



# HAITIAN APOSTOLATE MINISTRY DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2009

The Haitian Apostolate of the Diocese of Worcester extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Most Reverend Bishop Robert J. McManus for his remarkable support and understanding of this noble ministry of the diocese. My sincere appreciation goes to each member of the Advisory and Coordinator Boards for their incredible collaboration in attending meetings, sharing ideas, and focusing on the continued progress of the different activities that are life giving and lift up the dignity of the Haitian people we are serving in the Diocese of Les Cayes. This year again, we felt blessed to recognize God's providence and fidelity to His people. Day by day we felt more and more connected with our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Les Cayes through prayers and financial concerns. Once again, we trust in God's continuing mercy as we bring to Him our own desire to be in active solidarity with our Haitian brothers and sisters.

### REACHING OUT TO THE DIOCESE OF LES CAYES



From left to right: Todd O'Connor, Sr. Michele Jacques, Sr. Ines Almeida, Rosemarie Shooshan, Charles Eisenmann, Sr. Marie-Judith Dupuy, David Lajole, Bishop Robert McManus, Fr. Edward Ryan, Michael Cahill, Fr. Stephen Johnson, Joyce O'Connor.  
Were absent from the picture: Jean-Evens Dupuy and Raymond Delisle

The sister parishes of the Diocese of Les Cayes are very grateful to the twinning parishes of the Diocese of Worcester. Your continued prayers and financial support help them tremendously in their pastoral ministries. As they face so many challenges in their daily activities, they felt encouraged knowing that they are supported by a twinning parish in the Diocese of Worcester. Beside the monthly financial support that was sent to the sister parishes that helps them to reach their goals, several projects were accomplished during the year.

Because of the Twinning Relationship that existed between the two dioceses, it created the opportunity for St.

Mary's Parish, Shrewsbury; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Hopedale; St. Aloysius-St. Jude, Leicester; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Gardner; St. Joseph-St. Pius X, Leicester; St. Mary of the Assumption, Milford; Our Lady of the Assumption, Millbury; Holy Family Church, Worcester; St. Anthony of Padua, Dudley; St. Thomas-a-Becket, South Barre; Prince of Peace, Princeton; Holy Angels, Upton; North American Martyrs, Auburn and St. John Bosco, WA to respond generously to the needs of their sister parish or institution throughout the year 2009.



Parish Twinning Mass at St. Eugene de Mazenod,  
Fr. Stephen Johnson, St. Joseph/St. Pius X, Leicester  
& Fr. Michard Jean Jacques, Vic.

Several projects were accomplished during the year 2009. The construction of St. Gerard parish at Lagaudray was completed this year, thanks to the additional support received from Sacred Heart of Jesus, Hopedale. A few years ago, St. Joseph in Damassin had received a grain mill from its twinning parish, St. Aloysius/St. Jude, Leicester that served the whole population in the South Coast to grind and prepare their grains for sale in the



Sister Parish: St. Pierre & St. Paul, Coteaux  
Twinning Parish: Our Lady of the Assumption, Millbury

open market, such as: corn, rice, coffee, etc. The ceiling, the walls and the grinder were all washed away by the hurricane. St. Joseph parishioners at Damassin are very grateful to Fr. Peter White and all parishioners of St. Aloysius-St. Jude for the restoration of their grinder. In addition, St. Joseph's rectory was completely restored this year. Fr. Jacques Cassamajor, St. Joseph's pastor expressed his sincere gratitude and deep joy for the accomplishment of the repairs of the furniture at his rectory. He is also grateful for the repairs of a chapel attached to his parish that was completely devastated by the hurricane.

Ste. Cecile School at Pliché was in desperate need for a kitchen in order to prepare daily meals for over 700 students. Thanks to the generosity of its twin parish, St. Anthony of Padua, Dudley, Fr. Ignace Coissy was able to build a wonderful and large kitchen in which he will use a propane gas stove instead of cutting trees in the mountain. Fr. Coissy is also grateful to St. Anthony of Padua parishioners for helping him to make a down-payment on a truck because his original truck was totaled after a severe car accident. Most of his pastoral activities were able to be fulfilled with the monthly contribution he is receiving from his twinning parish.

## FARMING PROJECT IN THE DIOCESE OF LES CAYES



Education: Learning how to DO for yourself

It was becoming more and more difficult to keep the students at school and try to learn on empty stomachs. After several attempts to appease their hunger, it came to my mind that the implementation of a "Farming Project" per parish could be a solution to the problem. Thanks to the generosity of Fr. Lee Hightower, benefactor of St. Francois de Gracette School, this project was able to become reality.

With the competence of the agronomist Roselene Rosier, a recent graduate student from Notre-Dame University of the Diocese of Les Cayes, agriculture became part of St. François school

curriculum. From grade one to nine, each class has one hour per week to learn about agriculture and the students are accompanied by their teachers to do the gardening and farming.



Agronomist Roselene Rosier & Bishop McManus



Harvest of Corn by the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> Graders from St. François School, Gracette

A successful harvest of corn, black beans and a cereal called "millet" grown only in Haiti was their first accomplishment. An explosion of joy filled their hearts when they came to the realization that they produced their own food by themselves. During the Summer Camp with the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders, they were able to prepare the corn, grind it



Preparation of the corn before grinding

and store it to be ready to cook in the school canteen. Since this is an ongoing project, the students continue to plant produce according to their respective seasons.

Not only the farming project helps tremendously the feeding program of the school but also it builds the students' dignity to provide their own food. As I witnessed the joy of the students at their first harvest, I realized that the Haitian Apostolate motto: "Give people fish and they are set for a day; Teach them how to fish and they are set for life; Assure them a place at the stream, and their children will provide for themselves" had become a reality. I would hope that the twinning parishes would help their sister parish to overcome the hunger by undertaking the farming project. The other parishes of the Diocese of Worcester are invited to adopt a parish to implement the Farming Project in their parish.

## EDUCATION PROGRAM



Learning is Fun!

The Adopt-A-Student program of the academic year 2009 had 471 students who received financial support in some manner from parishes, institutions, and individual benefactors from the Diocese of Worcester. 90% of the students passed their final exams and moved to a higher level and only 10% had to repeat the year. At my last visit, I noticed that the students who are subject to repeat the year are in the worse living conditions. Some of them are living with a very old grandmother who has no more energy to follow the child while the mother or father work in Port-au-Prince or in Les Cayes simply to feed the family.

and forth to reach their school. Some of them missed some important exams during the academic year due to malnutrition and sickness.



A ride back to Frère Polycarpe School after backpack distribution

Other students have to walk 6 to 9 miles back and forth to reach their school. Some of them missed some important exams during the academic year due to malnutrition and sickness. Those who are living as domestics (Restavèk) have to work so much during the day at the chores of the house that they have no more energy to concentrate at school in the afternoon and try to learn. Others have to emigrate somewhere else because their family lost their house during the hurricane or they escape from their house because they were beaten or abused by the owner of the house.



Student Waiting for Sponsorship

### Backpack Distribution

Many of the Adopted students were able to start their school year with a backpack full of school supplies and other items recommended by the Education Program. I am sure that each individual benefactor prepared their adopted student backpack with love, joy and care. I don't need to tell you the excitement of the students when they were called to receive their backpack! It is still difficult to escape the sadness in the face of other children who had not received a backpack from their benefactor.

Thanks to some parishes such as Prince of Peace, Princeton, North American Martyrs, Auburn, St. Mary's school, Shrewsbury, Catholic Free Press and individual



Sr. Eve-Marie Lubin principal of Saint Anne School Backpack distribution to her student

benefactors who were so generous to donate extra backpacks, school supplies and other items that were requested from the list to provide a backpack to everybody. At my last visit for the Christmas party, I noticed 18 backpacks that were still on hold at the office because the name of the students came off in the shipping.

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our first Christmas Party in the Adopt-a-Student program was exciting and enjoyable. This party was made possible due to the loving care and generosity that exists between the benefactors and the adopted child in the program. Each student that received monetary gifts from their benefactors was given a card to claim their gifts. However, I received enough gifts from parishes, monetary donations from institutions and individual benefactors that allowed me to prepare 500 gifts for the children. I left Port-au-Prince in the pouring rain all dressed up in my Santa outfit. Santa was able to give 26 bicycles to children who must walk a long distance to go to school every day. I can hear the exclamation of joy and clapping “Bienvenue Père Noel parmi nous.” (Welcome among us Santa). And others were crying because they were afraid of Santa and did not want to come close. Of course they were afraid because this is the first time they saw Santa. Since I did not want to be recognized, I asked somebody else to speak for me, because Santa doesn’t talk Creole or French. This is the reason why Santa came to Les Cayes in the plane. The sad part of the party was the pouring rain, because some of the students were unable to cross rivers or walk long distances to come to meet Santa. I had to send their gifts to their respective schools to be delivered to them when they returned to school in January. Unfortunately, I left a lot of crying children behind when I left Les Cayes on December 27 and asked Santa to come back when there is no rain.

## MEDICAL PROGRAM



From left to right: Sr. Odeline Morcy, ssa, Dr. John Broach,  
Sr. Marie-Rose Astremond, ssa, Katie Broach,  
Sr. Nerlande Joseph, ssa.

This has been a very busy year for the Haitian Apostolate Medical Care Program. In September, Dr. John Broach, coordinator of the medical program was in Haiti to begin a plan of malaria abatement funded in part by a grant from the Esther’s Dream foundation of the Sisters of Saint Anne and with the generosity and care of the individual benefactors. While there, Dr. John also met with a number of community organizers in Chardonnières in order to develop a plan for a water safety program which will include two major components; the re-engineering of the town’s drainage system in order to help eliminate standing water and the building of a wall to protect the northern part of the town and the town’s water supply from floods and mountain water

run off. A successful distribution of bed-nets went to the adopted students and to the households where there are pregnant women and children under the age of five. The medical group hopes to continue this work in Chardonnières and expand the services of the clinic to perhaps include an expanded neonatal screening and maternal health program.

The Medical Program of the Haitian Apostolate continues its mission to improve the quality of life of our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Les Cayes. The Medical team is still working on the malaria project and is looking for alternatives to eliminate the stagnant water puddles that breed malaria-bearing insects.

The Medical Program of the Haitian Apostolate continues its mission to improve the quality of life of our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Les Cayes. Due to the generosity and care of the benefactors and the sponsorship of Esther’s Dream Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Anne, a successful distribution of bed-nets went to the adopted students and to the households where there are pregnant women and children under the age of five. The Medical Care team is still working on the malaria project and is looking for alternatives to eliminate the stagnant water puddles that breed malaria-bearing insects.

# Building Twinning Relationships with Sister Parishes in Les Cayes

by Bishop Robert J. McManus

## *My Mission Trip to Haiti, an unforgettable experience*



Most Rev. Robert J. McManus  
Bishop of Worcester

My recent pastoral visit to the Diocese of Les Cayes in Haiti was a memorable event. I knew that I was traveling to one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere but I was not prepared for the poverty that I witnessed first hand. I was told by one of the Haitian priests that I met in Les Cayes that 70% of the Haitian people were unemployed and that many Haitians claimed that they ate only every other day.

During my first full day in Les Cayes, I had the privilege of being the main celebrant of the Mass in the Cathedral Church in Les Cayes. Bishop Poulard, the diocesan bishop, greeted me and the other people from the Diocese of Worcester at the beginning of Mass before leaving for the installation of a new bishop in a neighboring diocese. The concelebrants were priests from the Diocese of Les Cayes who are the

pastors of the “sister parishes” that are twinning with some of the parishes in the Diocese of Worcester.



Bishop McManus celebrating Mass  
at Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral, Cayes



Sister Parish: St Anne, Chardonnières  
Twinning Parish: Sacred Heart, Webster

I learned first-hand from their Haitian priests of the good work they were able to accomplish in their parishes due to the generosity of our Worcester parishes. I also met other Haitian priests during the course of my visit who asked if the Diocese of Worcester could provide some financial assistance to them and their people.

At present the Diocese of Worcester has approximately 17 parishes that have joined with “sister parishes” in the Diocese of Les Cayes. It would be wonderful if additional parishes in the Diocese of Worcester could twin with more parishes in Haiti through our Diocesan Haitian Apostolate. The ministry of these zealous Haitian priests would be greatly enhanced if they had regular financial assistance coming from the compassionate generosity of parishes in the Diocese of Worcester.



Parish seeking Twinning Relationship



Bishop teaching experience in Les Cayes

Sister Marie-Judith Dupuy, S.S.A., the diocesan Director of the Haitian Apostolate, often states that education is the way that the Haitian people will make progress in their quest for social, political and economic stability. Our Haitian Apostolate supports a program of financially “adopting” students in the Diocese of Les Cayes, enabling their young people to remain in school and to receive an excellent education. Sister Judith is always looking for more people who will “adopt” Haitian students and thereby promote an opportunity for these young people to succeed in their schooling.

While the Haitian people face many challenges and difficulties in their daily lives, I was struck by the quality and depth of their faith and their devotion to the Catholic Church. I celebrated Sunday Mass in the chapel of the diocesan retreat house in Les Cayes during my visit. The heat was stifling, but every person, men and women, adults and children, was dressed in their “Sunday best”. Their participation in the celebration of the Mass was lively. The people answered the prayers of the Mass and sang the hymns with joy and enthusiasm. I was deeply impressed. After Mass, every person stood in line to greet me personally and to thank me for celebrating their Sunday Mass which, by the way, lasted for over two hours!



Bishop McManus concelebrating Mass at the chapel with Fr. Tulcé Benoit, director of the Foyer



Bishop's visit at « La Charité s'il vous plait », Cayes

Recently the local Worcester paper wrote an article that was published on New Year's Day about New Year resolutions. I was asked to share with the readers my New Year's resolution. I said that as a result of my recent trip to Haiti, I had resolved to be more thankful for the many blessings God has bestowed on me. The Haitian people, in particular, the people of the Diocese of Les Cayes, are grateful for the assistance both spiritual and financial, that they receive from the good people of the Diocese of Worcester. As Bishop of Worcester, I am proud of what our Haitian Apostolate has done for our brothers and sisters in Les Cayes. I hope and pray that this diocesan ministry will flourish in the years ahead.

+ Robert J. McManus

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus  
Bishop of Worcester

## REACHING A DREAM



### *Adopt-a-Student Program - Commitment to each Student*

Three years ago, during the selection of students to benefit in the Adopt-a-Student program, this wonderful girl named Christa was selected to continue her schooling by a benefactor. She is very bright and has lots of dreams for her future life. Christa is the fifth child of a family of nine. She was born and brought up in Damassin in the South Coast of the Diocese of Les Cayes. Since the age of four her godmother welcomed her at her house at Les Coteaux at the distance of about 10 to 12 miles from Damassin. I personally met Christa three years ago at her school during my visit with the adopted students. As I entered the school gate, I saw this girl crying her heart out because the school principal had sent her home because her parents were unable to afford the school tuition. I asked the driver to stop and I approached her at the corner of the school yard. In her desperate desire to stay at school to learn and not going home, I accompanied her to the administration office and asked the priest, who is the school principal, to accept her and I will be responsible for her education. Upon my return to Worcester, of course, the first benefactor who requested to adopt a child in the program got Christa.

When I met Christa, she was already 15 years old and she was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. But her eagerness to learn and to study to become a teacher after her high school went beyond my understanding. At grade 6 the students had to pass the state exams in order to be qualified to start the junior year. To my big surprise, Christa was the valedictorian in the school district of Les Coteaux because of her outstanding performance at the state exams. Christa's family is living in extreme poverty at Damassin and they knew it would be impossible to continue Christa's education. As a result, Christa was sent to Port-au-Prince to be a "Restavèk" for a young couple who had two children, four and two years old. Usually, the condition of a "Restavèk" is to be responsible for all the chores of the house and in return you will be sent to school in the afternoon. Unfortunately, those domestics are subject to all kind of abuses, mistreatment and even rape.



Christa first day of School  
at St. Joseph, Damassin

At the beginning of the academic year 2008-2009 Christa's benefactor had renewed her scholarship and she was not present at her school. As soon as I was notified by the Education Coordinator, Frantzy Charles, that she was sent to be a Restavèk in Port-au-Prince, I was convinced that this slavery system in the Haitian culture should

not destroy Christa's dream. Since I have a special concern and care for each adopted child, I made several trips to Haiti during the year to solve different problems. I took all the measures to find the house where Christa was serving as a Restavèk in Port-au-Prince. The man is not working and the woman goes to work every morning and drops the six years old to school while Christa stayed home to take care of the baby.

When I entered at the house and told the man that I came to pick up Christa to bring her home, he was really unhappy with me. Even though he was angry, I still asked him a few minutes in private to talk to Christa. He accepted to go at the dining room while I stayed in the living room talking with Christa. Christa was full of fears, very confused, shy and hopeless when talking to me. However, she was eager to return home as she kept begging me: "Sister, do not leave me behind. I want to go to my family. Bring me with you, please." In front of this desperate request, I could only tell Christa, "Go, pick up all your belongings while I will talk to the man of the house." I went to join him at the dining room and told him that I will leave with Christa. He became very furious at the news; but I knew he would not dare touch me. I tried to calm him down so he can take a picture with us.



Christa in her classroom (back row)

It was not an easy task, of course, but I was determined to take Christa home to Damassin to her family where she will continue her studies and reach her dream, hopefully to become a teacher. Christa is actually in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade at St. Joseph Catholic school. It seems that Christa keeps counting every day how many years she has left to finish her high school so she can go to "Ecole Normale" to learn to become a teacher. Christa feels the love, concern, and care of her benefactor. I will definitely keep in touch with her to be sure she reaches her dream.

## *Thank You – Merci Beaucoup – Mèsi Anpil*



Msgr. Rose signing twinning covenant for St. Mary's parish

Without your prayers, support and love, the Haitian Apostolate Ministry would not overcome the unexpected obstacles and still continue to struggle to bring the changes necessary into the ministry. I felt personally very fortunate and blessed to move the Apostolate from a philanthropic organization to a ministry in which LOVE is the ultimate reason of our Christian life. The Office is very grateful to each benefactor, parish and institution who generously supported the Adopt-A-Student Program of our ministry. There are still many students hoping to hear from you to give them a chance to attend school for the academic year 2009-2010. If you know of any friend, family member, Religious Education Program, or School who would be willing to help a Haitian child to be educated, do

not hesitate to call (508) 929-4328; (508) 929-4335 or email [sdupuy@worcesterdiocese.org](mailto:sdupuy@worcesterdiocese.org).

United in Jesus Christ,

*Sr. Marie-Judith Dupuy, S.S.A*

Director of the Haitian Apostolate Ministry  
Diocese of Worcester