



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)

## LETTER FROM BROTHER HARRY ECCLES

MARCH 11, and Bro. Mike McCarthy is due to return to Haiti. We'll see. If he has my kind of luck, he could be delayed. When I went to Florida on February 16, my flight was cancelled, and I had a four hour wait in Port-au-Prince. My Tampa connection was late, but I did have luck on the Venice link! Returning to Haiti on March 5, I had another cancellation, and I had to spend the night in Miami. Travel is an adventure, but now that I'm 80-plus, I could do with fewer surprises! (This privilege is only for the elders; you young folk will enjoy the unexpected!)

THE PURPOSE OF my trip to Florida was to join other Xaverians for a retreat and R&R. I did well on both counts! This visit was special because it coincided with my birthday, and the Brothers pulled out all the stops to usher me into the 80s. Found time to get my annual physical check-up, and the doctor gave me an appointment for next year.

WHILE I was getting to board the MAF flight to Hinche, I was surprised to find Nick McCann, last year's volunteer, at the airport to meet someone. Getting off the plane in Hinche, I was greeted by Kevin McArdle, another returning volunteer, with a group of fellow seminarians.

BACK TO THE ORPHANAGE I found John Gallini and a group from Virginia Tech. Even before they left, a group--big group--of Penn State students arrived. Busy days, but a more congenial activity than I find waiting in airports!!

WHEN I ARRIVED in PAP a day late, there were two young men from the Sant Zaverien to escort me

(two others had been there the day before). It's a good feeling to be greeted, especially when there have been delays. At the Sant I am always welcomed to "your home," and I do have many homes! A big change at the Sant: our new inverter not only makes us more independent of the state electric company, but we have a better inverter, and we can have light all over the house (formerly we had only three rooms with electricity). On top of that a few generous friends came up with the \$850 to pay for the inverter! That doesn't mean that the budget is balanced, but it certainly helps at the bank and in the heart.

FOR MY PART, my two duffel bags were jammed with all kinds of loot: a brand-new basketball and previously-owned clothing. Among the books was an illustrated LIFE OF PI to make the re-reading even more of a pleasure.

VISITS TO THE SANT always mean checking with the Missionhurst community at Mon Rêv for my Lynx mail. Some of it was the last of the Christmas mail--including the ever-welcome calendars. There was so much, in fact, that I couldn't take it all. I'll catch up tomorrow when I return to Port-au-Prince and to the Sant.

AFTER THE SANT, I'll be going on to the Scalabrini seminary, where I'm sure I'll find Brothers Vincent and Joseph, and, please God, Bro. Mike too!

A JAM-PACKED MONTH, and I hope I haven't forgotten too many of the people and events that made it a blessed time. May these remaining days of Lent be richly blessed for all of us, and may Easter fill our hearts with joy.

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## LETTER FROM CENAT ESPERANDIEU

*We continue with our series of letters from the young men who either are currently living at the Sant Zaveryen (Xaverian Center) in Port-au-Prince, or did live there while studying at one of the local universities or professional schools. Cenat has written in the past, as you may recall. What follows is a translation of his Kreyòl.*

**Piti piti zwazo fè nich!  
Little by little, the bird builds its nest.  
— Haitian Proverb**

I am very happy to greet all of you, my good friends, especially those who make so much effort, working in the cold and making many sacrifices, to helping us find the possibilities of studying for the good of our country, Haiti.

Before I begin telling you a few things, I want to wish you a good season of Lent, the season of love, sharing and penitence. May God help us to continue loving everyone as much as we can, in the same way you love us here at the Sant Zaveryen.

I am from a family of four children, from the Department of the Artibonite in the north of Haiti. I have two older sisters and an older brother. My father died two years ago, but my mother is still here at the age of 70. I'll take this opportunity to extend to all the mothers of the world a big "thank you" and hope that they will not be discouraged, since a mother is a treasure. My mother knew how to carry a basket on her head in order to send me to school. [Editor's note: the basket contains things to sell on the streets to make a little money.]

I am living at the Xaverian Center in Port-au-Prince and studying business administration at a university called the Julien Craan School of Commerce, and I am working as a credit agent at FONKOZE, a micro-credit institution in Haiti which helps *ti-machann*, or street vendors. The reason I have chosen business is that this country needs good people to invest in it and good-hearted young people with a university education for the country to progress.

We here at the Xaverian Center want to be models of good collaboration of one with the other, living as brothers. Even though we are from different parts of the country, this is our home. We are the ones who do the cooking and cleaning, and it is a good life. We also help others as volunteers. We

have received freely, so we give freely.

My friends, at this time I cannot forget the Xaverian Brothers whom God has called to be among the people of Haiti. Despite the difficulties of this country, they are confident. Among them we had Brother Philip Eisenhour who had the idea for this house for young men from the countryside without means to study in Port-au-Prince. After him there was Brother John Mahoney, who has since returned to his own country, but who was a fatherly model for us, and Brother Harry Eccles, who has much patience and who lives as the gospel teaches us to live. May God bless him all his days on earth!

Now we are very happy because we have three more CFX Brothers in Haiti. We welcome them with very glad hearts. We give thanks for Brother Michael McCarthy and his Congolese confreres, Brothers Vincent Ilungo and Joseph Ngoie, and ask God to bless them in the mission the Holy Spirit has for them.

Now some words about the socio-political situation of the country.

It has been 204 years since the struggle for change began. We still have sections of the country which cannot produce because the soil is washing into the sea. Why? Our trees have been cut down in the rural areas because the peasants need charcoal and wood in order to make a living and be able to send their children to school. We would like to have a green country again, and we need technicians and agronomists to stabilize the situation so that trees will not be cut down. Haiti has a chance to accomplish this because there are people here with good hearts.

At this time, life is expensive for the people. In 2006 we had a good democratic election; the people voted in great numbers. But now they are still looking for change. It seems that change from on high takes time and is not easy. I understand that the government cannot do everything and that business people must help prices to come down. In 2003 a sack of rice cost US\$25, but now it costs more than \$50; a gallon of gas costs almost \$5. It is really difficult for the people.

Many thanks to you who give us the opportunity to change these things. I leave you now with the love of Christ.