

Haiti in our Hands

Compassion and solidarity for the people of Haiti



Monthly Newsletter

October 2019

Annual Medical Mission to Chauffard Cancelled

With great sadness, we decided to cancel what would have been our 10th medical mission to serve the people of our Twin Parish because of security concerns. It was back in November of 2008 that Ligory Fernandes organized our first visit to Chauffard. That first information-gathering trip included just Ligory, Dr. Jerry McMahon, and Deacon Greg Cross and his daughter Catherine. By the next year, we organized our first medical mission, sending nine Americans. Parishioners Dr. Jerry McMahon and Dr. Tom Abbamont have served on all nine of our medical missions, with many of our parishioners volunteering their services for more than one trip as well. For the past two years, our teams have worked with Haitian doctors and nurses in the re-built Chauffard clinic with gravity-fed running water and fairly reliable electricity from a generator. Other team members have joined from around New York State, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

The week-long mission visits include three working clinic days, one day to reach the village and set up the clinic, one Sunday of rest, and two travel days. During the three dawn-to-dusk clinic days, our team regularly serves over 1,000 patients from this five village community. For most in this community, our annual clinic days would be the only time they would see a doctor. The people of our Twin Parish look forward to our visits. There are no stores around and they highly value the soap, toothpaste, pain relievers, and anti-itch cream they receive from your donations. Our volunteers are missing their planned visit as well. They always comment on the welcome and expressions of gratitude they receive and how valued and useful they felt.

News from Port au Prince:

From Father Rick Frechette:

“For the last year and a half especially, the Haitian people have been suffering deep political and social upheavals, often violent, caused by the decreased value of the local currency by half, and increased cost of living by a quarter. Do the death math. With whatever meager income you have (for the vast majority of the people here, this is still less than \$800 per year), you can now afford 25% of what you used to be able to buy. People cannot live like this.”

Via e-mail, September 26, 2019

Upcoming Events:

October 20 - November 3

Collection of basic medical supplies: vitamins, pain relievers, Tums, soap, reading glasses, rosaries and prayer cards.

November 30 - December 1

Haiti Speaker at all weekend masses

January 4 - 5, 2020

Bottle & Can Drive

For more information about any event, call Kate McMahon at 315-492-2378.

**Supporting the Church of the Immaculate Conception,
Chauffard, Haiti, Father Raymond, Parish Priest**

Concerning News From Haiti



It has been much more common than usual to see news reports from Haiti in American newspapers these past few months. Unfortunately, none of the reports are giving good news for the people of our Twin Parish. On September 28, 2019, *The New York Times* ran a story that began, “Burned-out cars, makeshift barricades and shuttered businesses signaled a week of unrest in Haiti, where protesters are demanding the resignation of President Jovenel Moise and more violent protests are feared. Streets, schools and banks are closed throughout the country, bringing the economy to a standstill. Shortages of oil, power and food abound. The nation’s currency is in free fall. . .”

The AP reported on October 5, 2019: “. . .The unrest on Friday came after several weeks of protests in which 17 people have been reportedly killed, the economy has been largely paralyzed, two million children have been unable to go to school and badly needed aid has been suspended, especially to rural areas. . .”

An article in *The New Humanitarian* from October 7, 2019 was similar. It reads, “Fuel shortages have sparked riots and have led to interrupted water supplies, while people have struggled to find fuel for their generators, stoves, and vehicles. The World Food Program has also suspended many of its aid operations because of the unrest.”

In our Twin Parish, there will be no protests as there is no government presence. The people of Chauffard are isolated up in the mountains and do not have running water, electricity, or vehicles. However, Father Raymond does rely on the parish vehicle to travel into Port-au-Prince to pick up your donations from the church bank account to buy food and gasoline. Roadblocks may prevent him from reaching the bank now or the bank may be closed. He could be robbed of the school lunch money or the food may be much more expensive or just not available. The school lunch program will have to serve smaller portions and may be suspended if he cannot buy the supplies. Without the money to pay the school teachers, the teachers may not come to work and the school may close. Without gasoline, Father Raymond cannot drive into Port-au-Prince to try to pick up money at the bank or buy food. If he cannot fuel the generator, he will not be able to power his lap top to send us emails to let us know how they are getting along in Chauffard. Please pray for the people of our Twin Parish and a speedy, non-violent solution to this conflict.

