

**Trip Report:** St Michel Parish, Boucan Carre, October 22 – 27

**Travelers:** Bill McDonald, Judy Townsend

Monday, October 22; Flight cancelled, 24 hour delay

Tuesday, October 23

- Arrived Port Au Prince 1:20, met by Julio, translator; Junior, driver; and Sr Mary Derisca.
- Good trip to Boucan Carre, but road into town blocked due to construction; used new “by-pass” road to rectory. None of these are paved roads.
- Good dinner and long, detailed discussion with Fr Duportal with Julio providing translation.
  - Discussed St Kateri projects and detailed support for St Michel schools.
  - Thanked him for 2017 visit and his impact on our parish.
  - Passed on greetings from Fr Bob as well as Terry and Ginny Johnson who served as his French interpreters during his visit.

Wednesday, October 24

- No morning Mass due to power outage.
- Discussed trip plans with Fr Duportal, and he helped set full itinerary.
  - Discussed Philo test scores; Fr Duportal indicated the pass % did not include the retest scores. Final results were 15/16 passed.
  - Discussed our desire to visit ongoing Vocational school program at parish in Savanette if Sisters approved. He was very supportive.
- Met with Sr Estaphanie and Sr Mary Derisca for school discussion.
  - Now 900 students, 200 pre-school and remainder in grades 1-7.
  - Vocational school, 11 students
  - 36 teachers and 14 support staff.
  - Discussed visit to Vocational school in Savanette, and both were enthusiastic
  - Both discussed growing their vocational program to possibly include producing additional clothing items, sandals, art, or jewelry for sale locally or abroad.
- Visited school with both Sisters and Julio for translation.
  - Vocational students, 11, were busy with embroidery class; impressive work.
  - No sewing machines are operational
  - Visited several classes, pre-school through 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Students attentive and teachers very professional.

Thursday, October 25

- Mass at 6:00
- Fr Duportal drove both Sisters, Julio, Judy and Bill to Savanette to meet with Fr Nicholas
  - Fr Duportal had been seminary trainer for Fr Nicholas at Hinche; great personal exchanges.
- Fr Nicholas described how they started Vocational program over 2 years ago.
  - He would like to expand program to his other parishes.
  - Students pay small amount when they are able but financial problems persist.
  - All students are from local area.

- First 2 years have been sewing with a professional tailor on staff. We saw impressive examples of their products.
- There is no program yet in place to ensure employment following class. He would like to use graduates to teach similar program in other parishes.
- 20 sewing machines through Food for the Poor; 5 set up in this school; only 1 remains in operation. Tailor brought his own Kenmore machine states it is very reliable.
- Desire to begin cooking classes, but lack equipment
- Very good dinner and further discussion at local parish; Fr Nicholas was great host.
  - Fr Nicholas showed off his “goat farm”

Friday, October 26

- Mass at 6:00
- Visited secondary school with Fr Duportal
  - Discussion with principal, Lubert Louis; students testing
  - 25 teachers, most requesting pay increase
  - Concerned about loss of 7<sup>th</sup> graders to elementary school and possibility of losing 8-9 graders in near term.
  - Some enrollment problems may also be related to students’ dislike of discipline.
  - The Big Latrine is being used, partially. Fr Duportal had it modified for 4 standard toilets.
  - Judy asked about uniforms; fabric from Port au Prince and sewn by students or parents.
- Fr Duportal drove Judy, Bill, Sr Derisca and Julio to Saut-d’Eau waterfall in Sodo. This is a healing site.
- Stopped at Notre Dame of Mount Carmel cathedral.
- Drove to Peligre Dam and walked on the dam.
- Judy, Bill and Julio walked through weekly Market, impressive array of goods for sale.

Saturday, October 27

- Mass at 6:00
- Good breakfast and thanked Fr Duportal for gracious hospitality and spending so much personal time with us.
- Drive back to PAP. (Terrible trip; roads very bad following heavy rain and city traffic).