



VMH

VOLUNTEER MINISTRIES IN HAITI

June 2009

A monthly newsletter to report on developments of the Volunteer Ministries in Haiti, a program of the Xaverian Brothers supported by the Diocese of Richmond. Further information is available from the Haitian Ministry Commission, Diocese of Richmond, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond VA 23294 (telephone: 804-359-5661) (fax: 804-358-9159) (e-mail: pschwermer@richmonddiocese.org) (website: www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti/hat111.htm)

OUR LAST ISSUE—FROM RICHMOND

The next issue of this newsletter will be coming to you directly from the Xaverian Brothers and it will focus in particular on the students at the *Sant Zaveryen* (Xaverian Center) in Port-au-Prince and the work Brothers Harry and Michael are doing in other areas of Haiti.

Why? Well, the Xaverian Brothers Volunteer Program, which has furnished so many excellent volunteers to Haiti over the years, is being suspended. We will not have any volunteers in Haiti next year.

The Xaverian Brothers, however, are committed to providing the opportunity for poor young Haitians with talent to take advantage of a university education, and your support is essential as we continue to do this through the *Sant Zaveryen* [Xaverian Center] program. Since the *Sant* was founded thirteen years ago, your partnership with the Xaverians has resulted in Haiti having engineers, doctors, accountants, pharmacists, dentists, and many other professional leaders.

We would like to keep our mailing list current and perhaps also communicate through email, so please take a moment to update your address on the slip enclosed with this newsletter (and enclose it with your contribution). Thanks so much for your continuing support—*Gwo Mèsi* (big thanks)! God bless each of you—some of whom have been with us from the days of the Volunteer Ministries Community Program (VMC), which began in 1976 in Harrisonburg and Blackstone, Virginia, and morphed into VMH twenty years ago when Brother Harry moved to Haiti!

LETTER FROM BROTHER MICHAEL McCARTHY

May is the traditional month in the States for college graduations. Here in Haiti it's not that simple: universities promote their graduates in June, August or even September; for some institutions a particular academic year could have been interrupted by weather-related causes or even civil unrest. So, it's difficult to have one day or even one month in which to honor the three *Sant Zaver-*

yen students who will be graduating at the end of this academic year: Accilien Gelin, Volmar Abdiel and Martineau Isaac.

Accilien graduates in June as a civil engineer after completing his six academic years at the Université Metropole d'Haiti, and living at *Sant Zaveryen*. He wishes to return to his home town of Hinche and begin a project of providing potable water for as many people in and around Pandiassou as possible. Because he recognizes the difficulties he will face in realizing his dream, he thinks he'll begin next year as a physics/math teacher while he researches the necessary steps he needs to take to give the Haitian people the fruit of his labors, the fruit of the generosity of many people who provided funds for his support over those years.

Volmar will complete his studies in October and receive his diploma as an electrical-mechanical engineer from Faculté des Sciences de l'Université d'Etat d'Haiti. A native of St. Michel in the Department of Artibonite, and a graduate of Louverture-Cleary High School, Volmar wishes to apply his skills by tackling one aspect of the energy problem here in Haiti: he's already working on harnessing wind as an energy source. Along with two of his classmates, utilizing the 'wind atlas' of the country, he's been working on this project with his professor during this final semester. It involves travelling to Jacmel where the winds are most favorable, and moving this dream to the next step. He's looking forward to getting a masters degree in the future.

Martineau, a native of Croix-des-Bouquets (suburb of Port-au-Prince) and another Louverture-Cleary graduate, will complete his medical studies at Notre Dame d'Haiti at the end of this year and is preparing for his year of residency in Cap-Haïtien, in the northern part of the country. He knows he still has another year of practical experience before being assigned to his year of 'service to his country' as a recent medical school graduate, before he completes his long journey as a doctor in December 2010. His dream is to return to his neighborhood where the medical services are not adequate, and begin a clinic that will serve the residents there. He hopes to work with a team of doctors from his class, each one of whom will offer a different specialty for the people there.

Success stories like these comprise the backbone of the

Sant's mission: providing spiritual, academic, communal and service opportunities to university students who would not be able to study if such a residence and accompaniment were not there. Such an opportunity is only possible because of the leadership of the Xaverian Brothers, and the interest and generosity of many people who share the belief that education can be a liberating force for the future of Haiti.

Congratulations, Volmar, Martineau and Accilien, on a job well done; may the service you render to your country fill you heart with joy and satisfaction as you enrich the lives of many others through all you have received. "What you have freely received, freely give."

LETTER FROM CENAT ESPERANDIEU

This letter from one of the young men residing at the Xaverian Center (Sant Zaveryen) was translated from Kreyòl by Br. Cosmas Rubencamp.

My friends, I am happy to write to you again and greet you in the Lord who has all the power.

I am from the northern part of Haiti, the Department of Artibonite, and have two sisters and a brother. My father died, and my mother is 76. My sister is the head of the family now, and I am the youngest.

I have lived in the *Sant* for several years and am attending the Julien Craan Institute of Administration, a school not far from the *Sant*. My main objective when I finish is to continue the mission the Xaverian Brothers have undertaken in Haiti, particularly in my home area: to help poor children who are not able to go to school and to begin some business to give them work.

We have a lot of people who can't find work, and sometimes they blame insecurity. Yes, there is hunger and food insecurity. To overcome this we need ideas such as those which the fourteen young men at the *Sant Zaveryen* have.

We know that the American economy has fallen, but, thank God, we know that the American people are a people of faith, and in spite of the difficulties they continue to help the youth of Haiti. We can tell you that we fourteen represent a new Haiti—thanks to the Xaverian mission here. When we finish at the Xaverian Center and return to our homes, we promise you that we will be the face of a new Haiti. We know that you, our friends, probably don't realize what a good thing you are doing for us—hats off to you!

Often people ask why Haiti can't change. Is it a problem with the people, a problem with the country? I say no, it is a problem of infrastructure: good education, health care, jobs. We need a plan for assuring a future for our young people and for the country.

There is a new breeze blowing in the world, though, a

good wind. A sign was the last elections in the US. We have hopes that President Barack Obama can help unite a world divided socially and economically. Like you, we have a president here who campaigned on a dream. We both have dreams!

Our dream is that with your help we can climb out of the hole we are in. You may not think that you can help, but you can with the help of the Jesus who fed 5000 people with the little bread they had. That was because he had faith in the Father. It is the same with us in the *Sant*—with faith and conviction, WE CAN.

I am thankful that I can serve as a volunteer welcoming street children at Incarnation Village, directed by Br. Francklin Armand. I am also gaining experience with Fonkoze, the micro-credit service in Haiti helping market women to improve their business and make more profit. I also serve in the local parish and as part of a wonderful movement to provide pastoral ministry at the university.

I thank the community of Xaverian Brothers wherever they are, especially Brothers Harry and Michael here in Haiti, May God keep you in his grace, because you have always been there for us. Thank you. God bless you all.

VMC REUNION COMING UP!

From 1976 to 1989, 104 young men and women gave a year's service to marginalized people in Virginia. Founded by Fr. Bill LaFratta, the program began at Emmaus House in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and expanded into Bethany House in Blackstone, where Brother Harry Eccles was director from 1979 to 1989.

Occasionally since 1989 there have been reunions of these folks, and there will be one again at the Benedictine Abbey in Goochland County, Virginia June 26-27. Bishop Sullivan will be there, as will Fr. LaFratta, Br. Harry and Br. Peter Mahoney, who was director of Emmaus House from 1983 to 1988.

This time will be a bit different, insofar as some of our former Haiti volunteers [as of now, Jana Robbins, Mike McGeehin, Jonathan Dohanich and Greg Mason] are planning to join them!

CONGRATULATIONS!

And, speaking of former Xaverian Volunteers, congratulations are due to Ryan Kenrick of Chesapeake, Va., who graduated last month from the School of Law at the College of William and Mary. We wish him well as he studies for the Bar this summer, after which he's taking a vacation. Where? Haiti, of course!

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY OF HAITI

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP CONTRIBUTORS: 2008-2009

Listed below are the individuals & groups that contributed to the VMH from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009.

James & Patsy Abell
John & Clare Ahern
Liam & Nuala Ahern
Thomas & Linda Ashe
Paula Backscheider
Victor & Ann Batson
Br Bede Benn, CFX
Karen Berquist
Mike & Cassie Boothe
Tom & Marianne Boyle
Allan & Patricia Britz
Rev Thomas Caroluzza
Marty & Martha Casper
William & Virginia Cavender
Paul V Connolly
Ronald Coon
Anthony & Maria Corio
Rev George Cowan
Giles Crowell
David & Martha Crowley
Eric & Mary Davidson
Margaret Davis
Rev Anthony Dinges
John & Marilyn Dohanich
Frank & Carol Doyle
Samuel & Rosalie Doyle
William Doyle
Anna Drake
Pauline Eccles
Ida Ellett
Wayne & Marie Farmer
First Presbyterian Church—Snohomish
Joseph & Mary Florino
Thomas Francis
Jack Gegner
Alfred & Kathleen Gross
Maureen Haberman
John & Kathleen Halpin
Patricia & Joseph Harrison
Richard Hastings
James T Hayes
Lawrence Hinch
Marian Jones
Robert & Virginia Joyce
Robert & Anne Kelly
Timothy & Margaret Kelly
Bruce & Melinda Kind
Joan Kosnik
Leary & Carmon Kreissl
Paul Labelle

Nancy Layne
William Marinan
Mary Martin
Valerie McAvoy
Eugene & Miranda McCarthy
Eugene & Catherine McGahren
Michael & Shelby McGeehin
Thomas & Maureen McGeehin
Monastery of the Holy Spirit, Conyers
Ginnie Morrow
Damian & Katheryn Muller
Stephen & Margaret Anne Murphy
Charles & Kathleen Mussomele
Michael Naccarato
Nick & Marie-Luise Nazar
Kathleen & Mary Newett
James Nichols
Everett & Rosalie Nieuwenhuis
John & Lynn O'Brien
Doreen O'Connor
Jeremiah O'Leary
Stephen Pandolph
Guy Pilato
Kermit & Mary Pope
Charlotte & Anthony Ramey
Charles Reiter
Robert Riffée
Jan Robb
Benjamin & Jana Robbins
Chris & Karen Roberson
Patricia Roberson
William & Dorothy Rossi
Leonard & Mary Rusnak
Joseph Ryan
John Schneider
Jim Schroering
Marilyn Shea
Eleanor Sprankle
Michael & Carol Stark
Br Stephen Strausbaugh, CFX
Eleanor Suntum
John & Rosemary Sutich
Joseph Svehlak
John & Ellen Thompson
Lee & Myra Weathington
Richard & Jane Welsh
Leonard Wojtanowski
Thomas Woods
Xaverian Brothers, Baltimore