

SIGNS OF HOPE IN THE MIDST OF TRAGEDY

Fr. Gene Schroeder

Pastor

Like many of you, my heart has ached for our sisters and brothers in Haiti. But in the midst of seeing so much devastation, I have also been touched by the generosity of so many people who have responded to the needs of the people of Haiti. I am reminded of the words of St. Paul who wrote in his letter to the Ephesians, “we give thanks to God whose power, now at work in your lives, can do far more than you can ask or imagine.”

The financial support people have given is simply amazing. In our parish alone, over \$25,000 has been raised. Many of our friends of Haiti outside our parish have joined in our efforts. We are grateful to the people of St. James in Haubstadt, St. Philip, Resurrection, St. Ferdinand, and St. John the Apostle who have been very generous in their support. Many of the children from these parish schools have also sent money. Our friends at St. Gerard Parish in St. Louis, who have partnered with us in the past, have also sent money. One of the most amazing examples of people reaching out to our brothers and sisters in Haiti comes from our friends at Holy Mother of God Parish in Vladivostok, who took up a collection and sent us the money they collected.

In this day of internet connectedness, I have also witnessed people from throughout the United States joining in our efforts. The children of St. James School in Red Bank, New Jersey, who saw our parish website, sent us a check for \$2000. They want to continue to work with us for the children of St. James Parish. A doctor in Miami, reading on the internet about our campaign to provide vitamins for the children in Haiti, sent us a case of vitamins.

I have also received inquiries from people in Pennsylvania, California, Ohio and elsewhere in Indiana who are interested in going on one of our medical mission trips, all because they read about us through our website.

The blessings continued. When we put out the word that we needed to send medicines to Haiti, St. Mary's Medical Center quickly responded by giving us thousands of dollars worth of medicine. And, to top it all off, Mr. Ron Romain offered us the use of his private jet to bring these medicines to Haiti. Last week, Dr. Steve Elliott and I traveled to Cap Haitian where we met with Fr. Alain, the Pastor of St. James Parish. In addition to the medicines that we received from St. Mary's and from AmeriCares (an international medical relief organization) we bought another \$5000 worth of medicines for use in our parish clinic. And we gave \$10,000 which Fr. Alain is using to buy food for the displaced people who are coming to Plaine du Nord.

Responding to the needs of our friends in Haiti who have been affected by the earthquake, will be a long term project. Most immediately, there are more people coming to our parish from Port au Prince who will continue to need food and medical care. Even before the earthquake, there were and continue to be many people in our own parish who needed these same things. All the new people coming into the area are putting an added burden on an already bad situation. In addition there are 90 children from these families who want to come to our school.

This spring we are planning two mission trips to Haiti. The first will be in there the first week of March. Their primary focus will be to complete the wiring of the generator for the medical clinic. The second group will be going in April and will be primarily working with the medical clinic. Through these efforts we will be able to better define how we can best support our friends in Haiti.

Fr. Alain, in thanking us, for our efforts, shared with me a saying in Creole: “se' le' w man ka, ou Kanen moun ki zanmi_w' d'e—”You recognize your best friends when you confront the difficult moments.” Your generosity has made this possible and I give thanks to God for all the good that is now being done because of your efforts!