



***St. Francis-Haiti Outreach***  
***P.O. Box 2563***  
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***NEWSLETTER***

***June 2013***  
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**This month's pictures show a kindergarten child enjoying her school meal which you make possible and a picture of some of the boys at Our Lady of Pointe-a-Raquette Catholic School. They liked showing off their new uniforms.**

**News from La Gonave from Marie Thomas**

**As you are aware, I completed my first trip to our twin parish, St. Louis, on the island of La Gonave, Haiti, in April. Traveling with me were Fr. Joe, Jim and Tamara Ridenour, and Dave Fritz. I loved being there and meeting the people of the parish and the children at the school. They are so joy-filled and grateful for all that you are doing for them. We will have a program in September where we will share with you the many beautiful pictures and stories from this trip. In this newsletter, I have asked Nancy Hanna to share the details of her first trip to Haiti which was taken in February with parishioners from St. John's in Waynesboro. As you will see from her report, the school is full of spirit and learning! I am happy to report that Bob's Clinic is at full staff as we have a new doctor on board—Dr. Jimmy Fort, who is a native of Port-au-Prince. Dr. Jimmy is 31 years old and single. He graduated from ELAM (Latin American School of Medicine) in Santiago de Cuba in July 2012. Medical school in Cuba is a 6 year program. After graduation, he was employed for one year at General Hospital in Port-au-Prince. He currently is employed at Bob's Clinic for a 6 month probationary period but has indicated that he would like to stay on.**

**There are some changes in the parish as well. Fr. Arsene Beneche was named the new pastor of St. Louis on April 28th. Archbishop Poulard of the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince came to the island for the installation of Fr. Beneche as pastor. Father comes to us from St. Mary Magdalene Parish in Port-de-Bonheur, La Gonave, where he has been pastor for the last 5 years. He is quite familiar with the people of La Gonave and has written us to say he is meeting and working with the people of the parish to assess any changing needs and priorities.**

**We also were honored to have a visit from Fr. Roosevelt recently. He continues to be a tremendous support to us as we travel to and from Haiti. He continues great work in his parish of St. Jude's in Mon Lopital with the support of twin parishes in Michigan and Wisconsin who help with projects there. Father wants you to know that he continues to pray for us at St. Francis each day and extends an open invitation to all of us to visit him in Haiti.**

**Thank you so much for your support of the people at our twin parish of St. Louis. You are truly making a difference in so many lives, and Fr. Beneche and the people of Pointe-a-Raquette appreciate your support more than can be expressed. For more information about our programs, please contact Marie Thomas, 540-255-3166 or [steuart@cfw.com](mailto:steuart@cfw.com).**

**Men anpil chay pa lou. Many hands make the load lighter. Bondye beni ou. God bless you.**

### TRIP REPORT FROM NANCY HANNA

From February 19<sup>th</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup> I traveled to Haiti for the first time with St. John Parishioners Colette Petitt (her 5<sup>th</sup> trip!), Jeanne Branch (her 2<sup>nd</sup> trip), and Sue Pauly; it was Sue's first trip as well. From Wednesday afternoon to Saturday morning, Fr. Chadique and his driver, Tony, took good care of us at the rectory in Point-a-Raquette. Wednesday afternoon we were given a tour of the church, the school and the clinic, and stopped in to say hello to all the classes. Although we were a bit travel weary, we felt very welcome, and everyone made sure that we knew they were so glad we were visiting! Later that afternoon we walked over to see Mr. Fredo, and delivered an 'iPad video message' from Dr. Linda, which meant a great deal to him. Jeanne then recorded his message to take back to Linda. She had recorded some messages for specific individuals, and also for the town as a whole; these videos and the subsequent replies were the absolute hit of the trip. As many of you may already know, nearly everyone there enjoys having their picture taken, immediately after which they want to see it, especially the children! So the video was even *BETTER*! A very good way to bring Linda to say hello to them and for them to return the favor.

The next morning, we returned to the school to see how the classes were doing, distribute sponsor notes, and to have them meet Flat Stanley. (a two-dimensional character who accompanied us on the trip courtesy of McSwain Elementary!)

While I was off on a 'school assignment' in the nearby fishing village of Nan Boukan, Colette, Sue and Jeanne visited St. Anthony's House and checked on one resident's (Sabien's) health issues. They also met with the cook responsible for the food program to make sure that they are helping as many people as need it. Praise God for St. John's parish participation with these efforts as well as with sponsorship of students!

After Friday morning Mass, Fr. Chadique showed us the progress on his project of Stations of the Cross outside the church that follow up the road next to the church. Later in the afternoon, we toured two of the chapels in the mountains to learn what progress has been made up there, and to hear what plans Fr. Chadique has for these remote areas of the parish.

Our time at Pointe-a-Raquette went quickly; we left Saturday morning to return to Port-au-Prince and spend time with Fr. Roosevelt at his parish, St. Jude's, in nearby Mon Lopital. We had a walking tour of the surrounding area, attended Sunday Mass, and went to Sunday afternoon Holy Hour, which was quite a joyful event! The parish is without a permanent church building; it was too damaged by the earthquake and was torn down. (St. Jude has a twin parish in Milwaukee, WI -- Church of the Gesu; they have been 'twinned' since 2002.) On Monday after morning Mass, Fr. Roosevelt and his driver, Jimmy, accompanied us to one of the Sisters of Charity orphanages, and it was humbling and moving to be a small amount of help to the sisters and workers as we played with young children and then fed babies their lunch. You won't see any pictures or videos of that excursion, they do not allow any of it to become 'photo ops'; you are there to help! After we left the orphanage, we stopped to see the ruins of the beautiful Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption. We'd been told that the city was in much better shape since 2011 and 2012 visits, but this was a sobering reminder of the unimaginable tragedy of 2010's earthquake. Here, the archbishop, many seminarians, and the rehearsing cathedral choir were killed by the collapsing buildings. After leaving the Cathedral area, we toured other city landmarks on our way to a belated birthday celebration lunch for Fr. Roosevelt. We flew out Tuesday a.m., and arrived back in Virginia around 10 p.m. that evening. One incredible week.