

REPORT TO PARISH March 11/12, 2023

"Then the righteous will answer him and say "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, OR thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you OR naked and clothed you? When did we see you ill or in prison and visit you? And the King will say to them in reply, "Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me."

- Thank you, Fr. Arpee and Fr. Greg, for providing our Parish Twinning Committee this opportunity to update our parishioners on our continued mission of hope and support for our brothers and sisters of St. Gabriel Parish in Beau-Séjour, Haiti.
- 2023 marks the 15th year of our Twinning with St. Gabriel Parish with the past 9 years having focused on the financial support and continued Catholic education of over 800 students in 3 schools.
- It has been some time since our last presentation to you and we are so pleased to be able to speak to you and share once again this ability to gather as one community following the worldwide challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic and the long periods of isolation and social distancing experienced by all.
- We are pleased to report that notwithstanding the near collapse of many of the Haitian government programs, including education, St. Gabriel Parish with the financial support provided by St. Margaret Mary, was able to keep their schools open for much of the pandemic. It has been the local Catholic Church, to which the people have always relied upon for support. This as expressed by Fr. Fernand in his letter to us dated June 22, 2018. "Know that only the Catholic Church provides good education in Haiti. Without exaggeration, we can say this; Haiti still exists because of the presence of the Catholic Church" and he further stated, "We know that a very good education opens all doors. Education elevates man to the dignity of his being."
- In August of 2021, we received notice that Fr. Fernand was being reassigned from St. Gabriel Parish. We expressed our gratitude and heartfelt thanks to him for his 7 years as Pastor. We have now welcomed Fr. JUDE ENFIREILLE as the new pastor and acknowledge his passion for the education of the children.
- As I mentioned earlier our focus and commitment, financially to Catholic education has been delivered through an annual promise of \$20,000 US funds, for the last 9 years which concludes with the completion of this academic year in June, 2023.
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- I can appreciate that many of you are thinking, "that's a lot of money" and you are correct. To put the generosity of this parish into perspective... since the beginning of our mission in Haiti, in 2008, to the end of 2022, we have provided our brothers and sisters in Beau-Séjour with \$509,000.00 in Can. funds.
- With our support, an entire generation of students have received an elementary and secondary level Catholic education. This next generation has commenced their journey to a brighter future.
- As we emerge from the global pandemic, the committee has reviewed and prayerfully reflected on our mission and our level of commitment going forward.
- Every child is deserving of an education and opportunity to develop their God-given talents and your parish twinning committee believes that this mission of hope is worth our continued support.
- The significant level of past support provided each year and the realities of operating in a post Covid 19 environment, has been evaluated considering the following facts:
 - Current attendance at masses on average, is about 60% of pre COVID
 - Operating revenue from weekly offerings has declined 33% from pre COVID levels.
 - Increased Operating expenses fuelled by inflation pressures are a reality not only for St. Margaret Mary, but all parishes throughout the diocese.
 - Recent Currency exchange and fees for our transfers to Haiti have required a 40% exchange rate to buy US funds.
 - With these realities, the twinning committee proposes the following...
A new four-year commitment of **\$12,000.00 US funds/ annum** to be provided for the school years commencing 2023-24 and concluding in June of 2027.
 - St. Margaret Mary Parish having included the Haiti mission as part of One Heart One soul capital campaign, has sufficient funds available to commence this new promise, as we initiate our future fundraising initiatives.
 - I stand before you today to confirm that the state of our mission with St. Gabriel Church and the education of their children, remains strong and resolute.

- We invite you to take notice of the special BLUE envelope inserted in this week's bulletin and located as well in the narthex. Please respond as your heart and personal circumstances allow and return your offering next weekend.