

Second Sunday of the Month: Haiti Sunday

Why Haiti?

In the fall of 2003, following the promptings of the Holy Spirit and at the request of Bishop Higi, our then-pastor, Msgr. Duncan, traveled on a mission trip to Haiti. With the help of the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas, he was headed to the parish of St. Antoine de Padua in Petite Riviere de Nippes. Rex Rund, our music minister, had spent several years in Haiti with the Peace Corps, so he joined the trip along with a few other members of the parish. A twinning relationship was begun that has lasted nearly 20 years. Both parishes have changed pastors and Bishops but the relationship between the people remains.

Only 700 miles from Miami, Florida, Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, but its riches flow from the faith of its people, who are 80% Roman Catholic. In a country where the government is unstable, sometimes violent, and provides few of the services and infrastructure found in most countries, the Catholic Church is the organization the people of Haiti look to for stability and support. Many of the parishes of the Lafayette Diocese have twinned with other parishes in Haiti, and following the lead of Msgr. Duncan, Fr. Richard Doerr has also traveled to our twinned parish.

From the very beginning the two pastors, Msgr. Duncan and Pere Valery Rebecca, identified education as the best way to improve the lives of the parishioners. (UNESCO lists Haiti's literacy rate at 61% today - a big improvement over the last 30 years.) Additional goals were to improve medical, water, communication and other services in the small Haitian community.

Over the next year we hope to update you on the amazing work you have done through this twinning relationship and the graces that have flowed to both parishes as a result. Every Haiti Sunday we will explore another aspect of this twinned relationship.

Many, many thanks for the ongoing support of this venture between the people of Carmel, Indiana and Petite Riviere de Nippes, Haiti.

Through our shared experiences we have come to see that what we share is far greater than our differences and what we bring back is far greater than what we leave behind.

Next Month: Life in Petite Riviere