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# HAITI NEWS

**SISTER PARISHES - ARLINGTON, CAVAILLON, GROS MARIN**

**St. Charles Catholic Church**

**The Rev. Gerard Creedon, Pastor**

*September 2000*

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## **Cavaillon & Gros Marin**

### ***A Report from the Pastors***

Father Jocelyn Musellier, pastor of the parish at Cavaillon, Haiti, and Father Marquis Charles, pastor at Gros Marin visited St. Charles in September. Both brought many thanks from their parishes for the ongoing support they receive from St. Charles' tithing program and the special projects supported by St. Charles parishioners and others. Second collections at one Sunday's masses raised about \$2,500 for the two parishes.

The new clinic in the village of Flamond – one of a dozen Father Jocelyn serves – is complete. Two nurses can now stay in the village and provide the only medical care for miles. A large cistern provides potable water. All of this is possible thanks to the generosity of the people of St. Charles and other friends of our Haiti ministry. Father Jocelyn said the community still needs money to buy paint for the clinic.

The community of Gros Marin has a clinic, but cannot afford a nurse to operate it. The salary would be \$100 per month

Both communities as well as other clinics in the parishes need medical supplies, especially supplies for diabetes including glucometers so that patients can monitor their blood sugar levels.

Readers of the Haiti News are familiar with the village of L'Oiseau, a village on a high hill

overlooking the water – and accessible only by foot or donkey. The people's determination and spirit have made it a special stop for Haiti Committee representatives visiting Cavaillon. We were able to present Fr. Jocelyn a check for \$4,000 designated by a donor for the community. These funds are likely to be used for boat transportation and for repairs for the church the villagers built without outside funding.

A new chapel for Flamond is among Father Jocelyn's highest priorities. He anticipates the project will cost \$12,000

The elementary school at Gros Marin has a well now, so the children have water to drink, thanks to a \$2,000 donation from a friend of the Haiti ministry. Father Marquis' next priority is a heavy-duty copy machine so he can reproduce instructional materials and materials for the church at Gros Marin.

#### ***What You Can Do***

- 1. Pray for the people of Gros Marin & Cavaillon***
- 2. Learn More About Life in Haiti***
- 3. Participate in the Haiti Committee.***

## Students Make the Grade

Nationally, only about 1/3 of Haitian students finishing elementary school pass the tough exams required for secondary school. In the schools where St Charles parishioners sponsor students, more than double the usual percentage passed their exams – in some cases, as many as 90% passed.

In the first class to take finishing exams in the newly expanded secondary school in Cavaillon, all but one student passed their exams, and the other student would have passed if some of his papers had not been lost in transit. This, too, is a phenomenal passing rate.

This is a tribute to the dedication of students who walk up to 2 hours each way to get to school and study in homes with no electricity and often not enough food. But it's also a tribute to the teachers who teach them. The St. Charles Haiti Committee supports annual teacher training in both Cavaillon and Gros Marin. This year, St. Charles parishioners and other friends of our Haiti ministry have increased the number of sponsored students from about 80 to 130, with pledges for another 50. St. Anthony's parishioners sponsor students attending Gros Marin. Father Jocelyn brought letters from Barrette School students to their sponsors from last year.

Both Father Marquis and Father Jocelyn told the Haiti Committee that the need for more sponsors is great in both parishes. The Barrette administrator estimated that only about one-third of area elementary school age children attend school. Public schools are scarce, and the Church is the primary educator. Generally, tuition is the only source of revenue to pay teachers. \$100 pays an elementary school student's tuition and other expenses.

In addition, they need money for school lunches at schools throughout the parishes because the students go the entire school day without food to eat.

Finally, all of the schools need books for their libraries.

## About the Haiti Ministry

*Sisterhood with Cavaillon and Gros Marin are an important part of St. Charles' ministry and worship. Ten percent of the St. Charles collection the first Sunday of each month goes to our sister parishes, primarily to support ongoing expenses. These contributions create strong parishes. In turn, the parishes provide spiritual support as well as the only viable infrastructure for education, health care, and economic development.*

*We are one of the 310 American parishes that have established partnerships with Haitian parishes through the Haiti Parish Twinning Program.*

*The Haiti Committee is a group of individuals – from St. Charles as well as other area churches – who provide financial and technical assistance for special projects important to our sister parishes.*

*Our activities are driven by the priorities and needs expressed by the pastors and communities in our sister parishes. We focus on four major areas: economic development, health, education, and church.*

*We raise awareness in the parish about the needs in Cavaillon and Gros Marin. We raise money to fund special projects. We gather information so that we can provide technical assistance to the sister parishes to help them reach their goals. Members choose how active to be and where to focus their energies and talents. And, we would like for you to join us.*

*If you would like to find out more about the Haiti Committee, please call one of the following individuals:*

*Brian Francis (703) 812-8656*

*Linda Hill (703) 521-7623*

*Josephine Lee (703) 522-5320*

## To Contribute Financially....

If you would like to make a financial contribution, you can write a check to St. Charles Church and, on the memo line, designate the Haiti Committee. You may take or send it to the Rectorry, or put it in an envelope labeled "Haiti" and put it in the collection plate. If you want it to go for a specific purpose, please designate that, also.