

OUTREACH TO HAITI

espwa, our newsletter of hope



H E L P I N G H A I T I A N S H E L P H A I T I A N S

Bishop Cote visits Haiti

MASS OF THANKSGIVING

The Most Reverend Michael R. Cote, D.D. visited Haiti in February 2017, where he celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving for our relationships with the Haitians; for all they have brought into our lives, and for all we have brought into theirs. It honored the generous donors to our ongoing mission; our staff who are our hands, feet and heart there, and the benefactors who have now positioned us to rebuild and continue our mission in a facility that more appropriately ministers to the Haitian people.

The Mass included Outreach staff, neighbors, clinic patients, and students in the educational program. It was fittingly concelebrated by Fr. Frank Rouleau, our Chaplain and Twinning Director, and Fr. Rouge, the pastor of Christ Roi parish. Music provided by the Christ Roi parish choir added a great spirit to the Mass.



Concelebrating mass is Father Frank Rouleau, Chaplain of Outreach Mission House; Bishop Cote, Diocese of Norwich, CT, and Father Rouge, pastor of Christ Roi Parish.

CONSECRATION & REDEDICATION

The groundbreaking for the new Norwich Outreach Center occurred right after Mass.

After a welcome to the guests, Bishop Cote consecrated the ground, and prayed in part, that the building *"will be a center in which Jesus Christ will be the cornerstone giving strength and life to the faith of your people."*

Milor Luxama, an Outreach staff member, broke ground with the pickax he and his cousin used to free two people trapped in the rubble from the 2010 earthquake. That pickax has hung on a wall at the mission house ever since. Now, symbolically it completed the circle at the groundbreaking—from the destruction of the earthquake to the genesis of a new era for Outreach and the neighborhood with the construction of the new clinic and mission house.

Bishop Cote completed the ceremony with the placement of mortar and stone in the hole dug by Milor, representing the foundation of the new building.



Milor Luxama breaks ground on the new Norwich Outreach Center.



Bishop Cote places the cornerstone for a new foundation.

"Father, in your presence, we bless and consecrate this land and break this ground to construct a center for the ministry of healing and hope for the people of Haiti...offering it to You as a sign of our commitment and faith. The building that will be constructed here will be a center in which Jesus Christ will be the cornerstone giving strength and life to the faith of Your people, a center from which His teachings and love will reach forth into this community and beyond to embrace the people of Haiti."

Relationship is the KEY

When Outreach was starting, the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince said that the people of Haiti did not want just charity, they wanted a relationship. Relationship is the key to understanding, and helping in a way that respects the dignity of the people and meets their real needs. The twinning relationship is built around this principle, as is all our work in Haiti. The U.S. twins are encouraged to visit Haiti regularly, and have the Haitian twins come to the U.S. so even more people supporting the relationship can get to know them.

Beyond visiting Outreach staff and services, Bishop Cote was developing relationships. He had lunch with the auxiliary bishop of Port-au-Prince, Erik Toussaint.

Come visit Haiti!

Want to replicate some of Bishop Cote's highlights? Get to know Haiti—the challenges, the joy and the history. Outreach to Haiti offers immersion trips, where one can experience many facets of Haiti, led by our Chaplain Father Frank Rouleau. We would be happy to set it up for you.

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Fr. Frank Rouleau
Twinning Director and Chaplain



Archbishop Guillard and Bishop Cote at the Chancery. In the background is the National Cathedral in Port-au-Prince that was destroyed in the 2010 earthquake.

Bishop Toussaint is returning the visit, as he will speak at the annual For the Love of a Child Gala in Connecticut on April 29.

The next day, Bishop Cote met with Archbishop Guillard of Port-au-Prince to renew the relationship between the dioceses. The Diocese of Norwich is twinned with the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince. In total we now number 17 U.S. partners, including Catholic parishes, a Catholic high school and other organizations that support twinned parishes, schools, clinics and orphanages in Haiti. Their support is, in part, financial assistance for tuition and books, salaries of teachers and medical professionals, feeding programs for the children and the elderly, housing and welfare of children in orphanages and various maintenance and construction projects. But more importantly the support is in the form of relationships, strengthened by face-to-face encounters, which makes twinning what it is.

The mission house is an integral part of the twinning relationship. It provides a secure base for U.S. twinning groups to stay in Haiti to maintain and develop

the relationship with their Haitian twin. Over the years it has also hosted countless international travelers who have come to serve, learn and stand in solidarity with the Haitian people. A dental group from Connecticut runs a clinic each year often working with Haitian dental professionals. Doctors and nurses from other organizations support the work of mobile clinics and visit regularly to work with their Haitian counterparts. Engineers have assisted their Haitian counterparts in construction and water projects. Art therapists and psychologists were present after the 2010 earthquake to help people cope with the trauma of loss. Immersion groups experience the culture and realities of Haitian life, meet Haitian students, patients, workers. The groups are guided by our chaplain, Father Rouleau, who acts as translator and as our constant contact with our friends in Haiti.

These are the people who will fill the guest rooms of our new facility and this is one of the many reasons why we say it is integral to the mission.



Visiting Paula's Girls

Bishop Cote visited Paula's Orphanage (Foyer des Filles de Dieu), and had an enjoyable afternoon interacting with the girls. The orphanage for girls has been twinned with Mercy High School in Middletown, CT, for many years.

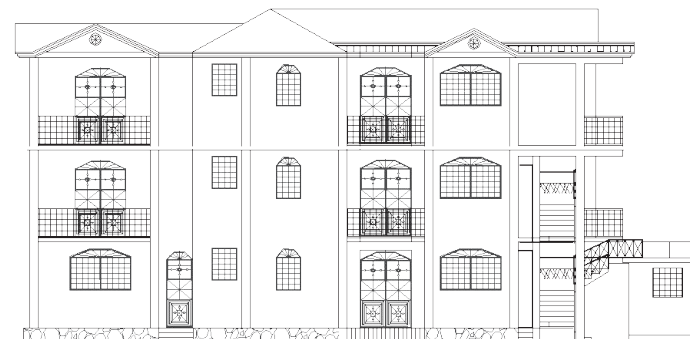
REBUILDING

More than bricks and mortar: A place that affirms our mission

The Diocese of Norwich has had a presence in Haiti for 30 years. Outreach to Haiti has been in the impoverished Christ Roi neighborhood of Port-au-Prince for 25 of those years. The massive earthquake of January 12, 2010, which took the lives of an estimated 300,000 people, destroyed the building that housed our maternal and child health clinic, guest facilities for international volunteers, education program center and damaged administrative offices.

In the past seven years we have focused our limited resources on providing post-earthquake relief and investing in new and ongoing services to the people of Christ Roi and beyond. We have made do with a temporary wooden and tin-roofed medical clinic that is already beyond its expected life. We have rented a small mission house to ensure that international volunteers continue to assist us in serving the people of Haiti. We do most of our after-school programs, seminars and student activities outdoors in our parking area. We have, in short, made the best of it.

We have been engaged in a capital campaign for the last two years to rebuild, as economically as possible, on our property in Christ Roi. Our hope is to once again provide a facility that reflects the dignity of the people whom we serve, and, at the same time reduce ongoing operating costs. The budget for the new facility was estimated at \$450,000. As of mid 2016 the campaign had raised a little over \$250,000. At that point, Bishop Cote decided action needed to be taken and ap-



"It is more than six years since the earthquake. It is time we had the new building to help serve the people of Haiti."
—Bishop Cote

proved a matching grant. He stated, *"It is more than six years since the earthquake. It is time we had the new building to help serve the people of Haiti."* The grant matched additional donations, from that point forward, of up to \$100,000. The response was strong over the next several months, capped off by an extremely generous donation of \$100,000 by the Padre Pio Foundation. By the end of 2016, the campaign was over \$500,000, and is now at \$573,000.

As it turns out, the Lord was providing for the bad news that was coming. The plans did not anticipate replacing the administrative and storage spaces. However, an engineering study of those spaces ordered earlier, was received in early January, and indicated those spaces needed significant repair or to be replaced. The better, and less expensive, long term answer is to replace the space. Plans were modified to add a third floor to the building for this additional space. Costs are still being finalized, but estimates for the additional

demolition work and the addition to the building are expected to bring the total cost up to at least \$600,000. Thanks to the great generosity of donors in 2016, we are close enough to continue on our path, but still need more money to finish and equip the new building! We need to replace the aged generator. We dream of installing solar panels to provide clean, cost-free energy.

Besides providing a permanent and more suitable place, the new construction will allow us to redirect an estimated \$40,000 a year to our program services budgets by eliminating rent and duplicate expenses associated with maintaining two locations.

"More than bricks and mortar" has been more than just a tag line for our capital campaign. The proposed building is integral to our mission to be present to the Haitian people, to provide basic services that will allow them to survive and to help lift themselves out of the paralyzing cycle of poverty.



The aftermath of the 2010 earthquake that destroyed the clinic.



The groundbreaking was a good opportunity to join together.



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The Norwich Outreach Center: A Place You Are Helping To Build

In establishing the matching grant for the new Norwich Outreach Center, Bishop Cote explained that, "From the beginning in 1985, the ministry has lived the gospel message by empowering the people of Haiti to help themselves by promoting the health and education of Haitians. While we have helped tens of thousands of Haitians over that period, just as important has been the spiritual enrichment of hundreds of people inside and outside the Diocese, as they have stepped forward to lead and support this effort over the

years. I regularly hear from so many generous supporters that they have received so much more than they have given. I believe this ministry is important to our spiritual growth as a diocese. For those already involved, I know you will support this need to the extent you can. For those who have not yet had the opportunity to support this effort, I invite you to prayerfully consider if this is something the Lord wants you to support."

This message was applied to the capital

campaign, but is equally applicable to supporting our ongoing operations. We are so thankful for all the support you have given over the years, financial and spiritual. We realize this mission is only possible with your help. We pray for you, and hope that you share our excitement as we take this next step in better serving the people of Haiti.



Left: The Mass of Thanksgiving was attended by Outreach staff, neighbors, clinic patients and students.

Right: Bishop Cote consecrates the ground for the new building.

