

Haiti in our Hands

Compassion and solidarity for the people of Haiti



Monthly Newsletter

November 2021

Farewell Father Estiverne

Father Julien Estiverne was the parish priest at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Chauffard when we began our twinning relationship. We are saddened to announce that Father Estiverne passed away from Covid-19 on Saturday, October 23rd. You may have met him when he visited us here in Syracuse twice. Father Estiverne had grown up in Chauffard and was currently serving a parish in the south of the country. From 2000-2011, he was our contact with our Twin Parish. We were told that he made the area safe for children and women walking the paths to Port-au-Prince and between villages. He first wanted our help to pay the teachers more. Then Father Estiverne asked that we fund a new truck for the parish as he was using a mule to travel to the outlying chapels and the parish had no vehicle for emergencies. The next big project was to rebuild the parish Rectory, which also serves as the church office. In 2008, the rectory was rebuilt into a safe structure with two guest rooms and we were able to visit! In the Fall of 2014, when the World Food Program pulled out of the area and no more food donations were coming, Father Estiverne requested funding to start the School Lunch Program.

Father Estiverne's nephew Alies wrote, in part, "He wanted to go to the hospital, but could not pass through a neighborhood occupied by armed men. We called the ambulance which took two days to arrive. We finally managed to get to the hospital, but it was too late. He was my friend, my advisor, and my dad. God will give us the strength to overcome this ordeal." He was a good man who truly cared for his community. He always made our Medical Mission teams feel welcomed and valued. He will be missed. Mesi anpil - many thanks.



News from Chauffard:

"For us at Chauffard, things are not too good and not too bad. The situation in the country is worsening day by day. The problem of insecurity persists. I infinitely regret your not being able to come to Haiti for these years, it is really regrettable for me and for the whole community of Chauffard. Each one demands to which saint they are dedicated. Thank God we have not heard of a case of Covid-19 in Chauffard. School is returning to normal. The students come regularly."

Father Raymond, Parish Priest, 11/2/21

Upcoming Events:

December 11-12: Haiti Speaker weekend

January 8-9:

Bottle & Can Drive
in Velasko Road parking lot

For more information
about any event, call
Kate McMahon at 315-214-1569

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

L'Hopital Notre Dame de Chauffard

The official name for Chauffard's clinic is l'Hopital Notre-Dame de Chauffard. It serves a community of thousands of people, who do not receive medical attention annually. The reconstructed clinic was dedicated in 2017 and has gravity-fed running water and electricity from a generator. The year-round staff includes a coordinator, two licensed nurses, a certified laboratory technician, and a caretaker. In 2009, we coordinated our first of nine medical missions to serve our Twin Parish in Chauffard, Haiti. As you would expect, this involves the ordering and purchasing of medicines both here and in Haiti, the hiring of translators, putting together a team of volunteer doctors, nurses and pharmacy staff, and reserving rental vehicles in Haiti. This service also includes details like making sure everyone is on the same flights, contacting a Parish Twinning Program staff member to meet our team at the Port-au-Prince airport, printing out signs of the medicine categories for the pharmacy, packing bags of lollipops for patients, and sending along fine-point Sharpies to label the prescription bags. We buy mosquito netting and send money ahead of time so the priest can buy food and other supplies and hire extra cooks to prepare to host up to 16 extra people! The team brings cash for gas and to pay the salaries for any Haitian staff for the mission: the translators and any doctors, nurses, drivers or extra workers. Each year has been a little different, but there are always a couple of newborn babies at the clinic.

17 parishioners of the Church of St. Michael and St. Peter have volunteered on these medical missions, helping Haitians, some who have never seen a doctor. Some of our parishioners have made the journey once, and others eight or nine times. We also have had 28 doctors, nurses and general volunteers join us from Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Long Island, Canada and the UK. Many of these volunteers have served our Twin Parish twice or five or eight times. Eight of our volunteers have returned, bringing a family member along with them.

Danielle Lewis, granddaughter of parishioner Flo Lewis, said of her time helping in the pharmacy: "The people of Chauffard are some of the most resilient and hard-working people I have ever met. Despite seemingly insurmountable conditions, they face every day with great joy and hope. During my trip to Chauffard in 2016, I was touched by the compassion and gratitude each person had for our presence and assistance. While I felt like there was so much more to be done than what we offered in that short week, I feel deeply thankful to have been able to help not only with medical assistance, but also in the simple act of sharing a little bit of joy and compassion with the people of Chauffard."

What has been the impact? In 2012, running four exam rooms, our team served 825 patients. In 2018, the team ran five rooms and saw over 1,000 patients in the three clinic days. The work is primary care, treating malnutrition, hypertension, parasitic diseases, pain, prenatal care, and more. This month, Father Raymond wrote, "With the lack of money of the people in the area, few are coming for necessary care. The drugs are extremely expensive now, the prices have increased to three times the usual price. The same for food products."

During this pandemic, health education and medical care are especially important. Our medical missions went beyond the primary care. We brought toiletries, rosaries, vitamins and cloth diapers. Our volunteers attended mass at the Church of the Immaculate Conception and shared meals together with the staff in the Rectory. We wish we could visit our friends in Chauffard and assist in their medical care at l'Hopital Notre-Dame de Chauffard.

