

I Will Not Complain

The flies used to keep me awake. They would zip by my ear just like an airplane when it 'buzzes the tower' and were always too quick for me when I would try to swat them away. I was sure their little fly faces were laughing hysterically as they would come in for another fly-by. Now that they have learned that doesn't bother me as much anymore, they like to tip-toe on my nose or my arm, just long enough to stir me out of a somewhat sound sleep. Oh well, it's time to get up anyway.

Really, I'm grateful for the few dive-bombing flies I have to deal with. A few manage to get into our fairly comfortable, air-conditioned building. Yes, air conditioned...I am so thankful for this luxury while we are here for our two-week mission trip. This is my first visit to Nicaragua, and as excited as I was to arrive, I was petrified of being in a new and strange place, so far away from home. The excitement has changed to resolve, and the fear has turned into determination. I will do what I am asked to do, and I will not complain. This is my goal. I will not complain...I have no right to complain.

When I was trying to decide on a task for when I arrived here, holding the babies in the orphanage sounded like something I could do well. I love babies. They are so innocent and precious, and I've always heard about how infants require physical human contact in order to grow and thrive. Yes, I could definitely hold babies. Yesterday was my first day on the job. I learned quickly that when you hold one of these babies, they will take hold of your heart. Although this sounds like a romantic notion, the fact is your heart feels as if it is being ripped to shreds just a little bit more, every time you look into those little and dark, brown eyes, seeking something from you that you're not sure you can give.

This ideal task for my 'mission-trip fantasy' was quickly challenged when I held my first little girl. She had no name, yet I couldn't help but call her 'Bella', the first word for 'beautiful' that came to my mind. This little person was so helpless and frail. She came into this world with AIDS and was struggling to keep her place in this world. She was shaking from fever, and her little body was so lethargic from sickness and diarrhea. And the stupid flies...they would not leave her alone. Always trying to land on the corners of her mouth where she had spit up. I was constantly trying to swat them away from her precious brown face for fear of them flying in her mouth when she cried. I continued to hold her close and tried to sing some of the songs I used to sing to my babies, not so long ago.

Once Bella was able to fall asleep and put down in her bed, I was given another little girl, so thin and delicate. Her eyes didn't have the fight in them that Bella's had. The women at the orphanage held very little hope for this little one. I instinctively named her 'Hope'. I sat holding her close as well, swatting flies and singing lullabies. By days end, I had held seven little people, and poured my love and my tears over each one of them. My heart was in shreds and I was exhausted. I didn't even remember my walk back to our site.

As I walked through the door, the contrast from the suffocating heat into the air-conditioned oasis was like waking from a bad dream. A burst of cool air brushed across my face and seemed to wake me to the reality of where I was, and where I had been. As we sat down to eat and share about our first actual working day, I looked down at my plate and watched two flies bouncing from one morsel of food to another. When we bowed to say grace, I choked back tears of guilt, sorrow, love, and painful images of little brown eyes. When I opened my eyes, I carefully swatted my two dinner mates away. "I will not complain...please forgive me, dear Lord."