

## **AS WE WAIT IN JOYFUL HOPE**

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**PASTOR**

As we wait in joyful hope...for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours. These familiar words are ones we say each time we gather to pray the Our Father at mass. They have been both a source of comfort and a challenge to me these past few weeks. Like many of you, my heart has been hurting for our brothers and sisters in Haiti as we have heard report after report about the devastation that was caused by the earthquakes in Port au Prince. Our friends at Plaine du Nord, while some distance away, have felt all these tremors as well and, like so many of the folks in Haiti, are now living with the fear of what will happen next. I don't know what our mental state would be like if we, here in our country, had experienced devastation that caused two hundred thousand people to die and over two million people to be homeless.

What does a person do in the face of such tragedy? Our hearts can be broken, but simply to feel such pain and be so overwhelmed that we just want to turn away from seeing any more pictures or hearing any more news does not seem to be a profitable way to spend our energy. We cannot feel bad enough ourselves to make the pain of others better. So what do we do. We do the next thing. Or, as some of the saints have reminded us, we do the work that is before us. So we collect money for our brothers and sisters in Haiti. As we are able, some of us make plans to be part of a mission trip to hook up a generator, we sponsor children for school and in all of this we stand with people who are hurting and in pain, not because we can make it all better but to remind them and us that there is no greater gift than a heart that understands.

Waiting in joyful hope is not about feeling particularly happy, or contented or even joyful. It is standing in the midst of our life circumstances and believing that God is in all of it, making all things new again, or as St. Paul reminds us, knowing that God makes all things work to the good for those who believe.

I must admit that over these past few weeks I have felt a little disjointed. On the one hand I am aware each day of the terrible things that have happened in Haiti and how their suffering makes anything we are dealing with pale in comparison. But as I have worked with people to raise money and medicines for Haiti, I have also found myself trying to sell our last remaining lottery tickets, worked with people to get a door repaired in school, made plans to install new doors in church and began the process of preparing next year's parish budget.

It's hard to hold all these things together. Is taking care of our buildings as important as feeding people who no longer have anything to eat? But without our buildings, we would not have a place to worship and a building to help teach our children the ways of our faith. In the end, it's not really a matter of what is more important, it simply is the work that is before us right now.

As we go about doing the work that is before us, there are reminders of the greatness of God. One of these was an email that I received from a catholic school in Red Bank New Jersey, who heard about our efforts to help people in Haiti by seeing it on our parish website. Is putting time and effort into designing and maintaining a website as important as feeding people who are homeless? I don't know, but without the website and the effort that went into it, would this partnership, which ultimately benefits our brothers and sisters in Haiti, have been possible?

In the end we do the work that is before us, the best way that we can and we remember the last words of the Our Father...for the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. This is God's work, this is God's world, this is God's kingdom. It is not up to us to know how everything is to work out. It is not even up to us to make everything better ourselves. It is our role to trust that God is in charge and God is making this work out as it should. When we are willing to be instruments in God's hands, tremendous things can happen, even beyond what we can ask or imagine. God makes a way where there is no way!