



# St. Margaret Mary Parish

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May 2018

## Special Report To Parishioners

### Re: Twinning Mission With St. Gabriel, Haiti

On this our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Twinning mission of love and service with St. Gabriel parish in Haiti, the parish Twinning Committee is pleased to provide this report and special update.

To sustain a mission of mercy such as our Twinning with St. Gabriel Church in Beau Sejour, Haiti for this period of time speaks volumes of the generous spirit, great love and deep faith of the St. Margaret Mary Parish community. Our continued service and support of our brothers and sisters in Haiti, both in prayer and financial support reflects our continued mission as a parish community to be a beacon of light and hope to the world.

From the initial visit of Fr. Bill Trusz to Beau Sejour in August 2007 and the resulting recommendation and blessing of Bishop Anthony Tonnos, St. Margaret Mary Parish established a steering committee to initiate the twinning of our two parishes.

In the summer of 2008 four hurricanes struck Haiti, killing 800 people, destroying all crops and leaving a country drowned in mud.

Again on January 12, 2010, a magnitude 7 earthquake struck the island of Haiti. Beau Sejour was heavily damaged - the rectory, church, school and newly built medical clinic were destroyed.

Joining with Holy Family Parish in St. Petersburg, Florida, small medical mission teams began to make visits to the area to provide medical, dental & nursing care to hundreds of people in the St. Gabriel parish area.

Significant financial support through various fundraising efforts and mission appeals from St. Margaret Mary Parish have helped our brothers & sisters rebuild, replace livestock and replant crops in response to the devastation caused by natural disasters. In recent years and in response to the critical challenges of keeping teachers engaged and schools open in the St. Gabriel parish area, St. Margaret Mary Parish made a significant commitment and focus to support Catholic education in the Beau Sejour region.

To put the commitment of the St. Margaret Mary Parish in perspective, our total commitment of funds over our 10 years projected to June 30, 2018 is a remarkable **\$393,000.00 Cdn. funds.**

In June of 2014, we welcomed Fr. Fernand as the new pastor assigned to St. Gabriel church replacing Fr. Gaby Noel and we worked diligently to establish a connection and relationship with Fr. Fernand.

Fr. Fernand on the eve of the normal commencement of a new school year advised that without continued financial support he would have no other option but to close schools as the parents could not afford to participate and the church was in no position to pay for the services and expenses for the teachers and supplies.

In a letter dated January 16, 2015 to Fr. Fernand, St. Margaret Mary Parish communicated our decision and pledge of a total **\$80,000.00 US funds** over 4 years to guarantee the continued provision of a Catholic education in the Beau Sejour region.

This commitment in Canadian funds is projected to reach with our final payment in June 2018 an amount of **\$108,000.00 Cdn funds**. With these funds and our commitment, we are blessed to report that approximately 1,000 students have been able to attend and receive a Catholic education.

With our initial 4-year commitment near completion, the Twinning Committee with the vigorous support and encouragement of Fr. Oehring is recommending that St. Margaret Mary Parish renew our commitment and pledge of **\$80,000.00 US funds** for a new four-year period. This commitment will support the continued Catholic education for the 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic years. Based upon our foreign exchange rate experience during the past years we are projecting this commitment to be in the vicinity of **\$108,000.00 Cdn funds**.

With the continued generosity of the parishioners of St. Margaret Mary and some good fundraising events we are confident of our ability to secure a brighter future for our youth. With our support the future of our brothers and sisters in Beau Sejour, Haiti is brighter and the promise of a better future will shine through a new generation of young Haitians to the glory of God.

With our renewed commitment and support for the opportunity of a Catholic education in the Beau Sejour Region we intend to introduce our parishioners to some of our graduates who have found their path and calling, through articles and interviews which will be shared through future bulletin inserts, announcements and posted on our parish website. Together we have and continue to make a difference in the lives of those we have been called to serve in Haiti.

Respectfully,  
Father Oehring  
(*Pastor*)

Jim LoPresti  
(*Chair*)

Anne Cupido

John Dobrowolski

Kim Drotar

Gina Ghiabi

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