

*St. John Vianney Parish
South Burlington, VT*

Parish Twinning News

*St. Jean Apotre Parish
Boc-Banic, Haiti*



SJV parishioner Cecelia Wagner hands out school supplies to the students of St. Jean Apôtre school in Boc-Banic, Haiti.

St. Jean Apôtre. A small, modest, forty-something, he seems often to carry the weight of the community and its needs constantly on his shoulders. He has a plot of land and hopes one day to build a school building, but for now classes are held in the church. A mobile clinic comes to the area once a month, setting up on the Church property to



At present this river is the only source of water for Boc-Banic and the surrounding region.

see to the community's health-care needs. Père Voclairn showed us the dirty brown river which is currently the area's only water source. Bringing clean, potable water to the community is another of his priorities.

The aim of the Twinning Project is not charity, but solidarity. We were inspired by how much Père Voclairn and his parishioners have accomplished with such meager resources, and we came away committed to supporting their efforts however we can. Through donations of school and medical supplies we can help insure the future of these neediest of our Christian family. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can seek out other ways to stand in support of our sister-parishioners. And in joining our own prayers to theirs we can all share the bounty of God's graces, even as we embrace more fully what it means to be members of the Body of Christ.

Our Parish Twinning Project

By Josh McDonald

On Thursday, October 6, 2011, a small group of St. John Vianney parishioners departed for a visit to our new sister-parish in the village of Boc-Banic, Haiti. The goal of this parish twinning program is to foster relationships between Catholic parishes in the US and Haiti. We spent the weekend getting to know our Christian brothers and sisters in Boc Banic – we shared in their meals, we enjoyed their hospitality, and we participated in their celebration of the Eucharist. And we got to see first-hand the poverty they live with.



Père Voclairn Derisca, pastor of St. Jean Apôtre parish

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SJV parishioner Dorothy Myer hands out candy to the children.

Haiti's Children are its Future

Reflection by Dorothy Myer

We saw a most interesting and needy area. Through discussions with Father Voclair and the Parish Council, Theresa [Patterson, director of the Parish Twinning program], volunteers for other parishes and other projects, and among ourselves, we learned more about the area and its need and we came up with many ideas. We returned from the trip full of enthusiasm and eager to get started.

I particularly enjoyed playing with the little children and watching and listening to them at school. They have no school, but hold school in the church. All classes meet there close together and giving loud



recitations. It must be difficult for them to learn under those circumstances. Perhaps the greatest thing we could do for Boc Banic, and for Haiti, is to help in any way we can to contribute to the education of these children.

Where is Our Sister-Parish?



Boc Banic is located in the central eastern part of Haiti near the Dominican Republic border.

The parish of St. Jean Apôtre is centered in the village of Boc-Banic, in the central eastern region of Haiti. It is rural and remote, the nearest paved road is roughly thirty miles distant – and “roughly” describes the travel as much as the estimate. The parish has four outlying chapels which the pastor visits once a month. One of the chapels, he says, is not accessible by motor vehicle. And judging by the roads we routinely rode on, one shudders to imagine what he would consider “impassible.”

The nearest full-time medical clinic is an hour away by car, which hardly anyone in the area has access to (even Père Voclair has to borrow a vehicle to get to his remote chapels). And patients most in need of medical attention often can't survive the trip. For all the attention and the money that has been invested in Haiti, especially since the 2010 earthquake, our brothers and sisters of St. Jean Apôtre remain isolated, unnoticed, and largely forgotten, even by their own government.



This section of the main road into Boc-Banic is typical but by no means the worst of the roads we traveled on a daily basis.

If you'd like to learn more or find out how you can help, please contact a member of the SJV Haiti Committee:

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