

January 14, 2010

Dear St. Mary's Parishioners:

The devastation we are witnessing in Haiti via television and the internet is heartbreaking. The initial reaction for many of us is to want to rush down to this tiny country and do something, do anything. But right now, it seems that the better course of action is to allow the experts to do their jobs first without our being in the way.

After much discussion with folks from St. Mary's who have been to Haiti, who have made friends with their brothers and sisters in Christ there, and who have taught us so much about this fragile country, we have decided on our initial course of action.

First, we ask all of you to pray for all of the people in Haiti:

- ✠ those who have lost loved ones;
- ✠ who were injured;
- ✠ who lost everything that they owned;
- ✠ who are searching in the rubble for those who may still be alive;
- ✠ those who are providing medical care; and
- ✠ those who are providing meals.

Second, we ask that you consider making a financial contribution to the relief effort so that medical supplies, bedding, clothing, food and water, and rebuilding supplies can be purchased. You can make a check payable to St. Mary's with "Haiti Relief Effort" on the memo line and drop it in the offering plate this Sunday, the next Sunday, or the next. This will be a long-term effort. You can also drop it by the church if that's more convenient for you.

Third, you can make soup for our Super/Souper Bowl Soup Sale on February 7th and then buy soup on that day. We polled the Outreach Committee members yesterday, asking for their consent to make the Haiti Relief Effort the recipient of the proceeds from that sale, and the response has been an overwhelming "yes."

And fourth, if you have time Monday, January 18 and are interested, please feel free to be part of a meeting at 2:30 pm in Room 108 in Randolph Hall where those who have been on mission trips to Haiti will lead us in a discussion of what other things we can do including, but not limited to, fundraising.

Know that the priest and his wife that St. Mary's folks have worked most closely with, Pere Val and Carmel, are safe, but that they are trying to care for many, many people in the area of Haiti where they live, worship, work and teach. The fate of the 5 Episcopal parishes for which Pere Val serves as rector is unknown at this time as is the fate of the Haitian nurses and support staff that help with their work. Because the members of these 5 parishes located in the mountains surrounding Port-Au-Prince will depend on Pere Val as their life line and because Carmel runs the nutrition clinics for children located in these parishes, to say they will have their hands full is an understatement. Before the quake, it was common for people to walk several days down out of the remote mountains to seek medical attention. The clinics, if they survived, will now be overwhelmed.

Before this earthquake, the overwhelming majority of the people of Haiti struggled to survive on a daily basis; this added devastation is unthinkable.

St. Mary's Outreach Committee