



Church Of The Nativity
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HAITI EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

Dear Friends,

Since I came to you as your pastor, we as a parish family have served the poor across the street and around the world with our prayers. But more than that, we have activated our prayer with our hearts, hands, feet and resources. We have sought out need wherever we found it, and we have alleviated the needs of others with our God-given talents.

Today, a need greater than I have ever seen, is placed before us. Our sisters and brothers in Haiti, whom we have come to know and love through Operation Starfish, are crying for help. They trust that God will send them some small measure of comfort and aid. We must be the hands and feet of Christ for them today. The devastating earthquake of January 12th has left their lives and dreams shattered. Listen to the words of Fr. Duken, who was here at Nativity with us this past April...

*"The whole country is in state of shock. No phone service, Thank God we are safe and the Internet is working. But, Port-au-prince has gotten a lot of damages. As far as Cap-Haitien is concerned, we don't have the estimate yet since it is raining heavily. It is dark. The whole city is covered with water, the people of Prolonge swamp, for instance, don't know what to do. This is a very tragic situation. We already have so many problems that we are unable to resolve after the devastation brought by the four hurricanes of 2008, there is so much suffering waiting to be addressed that this earthquake is really too much. A total disaster. We hoped that we would be able to make it but no way. No break. No chance. We will have to deal with new needs, new sufferings, new situation of hunger, new despair, new devastation. Consequently, we will have to turn to you for help since we have no one else to turn to. Thank you for understanding
Fr. Duken*

Let's let the people in our Nativity Villages and all of Haiti know that we are here, that they are not alone. Here's how you can join me in activating our prayers and restoring hope to the hearts of those who are suffering:

First, next weekend, at all the Masses, we will have the Starfish basket out to receive your contributions. The Starfish basket is a quiet, simple presence. You can pass it by, or you can put a little something in it – your choice. Gifts can also be sent or dropped off in the church office at any time. Just put Haiti Earthquake Relief in the memo line and make the check payable to Nativity Church.

Second, gather your entire family, children included, and help us pack 100,000 meals on Feb. 19 and 20 to be sent to Haiti. We are working with Prince of Peace Lutheran Church on this project. Contact Cynde Mausolf, cyngar@cox.net, 703-663-8484, for more information.

Third, help us fill a sea container with critically needed supplies (canned vegetables and meats, powdered or canned milk, bottled water and diapers) to be sent to Haiti. A truck will be at Nativity next weekend at all the masses. Contact Melinda Engelbrektsson, swedes5@cox.net, 703-690-9921, for more information.

It is important that we pray for our sisters and brothers. However, it is imperative that we *activate* our prayer. The words from the New Testament, *Letter of James*, Ch. 2, come to mind:

“My Brothers, what good is it for a man to say he has faith when he does nothing to show it? Suppose that a brother or sister is in rags with not enough food for the day, and one of you says, “Good luck to you, keep yourselves warm, and have plenty to eat, but does nothing to supply those bodily needs, what good is that? So, too, with our faith; if it does not lead to action it is lifeless.”

While our prayer is important, we must put arms, legs and hands behind that prayer. We must dig deep into our billfolds to help provide water, food and medical supplies for our friends in Haiti.

In 12 years of building relationships with the people of Haiti, I have learned much. Perhaps the most important gift they have given me is their example of keeping hope alive, in the face of overwhelming despair. What we do for them now will help them come back from a devastating blow, and allow them to once again teach us about strength, faith and hope.

I look forward to sharing more information with you at all the Masses next weekend. Thank you for being the prayerful, compassionate and loving parish that you are.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Richard B. Martin
Pastor

For more information go to www.operation-starfish.org