



SHALOM HAITIAN EDUCATION FUND NEWS

An occasional bulletin to provide information on our partnership with the Office of Education of the Diocese of Hinche, Haiti. It is also available on our websites:

www.haitianeducationfund.com and www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti. **September 2009**

ANNUAL HAITI GATHERING HELD!

Thanks to the support we received in response to our appeal for funds, the July 30 gathering of educational leadership was held. Here is an account of the event from Richard Joseph, the diocesan Director of Education.

At 8:20 on the morning of July 30 the diocesan educational gathering opened as Mrs. Fredeline, secretary of the diocesan education office (BDE), and Belfond Andrefaite, one of our supervisors, began to register the participants and gave them documents for this event.

At 9:12 Fr. Lévêque Bien-Aimé, Vicar of Education, led us at the opening prayer. Fr. Jéthro Noël welcomed everybody and thanked them for coming, acknowledging the big effort they made to be there. He encouraged them to work closely with the diocesan Office of Education (BDE).



Two views of the assembly in the new meeting space at the Sacred Heart School in Papaye

I gave a summary of all the activities of the BDE during the academic year 2008-2009: we did what we could with the possibilities we had. Then Sr. Marmoune Maurice, a member of the diocesan Committee on Education, read the results of the pre-exams and invited more schools to participate in those exams (which enable students to be better prepared for the national CEP exams given to the 6th and 9th graders). She reported too the schedule of the BDE for academic year 2009-2010.

I explained to the parents their role in the local schools committees: to accompany their children and the schools, to suggest good ideas to the principals and teachers, to talk with them about their children, and to share with other parents their experience.

Fr. Lévêque and Fr. Jéthro also spoke about the role of the parents, but in addition they asked the teachers to be responsible. Fr. Jéthro said that he knew they were experiencing a bad financial situation but insisted that money is not the most important thing—we must have confidence that one day in the future we will meet the children and be proud that they are successful. He said that we made a choice to teach, to prepare children. This is a sacrifice and the church believes in you. We need to work very hard. The task is difficult, but we should not be discouraged. Education is a thing of great value, the best way to become successful in an honest way. “We have a mission to co-create. Let us continue to do it in the name of our faith.”

Archbishop Louis Kebreau had just arrived from Cap-Haitien, and gone directly to Sacred Heart School where the Gathering was held. In his talk he spoke about the country. We don't have enough models in politics, or even enough models of faith. We have a great mission: to renew the youth, to help them to do research on internet, and to educate them to be good citizens. We have a difficult situation. We need to wake up to save our country, and with good will we can do it.

We explained the role of the Virginia Haitian Education Fund and told them how its Board of Directors work very hard to improve the education in the Diocese of Hinche, working closely with the parishes of the Diocese of Richmond to collect money to build schools, for teacher-training, to pay the salaries of the employees of the BDE. They are really involved very much to see better teaching in our schools.



Archbishop Kebreau of Cap-Haitien, administrator of the Hinche diocese, with Richard Joseph and Msgr. Jéthro Noël at the opening session

After those explanations, one teacher from Marie Auxiliatrice School (Thomonde), Ronèl Gédéon, offered the diocesan committee a suggestion: “We don't have money to offer to those benefactors from Richmond diocese, but we can encourage our children to work and to draw paintings to send to them as presents to show them our talents.”

One teacher from Cerca Carvajal, Sr. Oxilia Exelus, talked a lot to encourage the teachers for a successful school year.

Mr. Onal Alcin, a member of one of the parents committees, talked about the music in our schools and other things. Sr. Oxilia talked about developing the arts in our schools.

Mrs. Gélourdes, assistant principal of St. Martin Primary School, encouraged the BDE to look for scholarships for the students who are very intelligent.

Finally, Fr. Wilfranc talked a little about his experience in Thomonde, where he is the principal of the Bishop Decoste Secondary School.

Fr. Lévêque, Fr. Jéthro and I thanked everybody for coming and encouraged them to share what they learned with other parents, teachers and principals.

We had a good weather, no rain. There were 154 persons attending including Archbishop Kebreau, thirteen priests, one deacon, 45 principals, teachers, parents, five students and the members of the diocesan Committee on Education. The only schools not represented were Notre Dame du Saint-Esprit (Hinche), and those in the parishes of Fonds-Pierre, Marmont, Trianon, Roy-Sec and Saut d'Eau.

PARISH VISITS BEGIN AT ST. ANN, ASHLAND

The Haitian Education Fund collects data on the primary schools of the Diocese of Hinche, some of which is quite valuable information for twinning parishes which have schools. HEF Board members Kathy Gross and John Beall visited St. Ann's Parish on August 13, starting a series of meetings with parish Haiti committees which have shown an interest in learning more about the schools in their twinning parishes. Here is part of Kathy's report.

St. Ann's is twinned with Dubuisson, a parish with two primary schools: one, Our Lady of Perpetual Help) a small (153 students) congregational school, staffed by a group of Sisters; the other a presbyteral [parish] school, Bon Berger de la Marre.

St. Ann's assists Bon Berger de la Marre, founded three years ago by the pastor, Fr. Roderick Mital. We have data from both schools, so we shared what we have with them, but here I will report only on Bon Berger.

We presented the “résumé du directeur,” the principal's summary listing the names of the teachers and their educational background, the names of the principal and the diocesan supervisor, and the number and gender of the children for the years 2007-08 and 2008-09. We gave them printouts explaining the levels of education in Haiti and the results of the supervisor's five visits to the two schools.

We shared with them the 2008 CEP exam results, those of the 6th graders who took this government exam in order to move into the 7th grade. Failure means repeat of the 6th grade or simply the end of formal education. The 2009 results are just becoming available.

We also were able to provide them a report prepared by supervisor Lafleur Pierrot that dealt with teacher-training weekends conducted at Bon Berger. We also let them know who from the school participated in the summer Gathering sponsored by the diocesan BDE (Office of Education) in July.

We look forward to meeting with other twinning parishes here in the Richmond Diocese. The next one is likely to be St. Bede (Williamsburg), twinned with St. Joseph in Thomonde. On the horizon, as well, is a visit to Church of the Holy Family in Virginia Beach, twinning with St. Jude in Baptiste.

If your parish would like to be included, please contact Kathy Gross at haitikathy@gmail.com or at 804-512-6263.

MORE ON THE 'CEP'

Brother Cosmas Rubencamp CFX, HEF Secretary, happened to be visiting Maison Fortuné Orphanage, Hinche, with a group from St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Newport News in late June, on the same days when the 6th graders from all over Haiti were taking the annual exam which gives (or denies) access to what we would call middle school, the 7th-9th grades. In the 9th grade students take another exam before they can move on to secondary school.

All the students from the orphanage school had been assigned to take the exams in other schools in Hinche (their teachers likewise had been assigned to still other schools to administer the tests). So, off they went in their best clothes at 7:00 a.m. Shortly thereafter in came the teachers who had been assigned to our Fortuné Jean-Louis School, and then the 200 or so students who were to take the exam there.

The actual exam papers came from Port-au-Prince under police escort—but it was almost 10:00 a.m. when they finally arrived, adding to the pressure the students were already under and making for a long day!

The exams, spread over two days, six hours each day, cover French, Kreyòl, social studies, math and science.

The kids from the orphanage, by the way, did well. They all passed except one, and he will be attending a technical school next year. The HEF Board is starting to compile the results from all the schools in the Hinche diocese, as Kathy Gross's article above indicated.



The sixth graders who live at the Maison Fortuné Orphanage before they headed out for the Big Test

NEW BISHOP TO BE INSTALLED IN HINCHE

Bishop Emeritus Walter F. Sullivan will head a delegation to represent the Diocese of Richmond on October 11 when the new Bishop of Hinche is installed. He will be accompanied by Br. Cosmas Rubencamp CFX and Fr. James Griffin, pastor of the Church of St. Mark, Virginia Beach.

Bishop Simon-Pierre Saint-Hillien, CSC, has been appointed to succeed Bishop Kebreau, now Archbishop of Cap-Haitien. He will be the fourth Bishop of Hinche, which was established in 1972.

Bishop Saint-Hillien, a member of the Holy Cross Fathers' congregation, is a native of Gonaïves and has been serving as an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince and chairman of the Haitian Bishops' Committee on Education.

We welcome Bishop Saint-Hillien and look forward to getting to know him and working with him in the educational mission of his new diocese!

SHALOM/HAITIAN EDUCATION FUND CONTRIBUTORS

July 2009-June 2010

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- Endowment Fund (long-range support for projects) Support for Hinche diocesan Office of Education,
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