

MACHE ANSANM TO WALK TOGETHER

Second Annual Report of the Haiti Outreach Ministry

Dear Cathedral Parishioners,

2006 was a year of great need for the people of our sister parish, Notre Dame d'Altagrâce in Layaye, Haiti. The long-standing political unrest and deepening environmental degradation in the country continued to take toll on the poorest of the nation's poor. Drought drastically reduced crop yields and dried up the normally bountiful mango season. Families had little food for themselves and no excess crops to sell. But, thanks to your financial support and prayers, 2006 also brought many blessings to our brothers and sisters in Layaye. We in the Haiti ministry want to use this opportunity to bring everyone in the parish up-to-date with regard to the accomplishments, current projects, finances and future goals of our parish Haiti Outreach Ministry.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF THE PARISH TWINNING PROGRAM

The Parish Twinning Program of the Americas (PTPA) was started over 20 years ago by Ms. Theresa Patterson of Nashville, TN. The PTPA works to link Catholic parishes in the United States to parishes in Haiti with the goal of fostering relationships that help to bring dignity and justice to the lives of Haitians and spiritual renewal and focus to American Catholics. PTPA offers ongoing support as we grow in faith, understanding and friendship with Fr. Ilric and Notre Dame d'Altagrâce parishioners.

FINANCES

The monthly "Haiti Sunday" collections continue to provide a baseline level of financial support for the ministry. As you may recall, we began two years ago with the modest goal of collecting just \$1 per month per parish family, or about \$600 monthly. In 2006, Haiti Sunday collections averaged \$2,500. The second annual parish-wide fundraiser, Breaking Bread for Haiti, held January 21, 2006 (coinciding with the feast day of our sister parish's patron saint) raised more than \$9,500. In addition, as part of our parish IC A Need ministry, parishioners contributed some \$10,000 to provide tuition, books, Bibles, clothing and food for 108 children. For all of this support, we in the ministry sincerely thank the Cathedral parish.

What have we done with these funds? As detailed below, for 2006 we have provided the parish and its members with support totaling \$58,324.

\$11,200	Monthly support for parish schools (teacher salaries and general administration) ¹
\$15,602	Tuition and school supplies for Layaye elementary, high school, & college students
\$10,000	Installation of generator and wiring expenses
\$ 5,600	Portable water filtration system for 400 families
\$ 3,500	Emergency funds to Fr. Ilric (for truck repairs, housing assistance and water tank)
\$ 1,200	Deworming medicine and vitamins
\$10,000	Church roof repairs
\$ 820	Children's art project
\$ 222	Expenses for annual fund raiser
<u>\$ 180</u>	Misc. processing fees
\$58,324 ²	

In addition to these financial contributions, parishioners and parents of IC school students, donated approximately 350 - 400 school uniforms which were shipped and distributed to families in Layaye. Parishioners also donated some 400 pairs of eyeglasses and sunglasses.

¹ Monthly support to Fr. Ilric was increased in May from \$800 to \$1,000. This amount is being increased to \$1,500 monthly starting in 2007.

² Year end account balance was \$24,000 which included carryover funds from 2005.

All of the funds raised by the parish have or will be used to assist our sister parish. All of the costs incurred by members of the ministry in their work and travel to Haiti have been paid by these ministry members themselves.

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

During 2006, the Mache Ansanm ministry has been jointly led by Debra Bartelli, Chuck Kolesar, and Bob Lorschbach. Lois Chamblin coordinates our annual fundraising event. This past summer, Pat Burns, who headed communication efforts including maintenance of our blogsite (www.memphistohaiti.blogspot.com), moved to Texas with his family. Bob Lorschbach and his family recently relocated to Little Rock. While Bob will continue to remain involved in the ministry, additional leaders are needed to coordinate the many activities of the ministry. A retreat for reflection and strategic planning will be held in early 2007. Please watch the bulletin for details.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Although much of our effort during 2005 was directed toward getting the ministry on its feet financially and in assessing the needs of our sister parish, by contrast 2006 was marked by a great number of activities and achievements. Eight members of the ministry (including Fr. Val Handwerker) traveled to Layaye in four separate trips. In February, Fr. Val, Nadia Anhalt, Lea Black, Bill Donlon, and Bob Lorschbach were present at the blessing of the generator. They assisted with the distribution of 400 portable water purifiers to local families and provided deworming medicines and vitamins to 2,000 children. They also organized a community art project for children in the village. Chuck Kolesar made two trips to Layaye and distributed medicines, assisted in the local clinic, and delivered and assisted with the installation of a solar powered water purification system. Jared Powelson and Debra Bartelli traveled to Layaye in May/June bringing 800 pairs of eyeglasses and sunglasses. Jared conducted the parish's first eye clinic – screening, diagnosing, and providing glasses to some 360 people.

The major accomplishments of 2006 include:

- Provided funding for Installation of generator and wiring of the parish
- Provided portable water filtration - the "bucket system" – to 400 families
- Purchased (2005) and installed a solar powered water filtration system
- Through the parish IC-A-Need project, collected \$10,000 for tuition and school supplies for 108 children
- Organized a community art project (the fruits of which will be visible in Marian Hall at the annual fund raiser on Jan. 20th)
- Initiated a bi-annual deworming campaign; 2,000 children received deworming medicine and vitamins twice during the year.
- Provided monthly school and parish financial support
- Held second major, parish-wide fundraiser for ministry in January 2006
- Conducted a vision clinic for more than 350 local residents
- Collected and shipped approximately 400 IC school uniforms to children in Layaye schools
- Acquired 5 computers which will be shipped to Layaye in the early part of 2007

ONGOING AND FUTURE PROJECTS:

• **Financial support for schools in Layaye.** There is no public education system in Haiti. Fr. Ilric and the people of Layaye understand the importance of education and strongly desire that their children have an opportunity to attend school. We will continue to support the elementary schools in Layaye and the surrounding villages. We also hope to work toward the establishment of a high school in Layaye so that students do not have to travel to continue their education.

• **Provision of portable water treatment kits.** The provision of clean water to our sisters and brothers in Layaye and the surrounding villages is an essential first step in helping them to improve their health and overall economic situation. We plan to continue to work with Gift of Water, a non-profit organization that has long worked in Haiti, to provide at least 400 families per year with portable low maintenance water filtration units.

• **Worm treatment program.** Soil-transmitted helminthic infections (hookworms, whipworms and roundworms) are a major source of morbidity in children in many rural areas throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, including Haiti. As a component of our visits to Layaye, we will continue a deworming program on a

twice yearly basis. For only about 25¢ a child, we can provide effective treatment against these parasitic worms that are a major contributing factor to anemia and malnutrition in the children of Haiti.

- **Vision program.** During our first visit to Layaye we encountered only 2 or 3 people wearing eyeglasses. Sadly, this observation reflects the fact that the people of Layaye have no access to eye care. During the Fall 2005 IC A Need campaign we collected several hundred pairs of glasses and received hundreds more through the Lions Club. In May 2006, Dr. Jared Powelson (son of Deacon Powelson) conducted Layaye's first optometry clinic. We continue to collect eyeglasses and sunglasses and hope to hold a second clinic in the summer of 2007.

- **Establishment of professional school.** Together with Fr. Ilric, we have agreed to fund the establishment of a professional trade school in Layaye. As in many underdeveloped countries, the lack of job skills drives many people from rural areas into large urban centers, such as Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince, where they are far from families and often the targets of exploitation and violence. Helping the people of Layaye to obtain the skills they need to support themselves is critical to enabling them to live dignified, self-sufficient lives in Layaye. Five computers that were recently donated by Rhodes College will play an important role in the professional school.

- **Medical mission trips.** Currently, there is virtually no medical or dental care available for the people of Layaye. The nearest hospital, Sainte Thérèse Hospital, is located in Hinche which is a 1-2 hour hike on foot. Chuck Kolesar has been working hard to establish a relationship between our ministry and Partners in Health (PIH), a major health care and human rights force in Haiti directed by Dr. Paul Farmer (the subject of the book *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder); PIH also operates Sainte Thérèse Hospital. Chuck is currently working to identify individuals in Layaye who can work as community health workers to assist PIH staff and us in delivering health care to the people of Layaye. As our ministry develops, we hope to be able to organize one or two medical trips to Layaye each year. Therefore, if you or someone you know has medical, dental, or nursing skills, please contact us if you or they would be interested in joining this effort.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

During his first visit to the Cathedral in May 2004, Fr. Ilric delivered the Sunday Gospel reading from John that has become the underpinning for our ministry:

“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

In the years to come, we hope and pray that the Haiti ministry will continue to grow and be an important manifestation of the compassion and mercy that Christ implores us to have for our sisters and brothers, particularly those who are the most impoverished and vulnerable. It is clear that each one of us has something to contribute to this ministry. Therefore, we invite you to join us as we continue to work to bring compassion and justice to the lives of the people of Layaye. On behalf of the entire Haiti Ministry team and our sister parish in Layaye, we thank you for your generous financial support, kind words, and most of all your prayers. We pray that the Cathedral parish will continue to “walk” physically and spiritually, with our sisters and brothers in Layaye.

Scenes From Layaye



Village School

Vision Clinic



The Generator