

Haiti Mission Report to Parish – January 6 /7 , 2024

“ 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 and Sisters of mine , you did for me.” “

- **Thank you Fr. Adam for providing 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.**
- **Having given Fr. Adam a couple of months to settle in as our new Pastor, I had the opportunity to meet with him to advise and discuss our Twinning Mission with St. Gabriel church in Haiti. I was impressed with Fr. Adam’s knowledge of the history of the Haitian people and the special bond forged with the Polish people. Back in 1802 Napoleon dispatched a Polish Legion to join the French forces to suppress the Haitian slave rebellion. Many Polish soldiers admired the Haitians and some turned on the French army and joined the rebelling Haitians. Polish soldiers are credited with contributing to the establishment of the worlds first free black republic and the first independent Caribbean state. Haiti’s first head of state Jean-Jacques Dessalines called Polish people “ the white Negroes of Europe “ as it meant brotherhood between Poles and Haitians. Needless to say, the bond between St. Margaret Mary and St. Gabriel keeps getting stronger and stronger.**
- **2024 marks the 16th year of our Twinning with St. Gabriel church, with the past decade having focused on the financial support and continued Catholic education of over 850 students in three schools.**

- **Our last report to the parish was presented on the weekend of March 11/12 , 2023 during which your Twinning Committee presented an analysis of our financial pledge of support to sustain the Catholic education of the over 850 students, through an annual promise of \$20,000 US Funds, which term was concluding with the completion of the academic year in June 2023.**
- **In consideration of the impact from the worldwide pandemic and the realities of operating in a post COVID19 environment while rooted in the belief that every child is deserving of an education and opportunity to develop their God given talents, we presented 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 2027.**
- **Our first installment for this new 4 year commitment was provided to Fr. Jude Efireille in August 2023 which supported the commencement of the new school year on September 14,2023.**
- **Although the reality of our reduced financial support will pose some challenges on the number of students who may be able to attend school, it is our hope that with God’s grace, everything is possible and that access to an education will continue for every child in the Beau Séjour region.**
- **We welcomed Fr. Jude Efireille as the new Pastor of St. Gabriel in September 2021 and quickly learned of his gratitude and passion not only for the support and importance of having the youth nurtured through the formation provided by a Catholic education, but his passion to see the hope of a proper St. Gabriel church building become a reality. Until recently the St. Gabriel church was a ram shackle building with a tin roof and Fr. Jude appealed to the elders of the area and begged them to get started on the rebuilding.**
- **The St. Gabriel church community has been blessed with the engagement of no less than two Twinning relationships, St. Margaret**

Mary and Holy Family Catholic church in St. Petersburg Florida. As our focus has been on the financial support to sustain the continued access to Catholic education, the good people of Holy Family have supported many medical and dental services and supplies over the years. Since the pandemic and deterioration of the political and civil climate in Haiti, the Holy Family parish has been able to respond in a meaningful way to the request for financial support from Fr. Jude and the community to rebuild St. Gabriel Church.

- As reported in our bulletin, we are pleased to share with you that on Sunday December 10, 2023 our brothers and sisters of St. Gabriel parish, led by Fr. Jude celebrated the official opening & blessing of their new church building.**
- We are so very pleased and thankful for the blessings that our Lord has bestowed on our brothers and sisters in Haiti amid the ongoing challenges of political corruption, violence and poverty, there is hope in this community with access to education, medical aid and a church to welcome the faithful.**
- We invite you to take notice of the special “Blue Envelope” inserted in this week’s bulletin and also available in the narthex to continue our mission of Catholic education for the over 850 Haitian youth. Please respond as your heart and personal circumstance allow and return your offering next weekend.**
- Please join us in the Hearth Room immediately after Mass for some fellowship, refreshments and to view some new pictures of our students, teachers, Fr. Jude and the new St. Gabriel church.**

THANK YOU

**Jim LoPresti
Haiti Committee Chair**