

# *Our Haitian Twins.....*

As many of you know, Christ the King Parish has been "twinned" with Ste. Marguerite Parish in Port Margot, Haiti, ever since 1981. This relationship was the result of an effort begun some years before by Harry Hosey, a member of St. Joseph's Parish here in Nashville. The goal was to improve the living conditions of the mostly Catholic population of Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and one of the poorest countries in the world. Mr. Hosey's efforts grew into the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas now headed by Theresa Patterson with headquarters here in Nashville.

In the 28 years since the relationship with Ste. Marguerite was established, we have been taking up a special collection every other month (the green envelope marked "Haiti Parish Collection"). Money collected was periodically sent to Ste. Marguerite for use by the pastor as he saw fit. He used the money for maintenance and repair of the main church and surrounding chapels, salaries for catechists, salaries for teachers in the primary school run by the parish, school supplies, parish construction projects, and other worthwhile needs. Periodically, he sent a report to us and to the office of the Parish Twinning Program. Over these 28 years, Christ the King Parish sent over \$150,000 to Ste. Marguerite.

**Now, the Parish Twinning Program has asked that we direct our efforts to a new "twin" parish ... in fact ... two new twinned parishes** (Ste. Marguerite will continue to receive support from a parish near Indianapolis, Indiana).

**Our new "Haitian Twins" are located in Roche-Plate (Notre Dame d'Altagrace) and Pilette (Notre Dame des Doleurs).** On a map, they appear to be about 35 miles to the east of Port Margot where Ste. Marguerite is located. The nearest large city is Cap Haitien on the northern coast of Haiti and about 18 miles away. These two parishes were formed in 1991 and have not had a "twin" in the USA before now.

**This is a great opportunity for us at Christ the King!** We are starting a new relationship with two Haitian parishes in great need of our help. There is more information about the situation in these parishes on the back of this page. The pastor, Pere Ernst Dorcin, is a native Haitian born in 1955 and ordained in 1984. Pere Dorcin will celebrate the 25th anniversary of his ordination this coming Tuesday, September 8. He has recently (February, 2009) been assigned to these parishes. The estimated Catholic population of the area is 8,000.

The parishes operate seven chapels, some not accessible by car, and one primary school with 139 students and 7 teachers. Pere Dorcin is only able to pay the teachers the equivalent of \$31.25 a month (US dollars), and many children cannot come to school because of the lack of space and teachers. There is no safe drinking water supply, few medical provisions and few medical personnel. The needs are many!

In response to these needs, we are increasing our efforts at Christ the King. See the back of this page to see how you can help.

Our new twinned parishes: Notre Dame d'Altagrace (Our Lady of Grace)  
Roche-Plate, Departement du Nord Est, Haiti

Notre Dame des Doleurs (Our Lady of Sorrows)  
Pilette, Departement du Nord Est, Haiti

Pastor: Pere Ernst Dorcin  
Five catechists serve in the main center  
Seven Chapels with seven catechists  
One primary school with seven teachers

These two parishes were formerly chapels of a larger parish in Trou-du-Nord and are in an extremely poor area of Haiti. Most families live in humble thatched or tin roofed homes with neither water nor electricity. Formal employment opportunities are almost nonexistent. The area population is estimated at about 16,000 with about 8,000 practicing Catholics. Both parishes are primarily farming communities, and most families survive on the produce they sell from a small plot of land.

Education is highly valued. In this area, there are 12 schools with 11 of them being private, Protestant, or run by the government. In Pilette, Pere Dorcin operates one Catholic primary school. The seven teachers serve 139 students. Many children are left to wander the streets because there are not enough teachers, not enough school rooms, or not enough money to pay tuition costs. Pere Dorcin would like to build school rooms, increase the number of teachers, and increase the pay of the teachers. He needs more catechists, and he would like to be able to increase their pay.

Pere Dorcin also needs to work on the church and rectory and improve the local dispensary. There is little in the way of medicines or medical service in the area. Safe drinking water is a major need. Money can solve many problems... don't forget to use the special green collection envelope.... the next one will be in your packet for use next weekend.

**In our effort to increase our support for our Haitian twin parishes, we are planning a trip to Haiti early next year. This will be a fact finding mission.... a chance to see the area and meet the people ... a chance to learn what is most needed and how we can best serve. This will be our first trip to Haiti as a parish community. We will need your prayers and support in many ways.**

If you have questions, comments or suggestions, please contact Dave Kuhlman at 360-9697.

