



HAITI TWINNING MINISTRY (HTM) NEWSLETTER
 16TH YEAR IN TWINNING WITH SAINT GABRIEL PARISH
 FEBRUARY 2024 Edition 60- 5th year!

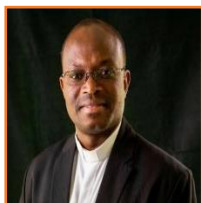


Vision: We, the parishioners of the Sacred Heart have been called to enter in a twinning relationship with our brothers and sisters at Saint Gabriel, Haiti. Together, we follow the principles of Catholic Social Teaching to foster faith-filled relationships, self-sustainability, and an end to dependency. **Mission:** End dependency while following the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.



Learning Haitian Creole, 1 Sentence at a Time.

Manje kwit pa gen mèt. / Translation: Cooked food has no master. Meaning: Food is free to be shared at mealtime.



GREETINGS FROM FR. FITHO | *Dear Fr. Paul, Sacred Heart parishioners, and community friends,*

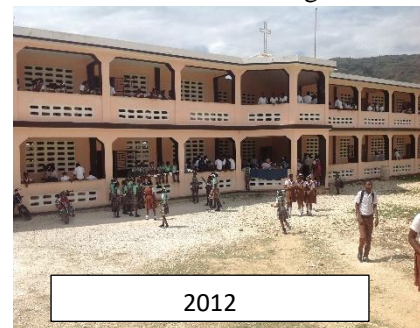
We join our prayers to yours this Lenten season. May this time be fruitful for each of you. The schools in the Hinche Diocese (twinned with the Richmond Diocese) were closed over Mardi-Gras in solidarity with those which are in areas that were not safe. The schools have now reopened, and our students will be taking the 3rd quarter exams before Easter. We thank you for your continued support. Please keep us in prayer as we are preparing for Saint Gabriel Feast Day, March 23rd. May the Lord keep both our parishes close as we continue being challenged by the current situation. Father Fitho, Pastor at Saint Gabriel, Lascahobas, Haiti

SHARING STORIES FROM ST. GABRIEL | The 2010 earthquake that occurred in Port-au-Prince and the surrounding area was



2010

devastating for our family in Haiti. Six weeks after this catastrophe, a small group of parishioners from Sacred Heart traveled to Haiti via the Dominican Republic (DR). Fr. Bernard Desras came to pick us up at the border of Haiti and the DR and brought us to St. Gabriel rectory. The parishioners there were greatly surprised to see their friends, despite such a tragic time. After lunch, we took a three-hour walk to Mât Bâtiment, in the mountains. There, we met with a community who had been debating whether their small chapel should host its own elementary school. By the time we left, the



2012

community had decided to start a 1st and 2nd Grades school. How wonderful it was that the children in that village would one day go to school.

The next day, on March 1st, 2010, we joined Fr. Bernard for breakfast in the rectory dining room. He greeted us with these words: “In these desperate times, we need to start a big project. God will reward us because of our faith. People are crying and are desperate after so many losses.” After breakfast, he took us to a field passed the busy open market. There, he explained that a generous parishioner had donated a piece of land on which to build a much-needed parish middle and high school. He had organized for a team of workers to start the foundations of the St. Gabriel School. Still today, I can hear Fr. Bernard says, “When I open the doors of a school, I close the doors of a prison.” In Sept. 2022, the school opened its doors to about 90 students, 7th-9th Grades. On March 1st, 2013, the school was inaugurated. A group of parishioners from Sacred Heart Parish, Norfolk attended this miracle of faith. Fr. Bernard and his community did all the hard work, and Sacred Heart and the larger community helped about 35% financially. Today, the school has 745 students, 1st-13th Grades!



GREETINGS FROM MR. FRITZ ANDRE | *Sacred Heart friends, Many thanks for your birthday wishes. Let us say thank you to God for having preserved the breath of life for us despite the pressure of the waves. Special thanks to Susie for this lovely card. My heart embraces you all. Let us continue to pray to the Lord to complete in us what He has already begun. Concerning the exams for the third control, we will begin them on March 8 and finish them on March 21st as a prelude to Saint Gabriel's Feast Day which we will celebrate on Saturday March 23 this year. Happy Lenten season. Let us prepare to enter the Lord's Passover.*
 Mr. Fritz André, Saint Gabriel Middle, and Highschool Principle



DIOCESAN HAITI TWINNING GATHERING | On Sat., Feb. 17, about 80 guests gathered at Saint Bede Church, in Williamsburg to celebrate and learn more about our journey of the past and plans for the future. Fr. Eric Ayers and Fr. Jonathan Goertz (presenter) – pastors of Our Lady of Lourdes in Richmond were present. Fr. Herald Jean, director of the Diocesan Health Commission of Hinche and Executive Vice-Rector at Notre Dame University of Haiti (Campus of Hinche) was the keynote speaker. He shared the Health Committee's goals for health care in our twin diocese: mobile health clinics, medication, medical training etc. Fr. Herald encouraged all twins to support the Diocese of Hinche vision for all parishes in the diocese to



have access to medical care. Among dignitaries present were Tina Wandersee, Social Ministry Director, Diane Atkins, Haiti Commission Chair, Kurt Elwart, Haiti Health Supportive Team, Kathy Dowdy, Haiti Educational Supportive Team Chair, and others.

Also, all were glad to meet old and new friends for fellowship and catching up on news from twin parishes. This gathering gave hope to all present and strengthened bonds. May we one day be able to see our family in Haiti and rejoice.

TEACHER ENDOWMENT FUND FOR ST. GABRIEL SCHOOL | The Haiti Ministry continues its 5-year plan to help St. Gabriel School to become increasingly self-sustaining despite challenging times. We are in the middle of the 3rd year. This is done by funding some of the operation costs: lunch, teachers' salaries, medical needs, scholarships, some self-sustaining projects such as a stationery shop; and making the school appeal to paying parents. We are also planning for the long-term of the financial support of the school. Two endowments have been started by two generous families, **the Scholarship Fund, and the Teacher Fund**. The goal is to be able to send our twin parish 20 scholarships annually (\$275 each), and at least one full teacher salary for the year (\$1,300).

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TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ST GABRIEL TEACHER ENDOWMENT #174 (Please print this section and keep for reference when you wish to donate.)

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE RICHMOND DIOCESE

WRITE ON THE MEMO LINE:

TEACHERS' SALARIES ST. GABRIEL, LASCAHOBAS, HAITI #174

SEND TO:

MS. MAGGIE KEENAN | CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
 7800 CAROUSEL LN. | RICHMOND, VA 23294

FOR ADDITIONAL INFO. CALL MAGGIE KEENAN, DIRECTOR OF PLANNED GIVING (804) 359-5661

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Thanks for your continued prayers for Haiti and for your support of the students. While their challenges are numerous, the school community is making progress.

SAVE THE DATE INDOOR SALE | FEED 1 CHILD, 1 SALE AT A TIME



Our next indoor sale will be Sat., March 9th, 2024 | 10:00 am-2:00 pm. Fred Huette Center, 1000 Botetourt Gardens, Norfolk, VA 23507. Signs will be out.

Needed for future sales: volunteers to help pack at 2:00 pm and a neighborhood driveway.

Monthly Meetings—We share a light meal at 6:00 pm in the Commons, followed by a meeting. All are welcome to hear stories of close relationships, and faith in action to a better life. -March 12th, 2024, 6:30 - 7:30 pm; -April 16th, 2024, 6:30 - 7:30 pm.

WE REMEMBER OUR FRIENDS IN THE HAITI MINISTRY



Ellen Renn, Feb. 16, 62-Sept. 10, 2017
Neil Walsh, Aug. 25, 1946-Mar.10, 2020
Nicolas Valcour, Sept. 9, 1960-Feb. 20, 2022
Dr. P. Farmer, Oct. 26, 1959-Feb. 21, 2022

Patricia Britz, Chair patprovence1@yahoo.com Cell: (757) 621-1860
Brendan Pigott, Assistant Chair <http://www.sacredheartnorfolk.org/ministries/justice-and-peace/haiti-ministry/>

Pictures taken by Fr. Adelin Joseph 1st & 2nd Graders

