



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

BON FET NWEL! BON ANE! Wi, zanmi nou yo, frè yo ak sè yo, may our Christmas be a blessed celebration, with Jesus our Savior at the center of our cheer. Not too difficult, since Jesus was accused of gathering with drunkards and sinners. May we face the New Year with hope based on God's presence as an antidote for human foolishness!

A WHITE CHRISTMAS here? Hardly, but we do have a seasonal change from rain and mud to dry and dusty roads. -We also have 60-degree nights. A sweater is handy in the morning, and some night I may even look for a blanket.

SINCE I LAST WROTE, I've visited the *Sant Zaveryen*, where a new academic year is underway. We are getting better electric service, but power is not certain. We did have an exercise of "people power" as the students chose a new team to manage the Sant. The incumbents were not returned to office, but they were well thanked. This year our Coordinator (my deputy) is Joizil Pierre-Louis, our Manager is Theony Deshommes. our Procurator (food man) is Joseph Renan, and our Housekeeper (maintenance, etc.) is Esperandieu Cenat. Father Andre, Society of St James, celebrated Mass with us as we thanked God and asked for continued blessings. Father Andre works in campus ministry, and three of our young men attended a stimulating meeting with representatives of other student groups at (of all places!) the Scalabrini seminary. Thanks to God and you, the Sant is off to a good start.

AFTER I LEFT the Sant, I went to the Scalabrini seminary to join my three Xaverian Brothers for a week of prayer and discernment. Bro. Ed Driscoll spent two days with us as we used the Gallup program of discerning gifts, a profitable exercise indeed! My longer-than-usual visit enabled me to accompany Brothers Vincent and Joseph in their ministries. My visit en-

compassed US Thanksgiving Day, which hasn't yet become part of Haitian culture, but on Turkey Day we did eat US hot dogs. I enjoyed the meal all the more because of the irony. No need to airlift relief supplies; we're doing fine in our adopted culture!!

Another highlight of my visit was the reception of six novices into the Scalabrini community. We were happy with our hosts as we dream of Xaverian novices in Haiti. Join us, please, in that dream, in that prayer.

Another memorable moment was Mass at Holy Trinity chapel not far from the seminary. The building is very much unfinished, with a plastic sheet serving as roof. A few of the elders asked if perhaps I had friends who could help complete the chapel. Anyone???

RELIGION PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE in Haitian life, and here in Hinche we are preparing to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Each evening the cathedral is packed for a novena (nine days) of Masses. The electric company gave service last night, and Friday and Saturday are civic holidays.

CURRENTLY WE HAVE VISITORS staying in Papaye for discussions on economic/agricultural efforts for the people. Along with Richmond diocesan representatives there is a team from Virginia Tech. A hope-inspiring visit, to be sure!!

ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT VISIT took place while I was out of town. One afternoon awhile I was at the seminary, I was happily surprised to find former Xaverian Volunteer, David Peterson and a group from Seton Hall University, who had tracked me down for a brief visit before they headed to Hinche.

MY MAIL BAGS may be irregular, but they are always interesting. When one of my thoughtful friends sends a "little something," he reminds me to get a football for the boys. A nice touch, especially because it's the

kind of thing I could forget. My mind responds to seeds and books, but footballs are important too!

ONCE AGAIN, my friends, sisters and brothers, may the light of our Savior shine bright for us the Christ-Mass season.

LETTER FROM DR. BELIMAIRE EM-MANUEL

We continue with our series of letters from the young men living at the Sant Zaveryen in Port-au-Prince and attending universities in the area. Here is one from an alumnus, now a physician. He writes to Brother H. Lawrence Nyhan CFX, one of his former high school teachers at the Louverture-Cleary School in Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti. We don't usually publish private letters, but Brother Harry thought that you would appreciate this evidence that your support for the Sant Zaveryen does bear fruit. Brother Larry is now at Xaverian House in Danvers, Mass.

Hi Br Larry!

I greet you in Jesus' name from Haiti. First of all, I am very sorry for having taken so long without writing to you, Please forgive me! I am very happy to be able to talk to you today. How are you doing? Even if you did not hear from me for so long, you have been always in my mind, because I can not forget the great things you have done for Haitian students at Louverture-Cleary School, especially for me. If I have good English pronunciation/skills today, it is thanks to you, because you were a very good English teacher for us. During all my medical studies, most of my books were in English, and I did not have any problem to read and understand them. Moreover, the best scientific information books are in English. Therefore, because I speak and understand English very well, I can have up-to-date information and conventional, standard knowledge from all around the world in order to be well educated to serve my lovely country Haiti correctly. Understanding and speaking English are a holy gift received from God through you: so thank you very much for the time you have spent to teach us English at Louverture-Cleary in 1998-1999 years.

I haven't forgotten either the religious principles you taught me. You always encouraged us to love God and to serve his people on the earth. You were a model for us because you have left your country to come in Haiti in order to serve the People of God. The community spirit you brought us is always in my mind,

because you have personalized it through your life. With the education received from you at Louverture-Cleary, I have been always trying to be useful for God's people. That's why I have done community service all my life in high school, at the Xaverian Center, at medical school, at medical social service in Haiti, and during my entire medical career. I received this spirit from God through the example of your life for God and his people: Thank you very much for your living teaching of God's gospel. Today, I am a better Christian because of your active positive life.

Finally, I would like to inform you that my family and I are doing very well by the grace of God. I graduated from medical school in December 2006. After my graduation, I was sent to work as a resident doctor in the public health center at a Haitian country village called Gressier. In that medical clinic, I saw pregnant woman, children, and adults, young and old. During my year of social service at Gressier, I did general, pediatric, gynecologic, and obstetric consultations as well as community health. I really enjoyed my job at Gressier, because I had the opportunity to serve the people of God in Haiti by giving them medical care respectful of their dignity. I thank God for giving me this opportunity to be useful and to serve in a positive way through my medical profession.

Now, you should continue to be happy because your old students are doing good works in Haiti, continuing what you have started, what you taught and what you lived. Nowadays, I just finished my social service, and I am waiting for new employment to continue serving the Haitian people.

May God bless you and keep you alive in peace and in health for a long time! love you in Jesus' name—you will be always in my mind.

FROM THE EDITOR

As our readers know, we do not have any Xaverian Volunteers working in Haiti this year—the first time in a decade or more. However, college seniors around this time of year begin to think about volunteering after graduation, and we already have some individuals with an interest in service in Haiti sounding out the Xaverian Brothers Volunteer Program. Please pray for them during this discernment process.