

Diocese of Richmond  
Haiti Twinning Ministry  
Start up Packet

*Our first task  
in approaching  
another people, another culture,  
is to take off our shoes,  
for the place is holy.*

*Else we find ourselves  
treading on people's dreams.*

*More serious still  
we may forget that  
God  
was there  
before our arrival.*

*"The Primal Vision"*

## Fortunes from the Country Side

Once a rich father took his child on a journey to the country side with the firm intent that the child see how poor certain people were and understand the value of things and how fortunate their family was. They spent a day and night in the farmhouse of a very humble peasant family.

Upon concluding the trip, on the way home, the father asked the child, “What did you think of the trip?”

“Very pretty dad!”

Did you see how poor and needy people can be?”

“Yes.”

“And what did you learn?”

“I saw that we have a dog at home; they have four. We have a twenty-meter pool; they have a creek without end. We have imported lamps in the patio; they have the stars. Our patio goes to the wall of the house; theirs goes to the horizon. Especially dad, I saw they have the time to converse and to live in family. You and mom have to work all of the time and I almost never see you.”

The father remained speechless and the child added, “Thank you dad, for showing me how rich we could someday be.”

*From La Culpa Es De La Vaca. Reprinted with permission in “Prayer without Borders”, Catholic Relief Services, Baltimore, MD 2004*

## Food for Thought

By Coleen Hedglin

A Haitian proverb states, *Bondye bay, men li pa konn separe*, meaning, “God gives, but he doesn’t divide it up.” The job of distributing his gifts seems to be left up to us, the proverb suggests.

We’ve read many statistics; we’ve seen photos; perhaps we’ve traveled, and we know, or at least we’ve heard of, the situation at hand: the rich are getting richer, and the poor, poorer.

You might think that I’m going to continue here by describing the startling differences between life in the Two-thirds World and life in developed countries. You might think, then, that I’ll go on to say that the answer to this problem, for those of us who are not poor, is to give away money to the poor. I’d rather tell you about a problem I have: I’ve learned that giving money to someone does not necessarily liberate either of us. Two recent experiences illustrate this for me.

Rose Marie is my neighbor. She came by last week to ask me for fifty *gourdes* (Haitian currency worth about \$2) to help with her family’s needs. I had the money, so I gave it to her. Now, when I think about it, it’s only by a series of chances that I have access to the resources that I do, and that she has access to so much less. Maybe that’s the reason I don’t feel liberated after giving her the fifty *gourdes* that she needs. And, as Rose Marie began to thank me profusely, cowering before me in gratitude for my “act of kindness,” telling me how God will bless me for my generosity, it couldn’t be more clear to me that she has not been liberated by this experience.

Is the solution to **not** give Rose Marie the fifty *gourdes*? Will that solve the problem? Let me tell you about another friend.

Judith scowled at me recently when I apologized for not paying back the fifty *gourdes* she had loaned me a couple of weeks earlier. Then, giggling as she walked away from me, she added, *Menm nou menm nan*, meaning, “We’re one and the same,” because the fifty *gourdes* just doesn’t matter and we’re all one and the same family anyway. This experience was liberating.

So why is liberation absent from one experience and present in another?

It seems to me that our liberation from money lies in our attitudes about it. St. Paul seemed to be addressing this question when he wrote the church in Corinth, seeking funds from the church in Corinth for Christians who were suffering economic hardship in Jerusalem. He wrote:

*...Give according to your means. Provided there is an eager desire to give, God accepts what a person has; God does not ask for what someone does not have. There is no question of relieving others at the cost of hardship to yourselves; it is a question of equality. At the moment your surplus meets their need, but one day your need may be met from their surplus. The aim is equality; as Scripture has it, "The man who got much had no more than enough, and the man who got little did not go short." (II Corinthians 8:12-15)*

Paul was quoting from Exodus 14, where God sends the life-sustaining manna to the Israelites en route from Egypt to the Promised Land. They discovered in their daily gathering of this bread from heaven, that if they gathered more than what they needed, or tried to hoard it, it spoiled.

I think a Haitian proverb applies here: *Manje kwit pa gen mèt*, meaning, "Cooked food has no owner." It dawned on me that this is how Judith viewed those fifty *gourdes*—like cooked food on the dinner table. Imagine we're at the table. I ask you to pass the beans. As you pass me the beans, both you and I are clear about the fact that those beans are no more mine than yours. At the same time, we're both going to take an amount of beans we need, not more, so that everyone who needs beans at the table receives them. We share because we are in an equal relationship with one another by the mere fact that we sit around the dinner table together.

Because of the absence of this attitude of equality, the poor and the wealthy are caught in particularly enslaving relationships. It is often a first reaction of many visitors to Haiti to want to give of their surplus. And it is often the first reaction of many Haitians they meet to ask the visitors for money. Decades of experiences of giving and receiving that don't emerge from equal relationships have caused this. Relationships are often defined by first acts of giving motivated by pity or guilt or maybe self-righteousness, fostering feelings of inferiority and superiority, helplessness and control, dependency and patronization, perpetuating the ever awkward and enslaving relationships that inhibit, even block, liberation. Finding ways for both parties to see redistribution of resources like passing the beans might be one step in leading towards liberation. But first, everyone must equally understand and exercise their right to sit around the dinner table.

One of the first things I tell visitors who come to Haiti as part of our [Transformational Travel](#) delegations goes something like this: "This experience is not about guilt. It is not about pity. This experience is about learning new truths about ourselves and about our world. It is about making new friends and recognizing our connected-ness with others in very different places. And, it's about sparking meaningful change in our lives, change which is motivated by these new truths, change which is motivated by love and respect for self and others." It's about learning how to pass the beans, and how to have them passed back. After all, they're just beans.

# The Meaning of Parish Twinning: Kole Zepol

By Dave O'Donnell September 30, 2005

Over the years I have gradually come to view my life as a spiritual journey. The guiding principle of my faith journey can be summed up in these four words - "It's all about relationships".

When St. Michael's Parish began a twinning relationship with St. Jean-Baptiste Parish in Dopale three years ago, the people of Dopale became an important part of my personal spiritual journey. And it still amazes me how well the same guiding principle - "It's all about relationships" - serves this parish-to-parish twinning ministry. Twinning is as simple, and as complicated, as that!

Adele has always presented twinning as a relationship. But it's important to recognize that the relationship between twinned parishes exists as a multiplicity of relationships between individual people in those parishes. That's because only people have hearts and relationships always involve the heart. I do not pretend to understand this, but I can give you a few examples:

Relationships are about giving gifts - The St. Michael's team happened to be in our twin village of Dopale last January when Partners-In-Health brought its mobile clinic to town for the first time. One of the almost 400 people waiting to be seen, an elderly woman, suddenly collapsed. Tom Eichler, a member of the St. Michael's team, had the woman carried to his own bed while she waited for transportation to the hospital in Las Cahobas. Hearts were touched in Dopale that day.

Relationships are about receiving gifts - On our last night in Dopale the parish put on an entertainment. Yvonne, a teacher we had become friendly with, got up and sang us a beautiful farewell song in French. Afterwards she told us somewhat apologetically, "I didn't have anything else to give you, so I gave you my song." Hearts were touched in Dopale that evening.

Dulice Chauson is the 93 year old honorary mayor of Dopale. Over the course of several visits he and I have developed one of those unspoken bonds that sometimes form between men. I say unspoken because Dulice rattles off his Kreyol in machine gun bursts and I rarely understand a word he says. We do a lot of smiling and nodding.

One afternoon Dulice came to the rectory with his grandson Yves, a young man who speaks English pretty well. After some pleasant chit chat about the new school we are building together Yves got very serious. He said "My grandfather asked me to tell you he does not have words to express what is in his heart." You'd better believe that my heart was touched in Dopale that afternoon.

Relationships are also about paying attention & trying to understand - St. Michael's has a Sponsorship Program. Over 400 parishioners pony up \$120 apiece to sponsor a school child. In return they each get a photo of their child and opportunities to exchange letters. This is clearly a program that builds relationships. The money raised funds the operating budget for the school. But therein lies the rub. Now we have a very solid relationship with Fr. Elizier,

the Pastor in Dopale. But when we asked about the school budget he consistently resisted giving any specifics. Finally he told us, “If you give me money, I will have money; if you do not, I will not have money.” Now what kind of sense does that make?

A similar problem arose with the construction of the new school building. Since almost \$100,000 was involved we asked him to set up a separate bank account to facilitate accountability ... NOT! “Parishes have only one bank account ... the pastor is responsible ... trust me to make wise decisions.”

And what kind of sense does that make? Clearly we have a responsibility to account for the money the people of St. Michael’s so generously donate. And our own bishop has been quite explicit about the priority he places on financial accountability, procedures and controls.

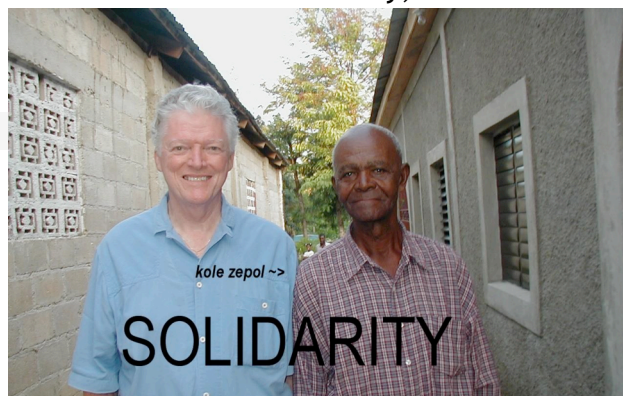
Well, relationships are also about recognizing cultural differences. After several very serious discussions with Fr. Elizier we came to understand that Haitians view a gift as just that ... a free gift with no strings attached. How quaint! Our efforts to assure accountability offended his sense of personal DIGNITY and disrespected his role as pastor ... and for Fr. Elizier, dignity trumps dollars every time.

We haven’t found an answer yet ... but at least we are beginning to understand the problem. Here again relationships parallel spiritual development. Aren’t both more about grappling with the right questions than about being so sure we have the right answers?

These experiences are reminding us that relationships are also about trust - not simple-minded naïveté, but the eyes-wide-open kind of trust. The kind of trust that is willing to assess each situation honestly and take a calculated risk in order to accomplish something worthwhile together. The kind of mature trust that sets clear expectations, but is also willing to risk being disappointed.

In the final analysis Adele is right. Twinning is about relationships. It’s about simply standing in solidarity with our Haitian brothers and sisters for the duration. The knowledge that someone out there cares about them and stands in solidarity with them gives our Haitian brothers and sisters the best gift of all - HOPE.

The Kreyol phrase for solidarity is kole zepol. It literally means “glued together at the shoulder”. Of all the pictures I have taken in Dopale over the years, my favorite is this one of my friend Dulice and me. I’m just standing there, straight up, waiting for the flash. But if I look closely, I think I can see Dulice leaning in ... kole zepol.



# HAITI MINISTRY

*“Men anpil, chay pa lou”*

“With many hands, the load is not heavy”

In 1984, Bishop Sullivan established Haiti as the official missionary outreach of the Diocese of Richmond with its primary focus being twinning relationships.

## Communities Currently Twinned

Our Lady of Peace, Appomattox	Dubisson
St. Ann, Ashland	Dubisson
Newman Community at VA Tech, Blacksburg	Matabonite
St. Mary, Blacksburg	Pignon, Cap
Haitien, Matabonite	
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Blackstone	Maison Fortune
	Orphanage
St. Anne, Bristol	Cerca La Source
Incarnation, Charlottesville	Little Brothers & Sisters of the Incarnation, Pandiassou
	Saltadere
Holy Comforter, Charlottesville	Saltadere
St. Thomas Aquinas, Charlottesville	Maison Fortune
Church of St. Therese, Chesapeake	
Orphanage	
St. Stephen Martyr, Chesapeake	Maison Fortune
Orphanage	
Prince of Peace, Chesapeake	Ecole Louverture-
Cleary	
	Croix des Bouquets
	Maison Fortune
Orphanage	
St. Andrew, Chincoteague Island	Mission de la Madre
Laura	
	Lavoute, Jacmel
Sacred Heart, Covington	St. Rose of Lima
	Chapel, Matabonite
St. John, Dinwiddie	Los Palis
Transfiguration, Fincastle	Marmont
St. Michael, Glen Allen	Dos Palais
Blessed Sacrament, Harrisonburg	Anse-a-Galets, La
Gonave	
St. Victoria, Hurt	Dubisson

St. Mary of the Annunciation, Ladysmith  
St. Patrick, Lexington  
Catholic Community of Lynchburg College

St. Thomas Moore, Lynchburg  
Church of the Redeemer, Mechanicsville

Immaculate Conception, Mineral  
St. Jude, Mineral  
Francis de Sales, Mathews  
Church of the Visitation, Middlesex  
Resurrection, Moneta

St. Vincent De Paul, Newport News  
Basilica of St. Mary, Norfolk  
Papaye  
Sacred Heart, Norfolk  
Sts Peter and Paul, Palmyra  
St. Elizabeth, Pocahontas  
St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Poquoson  
Sacred Heart, Prince George County  
St. Jude, Radford  
Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond  
Holy Rosary  
Office of Justice and Peace, Richmond Diocese

Pax Christi, Richmond  
St. Bridget, Richmond  
St. Edward, Richmond  
St. Gabriel, Richmond  
St. Mary, Richmond  
St. Michael, Richmond  
Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke  
Papaye  
Francis of Assisi, Rocky Mount  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Salem  
Cabestor  
The Well, Smithfield  
Incarnation  
St. Francis of Assisi, Staunton  
La Gonave  
St. Mary of the Presentation, Suffolk  
Holy Spirit, Virginia Beach

St. Martin School  
Fond Pierre  
Matenwa Learning  
Center, La Gonave  
Savanette  
Market Women's  
Project, Lascahobas  
Cerca la Source  
Cera la Source  
Boucan Carre  
Boucan Carre  
Foyer des Filles de  
Dieu, Port-au-  
Prince  
Marmont  
Bassin Zim Chapel,

Lascahobas  
Fond Pierre  
Sapaterre  
Boucan Carre  
Cerca la Source  
Matabonite  
Carissade  
Mirebalais  
Justice & Peace  
Commission,  
Diocese of Hinche  
Pax Christi, Haiti  
Carissade  
Cerca Carvajal  
Colladere  
Los Palis  
Dos Palais  
Ecole Normale de

Trianon  
Sacre Coeur in

Little Sisters of the

Pte. a Raquettes,

Belladere  
Saut-d'Eau

Catholic High School, Virginia Beach

Church of the Holy Family, Virginia Beach  
St. Gregory the Great, VA Beach

St. Mark, Virginia Beach  
Orphanage

St. Nicholas, Virginia Beach

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, West Point

Catholic Campus Ministry, College of William & Mary

St. Bede, Williamsburg

Maison Fortune  
orphanage

Baptiste  
Seminary Program,  
Diocese of Hincbe  
Maison Fortune

Maissade

Marmont

Thomonde

Thomonde

## A Prayer for the People of Haiti

*“The Harvest of justice is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.” James 3:18*

Out of the depths we cry to You, O God.

We cry to you for our Haitian sisters and brothers.  
We thank you for upholding them in their suffering.

Give them continuing strength and comfort.  
Give us love and courage to stand with them and work with them as they struggle for justice and freedom.

Keep us committed to the truth and empower us with your Spirit of love:  
~ a love that always sees possibilities for peace founded on justice;  
~ a love that seeks justice without vengeance and retaliation;  
~ a love that reaches out to enemies, as Jesus taught us.

We trust in your continuing mercy as we bring you our own desire to be in active solidarity with our Haitian brothers and sisters. Amen

Available as a prayer Card from Pax Christi USA: (814) 453-4955  
[www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)

## A Litany for the People of Haiti

By Pete Mahoney, CFX

**The response is: THANKS BE TO GOD!**

To recognize the Spirit that dwells in Haiti, let us respond...Thanks be to God!

For hope in the midst of despair, let us respond...

For the hospitality of our Haitians hosts, let us respond...

For Celebrations that give hope, let us respond...

For the Dream of an Independent and Respected country, let us respond...

For the help and concern of its Northern neighbor, let us respond...

For the realization that we need Haiti, let us respond...

**For our eyes to be open to a mutual relationship, let us respond...**

For our ears to be open to the Cry of Justice, let us respond...

For our mouths to speak the true story of Haiti, let us respond...

# A Haiti Resource Guide

## Books:

Aristide, Jean-Bertrand. Eyes of the Heart. Globalization and its effect on Third World Countries. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2000.

Bell, Beverly. Walking on Fire: Haitian Women's Stories of Survival and Resistance. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Farmer, Paul. The Uses of Haiti. Maine: Common Courage Press, Rev. 2003

Kidder, Tracy. Mountains Beyond Mountains: Healing the World: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer Random House, 2003

Paris, Barry. Song of Haiti. The lives of Dr. Larry & Gwen Mellon at the Albert Schweitzer Hospital of Deschapelles. Public Affairs: 2000

**Study Guide available:** Paul Farmer's book The Uses of Haiti has been enriched with a Study Guide prepared by Debbie Stollery. This guide was especially designed for use by Haiti Committees in twinned groups. Available from Patrice Schwermer: (804) 622-5129 [pschwermer@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:pschwermer@richmonddiocese.org)

## Especially for Children:

Turnbull, Elizabeth and Battles, Kristopher, Bel Peyi Mwen: A Children's Coloring Book of Haiti. Durham NC: Light Messages, email the publisher at [books@lightmessages.com](mailto:books@lightmessages.com) Williams, Karen Lynn. Tap - Tap. NY: Clarion Books, 1994.

Wolkstein, Diane. The Magic Orange Tree and Other Haitian Folktales. NY: Schocken Books, 1997.

## Educational Materials:

<http://www.educavision.com/index.htm>

Creole language study aides <http://www.indiana.edu/~creole>

## Websites:

Catholic Diocese of Richmond: [www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti](http://www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti)

Pax Christi USA: [www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org) for PCUSA Haiti Task Force click on Programs & Campaigns. Publication: Our Prayers Rise Like Incense includes Mass for Haiti [info@paxchristiusa.org](mailto:info@paxchristiusa.org)

Beyond Borders: [www.beyondborders.net](http://www.beyondborders.net)

Haiti Reborn (Quixote Center) [www.quixote.org](http://www.quixote.org) "Let Haiti Live" advocacy campaign.

Human Rights Watch: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

Institute for Justice and democracy in Haiti: <http://www.ijdh.org>

Windows on Haiti <http://www.windowsonhaiti.com/> An interesting site with editorial comment, descriptions of cultural events, recipes, links to solidarity groups, etc.

# HAITI FACT SHEET

**LOCATION:** Haiti is located 700 miles southeast of Miami, just 100 minutes air travel time, occupying the western third of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. Haiti is only 60 miles from Cuba.

**SIZE:** 10,714 square miles, or 1/4 the size of Virginia (about the size of Maryland).

**POPULATION:** Approximately 8.2 million people. Over 1.5 million live abroad, mostly in the U.S. and Canada, with an estimated additional number (varying between 450,000 to 750,000) living in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent Republic since 1804. Since then there has been instability in the government with many factions vying for power. Before the first democratic elections were held in December 1990, Francois Duvalier and then his son, Jean-Claude, ran a brutal dictatorship. When the elections occurred in 1990 the turnout of eligible voters exceeded 60% and Jean Bertrand Aristide was elected President. A nonviolent transfer of power from President Aristide to newly elected Rene Preval took place Feb. 7, 1996. Aristide was re-elected President Nov. 26, 2000. The Parliament of 83 Delegates and 27 Senators was elected in May 2000 (with term extending to Feb. 7, 2006). President Aristide was removed from Haiti in February 2004. An interim Government stayed in power until spring of 2006 when Rene Preval was elected as President of Haiti.

**RELIGION:** 80% Roman Catholic; 10% various Protestant mainline churches. Evangelical Christians are increasingly becoming evident. Vodou remains a part of Haitian culture stemming from African roots and the government officially recognizes the Vodouist Federation.

**LANGUAGE:** Creole and French are official but everyone speaks Creole. All of Haitian law is in French. Some grassroots groups and the clergy are learning English.

**EDUCATION:** Free public education is sporadic and non-existent in many rural areas. Only 5-10% of rural children ever complete elementary school. 80% of the population is illiterate. President Aristide was able to set up one literacy school in each of the 565 districts in Haiti.

**LIVING CONDITIONS:** Only 15% of the rural population has access to safe water. Most families do not have electricity or running water. Sanitary facilities as we know them, sewage disposal, flush toilets, etc., are almost nonexistent. 2.4 million people live in urban slums. In 1999 the UN designated Haiti the 3<sup>rd</sup> hungriest nation in the world behind Somalia and Afghanistan.

**LIFE EXPECTANCY:** 54 years. For some in hard labor activities 45 years.

**ECONOMY:** Average per capita income is less than \$400, closer to \$150 in the rural areas. Less than 1% of the population controls the majority of the wealth. Fewer than 200 families control the entire economy. There is little trade between Haiti and other countries. Much of the food for survival, such as rice, is imported at low prices because of subsidies to US farmers by the U.S. government.

## Haitian Proverbs

The Haitian people are a people of proverbs. Proverbs reflect the wisdom and philosophy of the Haitian way of life. They are memorized and recited at gatherings - one has only to say the first word of a proverb for the rest to chime in! The fact that these proverbs are subject to many interpretations make them ageless and a lively source of conversation. Below are some favorite proverbs of the Haitian people:

- 1) When you're not your natural self, you don't do anything well.
- 2) When your garden is far away, you're not wasteful with your food.
- 3) It's the last drop that caused the glass to overflow.
- 4) When you do good, time passes quickly.
- 5) If you don't use your head, your feet are going to do a lot of walking.
- 6) You must sleep at John's house before you know how he snores.
- 7) Education is the work of your entire life.
- 8) Nobody knows what's under the jacket.
- 9) Two heads have two different opinions.
- 10) When in trouble, you're not supposed to sleep too soundly.
- 11) What the eye doesn't see doesn't move the heart.
- 12) Behind the mountains, more mountains.
- 13) Rocks in the water don't know the misery of rocks in the sun.
- 14) A single finger can't eat okra.
- 15) The house that leaks can fool the sun but it can't fool the rain.
- 16) Only when the serpent dies do you know its true length.
- 17) A beautiful burial does not guarantee heaven.
- 18) Little pots get the big pot filled.
- 19) Make fun of the short man but don't make fun of the man who is naked.

# Twining with a Parish in Haiti: Guidelines

## Overview and Rational

As is stated in the Pastoral Plan and, following the example of St. Vincent DePaul, the Church of the Richmond Diocese is seeking to find ways to share resources with a developing country. Recognizing that the Church of Haiti is rich in many gifts but economically poor, our Diocese has respectfully chosen the country of Haiti for this outreach.

As one part of the outreach we ask each parish or institution to consider entering into a twinning relationship with a Haitian parish or other entity such as a hospital, school, or group.

Such a twinning relationship should be based on recognition that the many differences between Haiti and Virginia can provide opportunities for growth for each partner, since both possess equal dignity and equal human value.

Haiti's long history of struggle for self-determination, its proximity, its poverty, and the powerful spiritual health of its people make Haiti a unique asset to our spiritual development and fulfillment. In understanding Haiti and developing relationships with Haitians, we can better understand ourselves and the interdependence of humankind - beyond national borders.

But if we are really going to be in solidarity with the Haitian people, it is a lifetime commitment, biblically inspired and based. The American approach of going in with lots of money is not what they need and does not work. The people of Haiti know what they need. We need to listen to them and hear.

## Objectives of the Twining Relationship

- To develop a sense of solidarity for both our sisters and brothers in Haiti and parishioners in our diocese;
- To provide a sense of the universality of Christian community for both partners;
- To discover ways in which members of our Virginia communities can share their time and talent with the people of our Haitian twins, and to facilitate that sharing;
- To discover ways in which members of our Haitian twins can share their faith and hope with people of Virginia, and to facilitate that sharing;
- To be a voice for and an advocate for the people of Haiti in the U.S. and to support the actions of the U.S. that will improve the quality of life for Haitians;
- To provide sharing of the material wealth of our Virginia twins with our Haitian twins, as we listen to their needs and desires.

## Characteristics of a Healthy Twining Relationship

- A process that begins with careful listening to the hopes and concerns of the Haitian people;
- Mutual empowerment; an awareness of and concern for the interdependence of the Haitian and U.S. economic and political systems;

- Regular communication that involves several persons from both twin communities through e-mail, letters and visits;
- In both communities, a broad awareness of and commitment to the twinning relationship and its objectives;
- A sense of concern for both the material and spiritual well being of those in the twinning relationship;
- Creative projects that provide vehicles for the mutual sharing of gifts;
- Regular visits of members of each twin to the other.

## Process for Establishing a Twinning Relationship

The primary responsibility for establishing a twin rests with the Diocesan Haiti Staff Person.

1. Twinning can begin in several ways:
  - The Diocesan Haiti Staff Person or existing twinned entities identify and approach parishes to consider twinning.
  - A Virginia parish or group expresses interest in twinning to The Diocesan Haiti Staff Person or an already twinned entity.
  - All potential twins are referred to the Diocesan Haiti Staff Person to begin the process.
2. The Diocesan Staff Person visits the parish to discuss the possibilities and explain these guidelines. This involves discussions with the J&P Committee, Pastoral Council, Pastor/Pastoral Coordinator, Parish Staff and some form of presentation for the entire parish.
3. The Pastoral Council and Pastor/Pastoral Coordinator of the parish approve the establishment of a twinning relationship and form a Haiti Committee. A Haiti committee is essential. It is the responsibility of the committee to bring the message of Haiti to the parish and to facilitate the sharing of the relationship between the twinned parishes.
4. The Diocesan Haiti Staff Person reviews Haitian parishes and other groups that have requested a twinning partner and recommends a match, subject to the approval of both parties. Each parish or group will provide a description of themselves for the prospective twinning partners. An exchange of letters can begin. The Virginia Pastor/Pastoral Coordinator writes a letter of introduction to the Pastor in Haiti. Plans may be discussed to visit the Haiti twin.

5. When both entities approve, the Diocesan Haiti Staff Person informs the Bishop who writes a congratulatory letter to the newly twinned parish. An announcement is then sent to the Catholic Virginian. The twinning relationship should be celebrated in an appropriate manner in Virginia and in Haiti.
6. A similar process should be carried out with the Haitian parish or group for Steps 2, 3 and 4.
7. Communication begins. It is recommended that you invite the pastor or leader of the twin to come to visit your parish. And you plan to make a trip to your parish in Haiti. Also begin email and letter communication. If you do not have a person who speaks Creole and the leader does not speak English find someone who speaks French. Most Haitians speak French and you can begin communication that way.
8. You will be included in the Diocesan Haiti email list and mailing list.
9. You may continue to utilize the Diocesan office and other parishes in the area that have twinning programs for continued support and resourcing.
10. You are not alone. You have a network of support!!
11. In approaching other parishes to twin:
  - a) Raise awareness of the reality of Haiti
  - b) Encourage other parishes to consider a twinning relationship of their own and refer them to the Haiti Twinning Committee.
  - c) Parishes are asked not to act apart from the Haiti Twinning Committee when approaching and speaking to other parishes about twinning.

## Dynamics of Groups Already Twinned

- Co-twinning: Decisions considering co-twinning with another Virginia parish are exceptions to the guidelines and are processed through The Diocesan Haiti Staff Person.
- Changing twins is also an exception to the guidelines and is processed through The Diocesan Haiti Staff Person.
- All fund raising for your Haiti Twin should be limited to your parish, unless approved by the Diocesan Haiti Staff Person.
- All foundations and committees under the Haiti Commission must receive approval from the Diocesan Haiti Staff Person in order to solicit funds from parishes in the Diocese.

All groups or individuals in the diocese planning trips to Haiti must notify the Diocesan Haiti Staff Person. In addition to parish trips and Diocesan Retreat trips, this would include medical trips, college trips, and trips connected with the Haiti Commission's Foundations or Committees.

## Follow up Procedures

- Continue the discernment process with the parish and go through the process of decision making unique to your parish. (ie approval of pastor, parish council, leadership).
- Establish a committee who will be the steering committee for the twinning project for the parish.
- Notify Patrice of decision. She and you will decide together on the twin in Haiti based upon your desires, the needs of the parishes in Haiti, size of parish ect.
- Each partner will write a letter of introduction to each other and send or email.
- The Bishop of Richmond will write a congratulatory and welcoming letter.
- Communication begins. It is recommended that you invite the pastor or leader of the twin to come to visit your parish. And you plan to make a trip to your parish in Haiti. Also begin email and letter communication. If you do not have a person who speaks Creole and the leader does not speak English find someone who speaks French. Most Haitians speak French and you can begin communication that way.
- You will be included in the Diocesan Haiti email list and mailing list.
- You may continue to utilize the Diocesan office and other parishes in the area that have twinning programs for continued support and resourcing.
- Upon deciding to twin you will receive a packet of additional materials including a template for developing a Haiti twinning relationship and policies and procedures. You are not alone. You have a network of support!!

Revised Aug. 2007

# Template for Developing a Haiti Twinning Relationship

1. Decision to Twin - A Diocese of Richmond (DOR) parish makes a decision to twin; a Diocese of Hinche (DOH) parish makes a similar decision and submits a Twinning Questionnaire to the DOR.
2. Approval of a Twinning Partnership - The Associate Director of the DOR Office of Justice and Peace, in collaboration with the DOR Twinning Committee, considers possible twinning relationships and decides on a suitable match.

Establishing Communication - Since the foundation of twinning is the relationship developed between the two parishes, it is highly recommended that the first step be to establish communication between the DOR parish and the DOH parish. This should begin with email communication and an exchange of information about the two parishes. If the DOH parish does not have access to email, information can be exchanged through regular mail, but mail is very slow (typically three months to receive an answer). Sometimes small packages or letters can be dropped off at your parish in Haiti by other twinning groups passing through. E-mail may not be as quick as we expect if the Haitian pastor is depending on a cyber café and the uncertainties of electricity availability in Haiti. Many DOH twinned parishes have found it beneficial to acquire satellite access for their DOH twin parish.

Relationships should not begin with a discussion of money, but communicating challenges your parish may have (especially if it is very small or financially constrained) might be helpful. Parishes that have financial limitations have many other gifts that they can give. Listening, learning to know one another, building a spiritual life together, will provide the foundation for all twinned parishes to move forward together.

3. Parish orientation - Since the goal of twinning is to benefit both parishes it is important to hold a well-publicized orientation for the entire parish (including the pastor, deacons, and the parish council) to introduce the new ministry.
4. Haitian Pastor Visits - The first step in developing a twinning relationship is to invite the pastor of the DOH parish to visit the DOR parish. This is important for several reasons:
  - It establishes face to face communication between the two parishes and lays the foundation for future communication
  - Face to face dialog begins to solidifies the twinning relationship

- The Haitian pastor's presence at parish liturgies, meetings and special receptions exposes the new Haiti Ministry to parishioners beyond the Haiti Committee.

If the Haitian pastor is unable to make a visit early in the relationship, the Haiti Twinning Committee may want to proceed with plans to visit to their twinned parish (see below). Many concerns and questions of the Parish and Haiti Committee can be addressed by making a visit, and the relationship can proceed with much greater confidence, understanding and excitement.

5. Pilgrimage to Haiti - After the Haitian pastor's visit, the DOR parish begins to plan a trip to Haiti to visit the twinned DOH parish. Consider these trips as pilgrimages. Participants should be personally moved to participate. The traveling team should be prepared on a spiritual and practical level through a series of pre-trip meetings. A well-formed community travels with the attitude of a pilgrim, open to individual personal transformation. It is important to avoid our natural cultural tendency to find and fix problems, even problems we could not possibly fully understand.
6. Purpose of Visits - The greatest benefit that can come from this exchange of visits is that both parishes experience an increase of HOPE as they intentionally choose to walk down a difficult road together. The visit is an opportunity to explore the gifts and the needs of each parish.
7. Twinning with the Parish vs Twinning with the Priest - In your letter to your DOH priest regarding your upcoming visit, it might be a good idea to state your desire to meet with the Parish Council and other committees within the church, the school, etc., so that a relationship can begin with not only the priest, but the people as well.
8. Cultural Differences on Accountability - As communication continues and the relationship begins to develop, specific projects may be identified:
  - It is very important to allow the DOH twin to tell the DOR twin what their needs are rather than the DOR thinking they know what is needed and how to get things done. The people of Haiti know what is needed in Haiti and we must listen to them carefully.
  - If money is involved it is important to establish a mechanism for the DOH parish to report back to the DOR parish how funds are actually spent. But be forewarned that agreeing to a common understanding of how funds will be budgeted and how the DOH parish will report on the use of funds they receive is a touchy and difficult subject for the DOH parish.
  - There are major cultural differences to bridge here. Haitians are not used to the planning, budgeting and reporting requirements that we

take for granted. The DOR parish needs to be culturally sensitive to this. We need to understand that planning, budgeting and reporting are not a natural part of a culture that rarely has the financial resources to look past next week (or even tomorrow). In addition, Haitians consider gifts as just that, a freely given gift with no strings attached. Americans consider funds given for a particular purpose to be restricted to that purpose. If Haitians are asked to account for the funds given for a project they may very well feel that their American partner does not trust them. This quickly becomes, for the Haitians, a matter of personal dignity.

- The DOR parish must communicate, in as sensitive a way as possible, that parishioners who contribute funds for these projects will not continue to provide these funds unless they receive back the financial accountability they expect. Experience suggests that it is best to address this issue early in the twinning relationship and create clear expectations.

9. Basic Projects - Experience suggests that there is often a natural progression in the types of projects worked on in a twinning relationship:

- Haitian parishes and parishioners are materially impoverished and often do not have the basic infrastructure needed by their parish. For example, there may not be a rectory or a church in adequate repair or even electricity. Depending on the condition and age of the parish, the pastor may identify needs of this kind as priorities.
- Haitians value education and health care. The next levels of needs identified are often things like a school, a clinic, or a water project to provide potable water for the people in the area.
- When parishes have schools they often will need operating funds (for teacher's salaries, books, supplies, etc.). Many children come to school without having eaten a meal. It is difficult to learn on an empty stomach, so a feeding program may be a priority. A Student Sponsorship Program is a practical way for your parish to support a school financially.

10. Sustainable Development Projects - Once some of these basic needs are met the ideas of both parishes can turn more to sustainable kinds of projects. "Sustainable" projects are those that can sustain themselves both economically (without on-going external financial support) and environmentally (without doing harm to the environment). Sustainable projects help the people of Haiti provide for themselves the basic necessities of life rather than depending on the charity of others. Including sustainable development thinking in the parish's twinning strategy respects the inherent dignity of our Haitian brothers and sisters who currently live in survival mode from one day to the next.

Some examples of sustainable development projects are the Heifer Project, businesses built around computers, sewing machines, baking equipment or health care and training for people for jobs that already exist in the area. FONKOZE micro-business training and micro-loan programs as well as DOH Caritas programs are useful assets. Programs to improve agricultural practices or to promote reforestation can also be examples of sustainable development projects.

---

NOTE: The DOR parish and Haitians themselves ultimately want Haitians to be able to provide for themselves. So even in the early stages of twinning, when parishes may be focused on basic needs, it is important to keep the idea of sustainability in mind. The DOR Twinning Committee and the DOR Sustainable Development Committee can be a guide and resource to parishes as they begin to twin and through out the twinning relationship.

\*See Twinning and Sustainable Development Guidelines - attached

Sept 07

# Twining and Sustainable Development

1. Define Sustainable Development
  - A project designed in such a way that it can continue indefinitely on its own
  - ECONOMIC Sustainability - project generates enough income to assure its continuing operation after the initial financial investment.
  - ENVIRONMENTAL Sustainability - At a minimum, “Do no harm” and, if possible, contribute to the improvement of the environment.
  
2. Why Is Sustainable Development Important?
  - The Philosophical reason - Are we engaged in charity or empowerment?
  - The Practical reason - things change ... parish financial support can wane ... parish leadership can get tired or leave ... pastors are regularly changed
  
3. A Word of Caution
  - **Survival** comes before **sustainability**
  - As relationship between the twin parishes develops, basic needs of the profoundly impoverished begin to be known:
    - adequate food
    - potable water
    - basic health care
    - primary education (read & write)
  - Initially these projects may not be economically sustainable by your profoundly impoverished Haitian partners ... do them anyway!
  - BUT UNDERSTAND that dependence erodes dignity and ultimately fosters resentment
  - So keep sustainability in mind from the very beginning; talk with your Haitian partners about sustainability; get their ideas.
  - Have a long term strategy that addresses basic needs but moves towards full financial independence, i.e., full financial sustainability.
  
4. Examples of Sustainable Development Projects
  - Bakery - St. Mary's in Richmond → Los Polis
  - Butchery - Little Brothers in Pandiassou (tell story ... could be environmentally sustainable or not)
  - Potable water - Dos-Palais (free to all at fountains; fee for connection to house funds operation; environmental protection of “The Source”)
  - Sewing and craft business - Jackie Williams in Cange (tourist trade); also Lascahobas
  
5. Are We About Charity or Empowerment?
  - Aristide's goal for Haiti - Poverty with Dignity
  - We are certainly called to address directly the needs of the profoundly impoverished when we recognize them ... BUT ... in ways that respect their dignity
  - Remember, survival comes before sustainability
  - So if, as your twinning relationship develops, you learn that some people in your twin parish are starving, by all means give them fish
  - But even as you are undertaking these handouts, begin thinking about how you can give them a hand up. Begin thinking about how you can help them learn how to fish for themselves.

# Diocese of Richmond Haiti Ministries Policy for Youth

## Purpose

The following Policy has been adopted effective July 1, 2007 by the Diocese of Richmond Haiti Ministry Commission. The purpose of the policy is to provide safe traveling conditions for youth and their adult chaperones during trips to Haiti and to protect the safety of children in Haiti. The policy can also be found on the diocesan web site at [www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti](http://www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti).

## Contents

Page 2	Diocesan Policy for Youth Travel to Haiti
Page 3	Diocesan Policy for Adult involvement with Youth in Haiti
Pages 4-5	Traveler Information and Parent/Guardian Consent Form
Pages 6-7	Diocese of Richmond Youth Traveler Assumption of Risk and Release Agreement

## Material referenced

Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations located on the diocesan web site  
[www.richmonddiocese/human/index.htm](http://www.richmonddiocese/human/index.htm)

Effective 07 /01/2007

## The Diocese of Richmond Policy for Youth Travel to Haiti

In the event of a trip to Haiti sponsored by a parish, the diocese or a diocesan group/organization, youth under the age of 18 may participate under the following guidelines:

- Youth ages 15 to under 18 must be accompanied by one of the following:
  1. A parent.
  2. A designated guardian appointed by the parent through a notarized statement
  3. Chaperones from the parish or diocesan group/organization in the ratio of 4 to one.
- Youth under the age of 15 must be accompanied by a parent.
- The parent or legal guardian must provide the following diocesan written consent forms:
  1. Traveler information and Parent/Guardian Consent Form and
  2. Diocese of Richmond Youth Traveler Assumption of Risks and Release Agreement.
- All youth travelers must have international medical insurance coverage including evacuation. If the individual's insurance policy does not provide coverage, it may be purchased through MEDEX.
- All persons participating in trips to Haiti involving youth must follow all guidelines of the Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations Policy which includes background screening and VIRTUS training for those 18 and older. Please access a copy of these guidelines on the diocesan web site [www.richmonddiocese/human/index.htm](http://www.richmonddiocese/human/index.htm)
- All youth and guardians/chaperones must participate in the pre-orientation session prior to the trip to Haiti.
- The adult trip leaders must provide the Office of Justice and Peace copies of the Traveler Information and Parent/Guardian Consent forms, Diocese of Richmond Youth Traveler Assumption of Risks and Release Agreements, a copy of the travel itinerary with contact numbers in Haiti and a roster of trip participants.
- The Associate Director of the Office of Justice and Peace for Haiti and International Issues reserves the right to make a final determination concerning the participation of youth traveling to Haiti.

Effective 07 /01/2007

## Diocesan Policy for Adult Involvement with Youth in Haiti

- All diocesan sponsored volunteers working in Haiti must comply with the Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations. Volunteers must have background screening and VIRTUS training or its equivalent.
- All diocesan travelers who will be residing or working at the Orphanages in Haiti will be required to have VIRTUS training or its equivalent.

Effective 07 /01/2007

## Traveler Information and Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Name of traveler: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of travel to Haiti: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual in charge of trip: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: home: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on Passport: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport number: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian phone home \_\_\_\_\_ cell \_\_\_\_\_

Work \_\_\_\_\_

Person to contact in case of emergency (name, phone and relationship to traveler):

\_\_\_\_\_

Alternate person to contact in case of emergency (name, phone and relationship to traveler):

\_\_\_\_\_

### Medical information

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy holder's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to policy holder: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy number: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have Traveler's medical insurance through your provider: \_\_\_\_\_?

If not, please provide the name and phone number of the provider you have purchased Travelers medical insurance from (not an 800 number as these cannot be dialed from overseas):

\_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's name and phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

List any allergies:

\_\_\_\_\_

List all medications:

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there any other physical or emotional condition of which we need to be aware? If yes please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

*I, (Parent/Guardian named above) grant permission for my child (traveler named above) to participate in this event. I understand this event will take place under the guidance and direction of parish employees and/or volunteers from the Diocese. In the event of any emergency, I give authority to the accompanying adults to authorize treatment. I understand that an attempt to notify me will be made before any treatment is authorized.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of parent/guardian*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## Diocese of Richmond (DOR) Youth Traveler Assumption of Risk and Release Agreement

I understand the proposed travel to Haiti with the Diocese of Richmond (DOR) involves risks to my child. These include risks involved in traveling to and within, and returning from Haiti; foreign political, legal, social, and economic conditions; different standards of design, safety and maintenance of buildings, public places and conveyances; local medical and weather conditions. Additional risks include but are not limited to automobile accidents, contagious diseases, food poisoning, falls, airline accidents, strikes, military or political activity, equipment failure, assault, battery, robbery, injury, and death. My child and I have made our own investigation and are willing to accept these risks. We have also investigated the particular risks that may be present in Haiti. I understand that many of these risks are unpredictable, are wholly outside the control of DOR, and may change and increase beyond what is now known, anticipated or expected.

Knowing the risks described herein, and in consideration of being permitted to participate in this travel, I agree, on behalf of my child, to assume all the risks and responsibilities surrounding the participation of my child in this travel. To the maximum extent permitted by law, I do voluntarily and without reservation, release, hold harmless, and indemnify DOR and its officers, employees and agents, from and against any present or future claims, damages, expenses, actions, losses or liability of whatever kind including but not limited to injury to my child, injury to my child's property, or injury for which my child may be liable to any other person relating in any way to her/his travel with DOR caused by the negligence or other actions of DOR or any other party including the risks discussed and assumed in this Agreement.

I have consulted with a medical doctor with regard to my child's personal medical needs. There are no health related reasons or problems that preclude or restrict his/her participation in this travel.

I am aware of my child's medical needs. I have arranged through insurance, to meet any and all needs for payment of medical costs while my child participates in this travel. I recognize that DOR is not obligated to attend to any of my child's medical or medication needs, and I assume all risks and responsibility therefore. If my child requires medical treatment or hospital care in Haiti or the United States in conjunction with this travel, I understand DOR is not responsible for the costs or quality of such treatment or care.

DOR may (but is not obligated to) take any actions it considers to be warranted under the circumstances regarding my child's health and safety. I agree to pay all expenses relating thereto and release DOR, its agents and employees from any liability for any such actions.

I understand that Haiti has its own laws and standards of acceptable conduct, including dress, manners, morals, politics, and behavior. I recognize that behavior that violates those laws or standards could do harm to DOR relationships with Haiti and the institutions therein, as well as my child's health and safety. My child will be informed of, and will abide by, all such laws and standards for Haiti.

I will attend to any legal problems my child encounters with any foreign nationals or the government of Haiti. DOR is not responsible for providing assistance under these circumstances.

I grant DOR permission to reproduce and use for educational or other purposes all photographs, videos, movies or sound recordings of my child taken during this travel.

I have carefully read this Assumption of Risks and Release Agreement before signing it and I voluntarily enter into it. No representations, statements, or inducements, oral or written, apart from the foregoing written statement, have been made. This agreement is effective immediately upon execution.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Traveler

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Effective 07 /01/2007

## Twining Committee

<b>Name address</b>	<b>Regional Rep.</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Sheryl Burrell	Williamsburg	757 566 8091	<a href="mailto:baburrell@cox.net">baburrell@cox.net</a>
Mary Ann Collins	Tidewater	757 436 4644	<a href="mailto:m.collins@cox.net">m.collins@cox.net</a>
Loretta O'Donnell	Richmond	804 270 4426	<a href="mailto:lorettaodonnell@aol.com">lorettaodonnell@aol.com</a>
Terri Powers	Charlottesville	434 589 6559	<a href="mailto:terripowers@earthlink.net">terripowers@earthlink.net</a>
Kathleen Washburn	Lynchburg, West	434 525 0495	<a href="mailto:skwash@verizon.net">skwash@verizon.net</a>
Patrice Schwermer <a href="mailto:pschwermer@richmonddiocese.org">pschwermer@richmonddiocese.org</a>	Diocesan Rep.	804 622 5129	
Karen Hahn	Campus Ministries		<a href="mailto:kahahn@bedeva.org">kahahn@bedeva.org</a>
Leo Blumle	Technology and Communication		<a href="mailto:BlumleLeo@aol.com">BlumleLeo@aol.com</a>