

## TRIP TO HAITI 13-20 July 2010

I am George Van den Heuvel, and I went to Haiti with the medical team because I was asked to go as a French interpreter. The visit lasted a total of 8 days... (from July 13 to July 20, 2010).

### **From these 8 days:**

- Two travel days (to and from Haiti -- A long story in itself which I will skip at this time.)
- One free day - (Sunday) to attend mass and meet with people.
- 5 working days during which we conducted medical clinics. These are the days I will elaborate on briefly.

### **Medical Clinics**

The first one was held at Anse Rouge itself in the school classrooms. The other four were held at 4 satellite parish chapels located approximately 20 miles in all directions in rural areas.

Each workday would start by traveling to the various locations where the clinics were to be held, always a bone-jarring trip by 4-wheel drive over rocky, dusty and bumpy roads. After unloading all the supplies, the actual clinic work would start by recording on an "Index Card" the name of the patient, their age, and ailments. The patient would then go to visit the doctors (Dr. Whitters or Practicing Nurse Monica Siemens of the Wright County Medical Clinic in Clarion). The doctor would examine the patient, with the help of Creole translators, and then prescribe the medication needed. The patient would then move on to the nurses' area where medication would be dispensed by two nurses Monica Staudt and Pam Whitters. A local nurse would then explain in Creole how to take the prescribed medication.

**Small toys, stickers, sandals, and lollipops were also distributed to the children (which often caused---pushing and shoving—which disturbed our operations).**

Those who needed eyeglasses were then directed to our "optometrist area" where they tried on various pairs of glasses (which were neatly lined up in the suitcases—man on one side... women on the other... until they found one that would fit them).

*I have been told by some that we should not help them because we encourage them to become "eternal" beggars. What we need to do is to give them something*

*that they can use to help themselves...such as a job.* To that I respond: I agree with this thought ...but since we cannot provide them with a job, we should do the next best thing which is to help them get an education to become self-supporting and provide them with medical assistance. This is the fundamental reason why I went to Haiti. (If I had turned away from this responsibility, I would not have been able to face myself in the mirror).

**We all came back exhausted from this trip, but happy to have helped our fellow man.**

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to thank all the parishioners in our cluster who supported us on this mission of mercy. We realize that for many of you it was not easy (especially those of you on limited income)... but it was **much appreciated**. In return of your sacrifices, we the members of the medical team strived to represent each one of you with dignity by showing compassion to those who have nothing. God bless you all!