

MESSAGE TO OUR SISTER PARISH

OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

ANSE ROUGE, HAITI

AUGUST 16, 2009

My dearest Friends of Anse Rouge, Haiti,

Today we celebrate the 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Jesus is the Bread of Life who sustains us in our journey of faith. Jesus is the true and eternal Bread of Life who has been given to all of us as a spiritual gift. We gather to celebrate with you this Mass in which bread and wine are transformed into the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

I am Fr. Nils Hernandez, pastor of the Wright County Catholic Community in Iowa. I am originally from Nicaragua, Central America, a country that throughout the centuries has suffered from oppression and poverty. It is faith that helped my country during the times of political struggles during fifty years of the Somoza's dynasty, the Sandinistas administration during the 1980's and now they are back in power. We know that faith in the Lord is what sustains us always. I complement you for your faith and love.

Deacon Jerry Temeyer and I bring a message of hope and solidarity from the Wright County Catholic Community of Iowa. We come to be present to you as we celebrate this great feast of the parish patroness of Our Lady of the Assumption. A feast to the ever Blessed Virgin Mary!

We thank you for allowing us to come to this land of hope and rich culture. A land that has been tarnished by the culture of injustices and extreme poverty caused by human beings and, at times, the inclement weather. We pray for you at our Masses in Iowa and we thank Fr. Dorlean and his predecessor Fr. Dorsent for their love and ministry to the catholic community of Anse Rouge as well as other catholic faith communities associated with this parish.

We are humbled by your deep faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and by your openness to us. When Fr. Dorlean came to Iowa last October 2008, he spoke very highly of your faith in the midst of so much misery and we have witnessed during this official visit. We thank God for the loving solidarity that so many parishes in the United States have been present in this land of hope and love. We thank you for opening the doors of your hearts to offer your love and hospitality.

I thank Fr. Dave Beckman, former pastor of the Wright County Catholic Community, and the first group who came to visit you five years ago. Their efforts and belief in social justice is the door that opened our sister parish relationship. We have contributed towards

building of the school, towards feeding your children who come to receive knowledge and be nourished by it. Assistance has been given to your pastor, Fr. Dorlean, for better communication between you and us, an electricity generator was given in memory of Dr. Katheleen Temeyer, and Deacon Jerry has been very instrumental in our support to you.

I am ever so grateful to the cluster committee for their hard work and loving dedication in the various efforts to raise financial support for you. We have given over \$130,000.00 to this parish since we began our sister parish relationship. This money has been given to benefit the children who need to be nourished in body and soul so that they can learn.

Benedict XVI in his new Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth) offers sound reflections on human development. He recalls the enormous contribution of Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* December 8, 1975, which states “evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man’s concrete life, both personal and social.”... “Between evangelization and human advancement — development and liberation — there are in fact profound links” [30-31]. Hence, the Holy Father concludes that “testimony to Christ’s charity, through works of justice, peace and development, is part and parcel of evangelization, because Jesus Christ, who loves us, is concerned with the whole person” (*Caritas in Veritate* 15). The Holy Father reads the signs of the times in light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ reminding us that hope is crucial but with an unwavering faith in Christ. In addition, Benedict XVI is in touch with the present reality that affects us all during this time of many economic uncertainties.

Yesterday morning (Saturday, August 15, 2009), we celebrated the feast day of God’s Mother and ours is the climax and crowning of all the other graces and honors which God conferred on her. The assumption of our Blessed Lady to heaven, in her glorified body immediately after her death on earth, was not only the triumph of Mary but a triumph for all humanity. Where the Mother is, there will be all her loyal children. She played a large part in the redemption work of her divine Son on earth. She continues in heaven to play a very effective part in applying the fruits of that redemption to all her children. Mary leads us to her Son and she is a model of discipleship and faith. We have someone who prays us and intercedes for those who are oppressed by poverty. We are her children. She loves us. I pray for you and your pastor on this patroness feast of our Lady, our Mother. May you come to know the suffering Christ in and through your sufferings and struggles for justice.

May Our Lady of the Assumption bless us in our journey of faith and always lead us to her Son!

Fr. Nils Hernandez

OUR MINISTRY TO OUR SISTER PARISH IN HAITI

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The ministry to our sister parish in Haiti has very personal and emotional connections since my late wife Kathy was part of the team that initiated the drive to assist Our Lady of the Assumption Parish. The original team started something that has grown into a fulfillment of our Christian obligation to help the poor. It is not only personal though as I have witnessed people from the entire cluster join together and continually give of their time, talent, and treasure to help the poorest of the poor. I believe it has brought our parishes closer together with a new sense of collaboration and deep sense of solidarity for the purpose of proclaiming Christ's gospel message.

The ultimate goal is to help this community become self-sustaining which may be a lengthy process, but I feel a miracle has already occurred to see a school built and being used by teachers and students. It is a beginning to help raise the people from a life of poverty and starvation. We still have a long way to go since there is never enough food let alone money for teachers and school supplies.

On behalf of the Cluster Haiti Committee, I thank all those who are committed to help our sister parish and we hope that our Parishes will continue to support this great ministry to the poor. Our vision is that our entire community of Wright County prays for our Haitian brothers and sisters that they can rise above their poverty and starvation.

May God bless our loving solidarity!

Deacon Jerry Temeyer