
HAITI NEWS

SISTER PARISHES - ARLINGTON, CAVAILLON, GROS MARIN

St. Charles Catholic Church

The Rev. Gerard Creedon, Pastor

November 1999

Cavaillon & Gros Marin – Crossing into 2000

A group from the St. Charles Haiti Committee will go to Haiti in January for our annual visit to Gros Marin and Cavaillon. During their journey, the travelers deepen the bonds of fellowship and common purpose between St. Charles and our sister parishes.

The St. Charles representatives, who pay their own expenses, will further the relationship with our sister parishes in many ways. They will continue our dialog with the people of Cavaillon and Gros Marin to learn their priorities, their hopes, and their dreams. Meeting with village committees, the group will see what the people have accomplished with the resources we've been able to share from the monthly St. Charles tithe and from special contributions and committee activities.

At least as important, they will be fed by the spirit, faith, and even laughter, of the people there. They will bring back to St. Charles the wonder of people who, in their scarcity, share with us and with each other; of children who spend hours walking to and from school every day, of faith that creates dignity and even joy in the midst of poverty we can't imagine.

Among the highlights in the schedule are:

- A visit to the elementary school students in Barrette. Some 90 of these students are able to

About the Haiti Ministry

Sisterhood with Cavaillon and Gros Marin are an important part of St. Charles' ministry and worship. Ten ttepercent 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.

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

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- attend school because St. Charles sponsors pay their expenses.
- A visit to Flamond to see the new clinic that the community is building with funding from St. Charles. The new building will replace the borrowed school building that is scarcely usable. The committee that oversees clinic operations and construction of the new building keeps meticulous records of each dollar that comes from St. Charles or from community resources. About \$2,200 will allow the community to complete the clinic.
- A meeting with teachers from the elementary school in Gros Marin. Talking to these extraordinary young teachers gives us hope for Haiti's future. Through the Haiti Committee, St Charles provides much-wanted teacher training to all the teachers from the surrounding area.
- An insight into the ingenuity and dedication of the pastors who keep the parish infrastructure going with the \$600 or so that each of the two parishes gets each month from the St. Charles tithes.
- Shopping for crafts and folk art to bring home and sell to raise money for special projects in the parishes.

Things to Take

Many essentials are scarce or very expensive in Haiti. St. Charles visitors go to Haiti loaded down with suitcases of such items. You can help by contributing

- ✓ Over-the-counter medicines, especially children's dosages. (Please check expiration dates.)
- ✓ Pencils, pens, markers, notebooks and other school supplies.

The Face of Hope

A young man with horn rimmed glasses, immaculately pressed white shirt and tie, and an eager smile is the face of hope for the future of Haiti. The only name he's ever given us is Amazan.

When members of the St. Charles Haiti Committee first met Amazan, he was a student that the new secondary school in Cavaillon. Ken Firling and Pat Newman remember him as an extraordinarily persistent young man, anxious to be help and to practice his English.

Each year, when the group from St. Charles returned, Amazan was there. He wanted to spend time with the visitors, translate for them as best he could, and show them his community.

Last year, when the St. Charles delegation visited Barrette School, none other than Amazan, the new director of the Cavaillon parish elementary schools, greeted us. He is married now, and proudly introduced his wife and young son. The determination that drove him as a student now drives him toward educating a new generation of children.

So that the St. Charles delegation could bring home letters from sponsored students, he stayed up all night translating them.

Amazan recently wrote to thank St. Charles for the scholarships and tell us how much it means to the children and their families. He's still having trouble paying the teacher, "but we try to do that anyway." His next dream is to find a way to provide lunch for the children, many of whom show signs of long-term malnutrition. \$100 a month would set up the open-air lunchroom.

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