



Summary of the 2018 Trip

The travel team gathered at Sacred Heart and departed at 12:30AM. Our trusty drivers, Ron Henry, Tony Mike, Joe Hutton, and Andrew Mike delivered us safely to JFK at 4:00AM. We arrived in Port-au-Prince after a 5 Hour delay. Fr. Junior, Fenel Altenor, a Parish Council member, Acerneau, our translator, and Stanley, a driver, greeted us and whisked us away from the crowd, placed our bags and duffle bags in the bed of a pick-up truck and we began our 2 hour trek to Lalouere. When we arrived, the table was set with a feast. We thoroughly enjoyed our meal of authentic Haitian food with Fr. Junior and then retired for the night.

1/7/2018

We awoke at 5:30AM to the crow of roosters and the church bells. Mass was at 7AM at IC. We greeted parishioners arriving on foot to IC, after they stopped to clean the dust from their shoes. Deacon Greg Amarante assisted Fr. Junior throughout the Mass. The Church was packed. The Mass is so moving as the prayers are all sung in Creole with great zeal. At the conclusion of Mass, Fr. Junior introduced each member of the Travel Team. The Parishioners were so very excited to greet us with handshakes and hugs. We returned to the Rectory for a large breakfast fit for a holiday. Once again, we enjoyed with fevor the food prepared for us, hopped in the vehicles, and traveled 10 minutes down the mountain to Barbe, a mission church of the IC. The parishioners were already seated as we arrived a bit late. We quickly took our seats. Once again, the songs of prayer were so joyful. Although we have no idea what Fr. Junior said throughout his homily, it was evident that his parishioners were engaged as he asked them questions and they all responded. Once again, Fr. Introduced the Travel Team, handshakes and hugs were exchanged, and photos taken.

We returned to IC to find another hearty meal awaiting us. That afternoon we had an unplanned meeting with Fr. Junior under the large tree in the church yard. We asked Father to share with us his priorities. They are as follows:

- Education with continued construction of classrooms and Rectory/Parish Center.
- Solar power for classrooms, IC Church, and Rectory/Parish Center.



The Travel team introduced the idea of a Medical Mission under the Leadership of Dr. Chris Darrup. After further discussion, it was decided that we would endeavor to offer "Basic Care" to both the parishioners of IC and the people of the surrounding community. Father Junior mentioned that we could use the facilities at IC as well as the closed mission parish location near Gilbert, which is another community that IC serves. Dr. Darrup emphasized that we will begin this effort slowly and thoughtfully, once gathering information from other state-side doctors with similar experience. Another idea presented to Father was that of a Youth Mission. Father seemed in agreement, however, this will be pending further discussion and planning.

At the conclusion of the meeting, we went into Father's office and began to unpack and organize the contents of 7 large duffle bags of supplies that had been generously donated to the children and teachers of IC. Father's desk and numerous chairs were piled high with the many contributions.

Later that evening we played cards, our favorite pastime, and presented Father with our tithe and other personal contributions.

January 8th 2018

Once again, we awoke to crowing roosters and church bells at 5AM. We quickly got dressed and went to 6:15AM Mass at IC. A number of students had already arrived with their parents to attend Mass. For the Travel team, this was particularly moving Mass as Deacon Greg read the Gospel in French. Father was so impressed that he has offered Deacon to say the Homily in French next year!

After Mass we returned to the Rectory/Parish Center for breakfast and then quickly headed off to visit each classroom. The students and teachers greeted us with beautiful smiles and some classes sang "Bienvenue." Throughout the next few hours, we delivered the following items:

- 4,6,7,8 years: Tshirts, toothbrushes, beanie babies, dum dums,
- 5 years: Toothbrushes, tooth paste, beanie babies, dum dums, pre made bead bracelets



- 3 years: Tooth brushes, tooth paste, beanie babies, dum dums
- Teachers: Bucknell Tshirts, tote bags, cosmetic bags, beanie babies.

The students were then dismissed for recess and we sang songs, danced, played a variety of ball games and ran around the church yard. We returned to the 6,7, and 8 year old classes where we showed them how to make bead bracelets. Around noon, school was dismissed, and we returned to the rectory for lunch.

That afternoon the Parish Council members began arriving at 3 for our 4:00 Meeting. Each arrived on foot, Hermann Michele walks over an hour. Sainsoiell Altider arrived with a bag of coconuts. Fenel Altenor used a machete to slice the coconut enough to expose a small hole form which to drink the coconut water. He then sliced the coconut in half so that we were able to scoop out the coconut cream. What a treat.

By 4PM all of the Parish Council members had arrived and we commenced our meeting under the large tree. In attendance: Father Junior, Mr. Fenel Altenor, Mr. Sainsoiell Altider, Mr. Emates Dormeus, Mr. Hermann Michele, Mm. Ferdinand Dormevil, Melle. Limona Dormeus, Deacon Amarante, Dr. Chris Darrup, Ryan Darrup, Mrs. Maria Henry, Ms. Stacy Mastrolia, Michaela. Gratitude to the parishioners of Sacred Heart/Saint George church for their generous and continued support. Fenel Altenor then read a letter addressed to our parish. Each member of the travel team commented. Before the meeting concluded, Mr. Emates Dormeus expressed, from the bottom of his heart, his sincere gratitude for our actions. Our return to IC was a true signal that we are committed to the people of IC and Lalouere.

That evening we ate supper, relaxed and played a silly card game.

January 9th 2018

WE awoke early and greeted the students as they arrived at school. We watched as the 6-8 year old classes held their daily morning ceremony. They raised the Haitian flag, sang the national anthem, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary. Once they had filed off to their classrooms, we ate breakfast and scurried off to the 7yr old class to continue our music ministry by distributing the donated recorders to a classroom of ecstatic children. Their faces said it all when they began to play them.



We departed IC in the pick up truck with Dr. Chris, Ryan, and Acerneau in the bed of the truck sitting on student chairs. We were the object of many a second glance as we appeared to be a "Tap tap", or Haitian communal taxi, with white folks in the back. Our first stop was St. Marc, at the bottom of the mountain. We visited the church of St. Marc, where Father Junior had stayed before moving into the Rectory/Parish Center at IC. As a funeral was in progress we looked around from afar. Father then showed us a plaque commemorating all those who died for the revolution. Once again, we loaded into the truck and headed north, along Nat'l Rt. 1 to Borromeo and greeted many students who were in class inside the Cathedral as well as outside. In addition, we were able to enter the newly renovated Parish Center. A few blocks away, we visited the site where the Haitian Declaration of Independence was signed on January 1, 1804. This event marked the end of a 13 Year revolt as well as the only successful slave revolution in history.

Father Junior had one more surprise in store for us. Before departing Gonaives, he pulled the truck into the driveway of a beautiful large brick residence and then explained to us that it was the residence of His Most Reverend Excellency, Yves Marie Pean, the Bishop of Gonaives. Father then told us that we were going to meet his most Reverend Excellency. He greeted each of us personally and invited us to have a seat in the reception area. He then served each of us a refreshment. As he speaks English very well, we easily conversed about our mission and the tireless efforts of Father Junior. Deacon Greg then shared with the Bishop that his most Reverend Excellency, Ronald Gainer, Bishop of Harrisburg, would be arriving in St. March, Haiti on January 14, to spend time at the Mortel Foundation. After an hour long visit, we received a blessing from the Bishop for our mission, ministry, and for a safe voyage home. We extended an invitation to the Bishop to visit us with Father Junior. The Bishop shared with us that he has been to the Diocese of Harrisburg under Bishop McFadden. Once again, we piled in Father's vehicle and made our way back to St. Marc. We made a quick stop in St. Marc for a few souvenirs that were purchased from a street vender under the watchful eye of Father Junior. Upon arrival in Lalouere, we sat down to our last Haitian supper..

We rested for a bit and then the travel team sat together under the big tree and shared a few thoughts for the next year. They are as follows:



- Take prepared gift bags for the cooks, translator, and others who help Father Junior.
- Create an "Amazon Wish List." According to Father's needs.

Later that afternoon, Ferdinand and Limona stopped by. We all took a walk to their houses, which are beside one another. We returned to the Parish Center, ate supper, and had our Evaluation Meeting with Father. We discussed the following;

- Father asked for our feedback on each aspect of our visit. Everyone gave it a five star rating.
- Paper work for Cross International Organization food program was submitted by Maria Henry and Eileen Pannell. CI will contact Father Junior.
- The suggestion was made that Father Junior, and those who pick up the delegation at the airport, wear Bucknell shirts to be highly visible.
- Asked that Father provide us with a tally for each class that would include total number of boys and girls.
- Asked Father to prepare a "wish list."
- Asked Father for an itemized cost list for Solar energy, etc.

As it was getting late, we went to our rooms, and began to prepare for our departure the next morning.

1/10/18

We awoke at 5:30, got dressed, ate breakfast, and packed up the vehicle. The Trek to the airport in Port-au-Prince took 2 hours. Father is so protective of us that he never left us until we got through security.

We arrived a bit delayed to JFK, found our trusty drivers, and safely made our way back to Lewisburg.