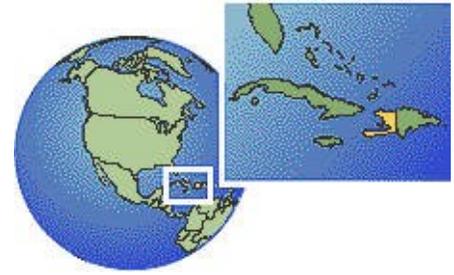


Newsletter



St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church
Haiti Outreach Ministry

March, 2016

Village Bank

A little capital can go a long way in Haiti.

This past August, 20 women from OLPH got together to learn good principles of business and borrowing money. After the training, each woman developed her own business plan, applied for a loan, and began her business. The average loan was \$250. All the businesses are reported to be going well. (Rumor is that the sneaker business is off and running well.)

Farewell to OLPH pastor Pere Guy Robert who has been reassigned.

Welcome to Pere Aunel Deone. We look forward to working with you.

MARRIAGE TIMES TWENTY

There was a joyous communal celebration the importance of communication and that day in November, when 20 couples got respect, talking together with their children, and having some time married at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. They did it "right" with singing and gold rings and a terrific party for all their families and friends, complete with boxes of wine from a SMM parishioner.



Married, with a beautiful ring!

Several people were baptized and many made their first communions. Most couples had put off the wedding for years because they could not afford to do it right with marriage preparation, a new dress, gold rings and a party for all. To prepare for their marriage, these twenty couples came to the church once a week for marriage preparation. There they learned

the importance of communication and respect, talking together with their children, and having some time for just the two of them. They even learned that if was ok for men to help with the cooking. Since the wedding ceremony, these twenty couples, now called the Holy Family Group, continue to meet every week. Many of the concepts they

learned in marriage preparation were new to them, like working together and "date night." Their weekly meetings give them the opportunity to talk about how they are doing and what problems they are having. Many thanks from these couples to SMM for providing the marriage instructions, the rings and the party.



Notice the three separate classes being held in this makeshift school.

NEEDED!

A new school for Our Lady of Fatima Chapel.



The outside of the school

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Winter Park, FL 32789
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Peace Program



These young people are enacting conflict-resolution, a skill they are learning in their Peace Program. As they study and talk about peace in the home, peace with your neighbors, peace in the community and peace with the earth, the kids are learning how to be leaders in their communities while joining together for companionship, support and fun.

Each of the chapels now has a Peace Program of its own and most have already begun raising goats for sale so that they can keep their programs going forward.

Last year the remote mountain community was just a "station," but now it has become the seventh chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. They have chosen St. Francis as their patron saint.

SEARCHING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

We know that we cannot solve all problems nor address every need in Haiti. We look for those needs for which there is a sustainable solution.

Some things are straightforward — you raise the funds to build a school and twenty years later the school is still there. We send money for



teacher and catechist training and the effects of that learning go on and on. We struggled with what to do with teacher salaries until we had the idea to give each teacher a cow. Now the teacher has the ability to raise the cow, sell the milk and sell the calves. While this does not actually replace a steady salary, it is sustainable and so far the teachers are enjoying being livestock owners..

One of SMM committees has been meeting with OLPH parishioners on the problem of the destitute elderly.

These elderly people typically have no family to help them and they just do not get enough food. In all the meetings, the parish leaders asked us

to buy food for these poor souls. And of course we want to; we certainly do not want these people to starve. Yet we know if we just use our funds to buy food this year, there

will be nothing for next year or the next or the next. And so we kept talking to encourage the Haitians themselves to come up with a solution. It looks like the solution is going to be pigs, raised by members of the community and sold to provide money to buy food for the elderly. OLPH is going to try this solution with a committee and the elderly in the main church. If it works well there, it can be expanded to other chapels. Say a prayer for healthy and productive pigs!

LIVESTOCK PROGRAM

If you went for a tour around OLPH parish, you would find 380 mature goats & 40 mature pigs plus a couple of hundred baby goats that were not there before SMM came to town with the Livestock Program. By the end of last year, a Livestock Program had been started in the main church and all six chapels. (St. Francis, the seventh chapel, will get some goats this year.) There are still at least 600 families on

the waiting list for animals. According to one of the parishioners, SMM is the only organization that really understands and supports their life style. Animals provide them hope for the future. Rains come and go, crops can fail to grow. But when you have an animal, you know you can always sell it in tough times.

That animal is your rainy day savings account.

