

FRATERNITE NOTRE DAME 2020 ACTIVITY REPORT - HAITI



Founded by His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie, Fraternite Notre Dame is a non-profit, non-governmental organization with its headquarters in the United States.

The Religious Order of Fraternite Notre Dame is made up of Religious Friars, Nuns and Priests not receiving any financial income but supporting all those who suffer in their heart or in their body.

Fraternite Notre Dame aims to organize charitable humanitarian, educational, social and medical works in the world, without distinction of class, gender or creed, but having in their heart a deep concern for the poor. It is

active in North America, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and especially in Haiti. Since 1996, the Order of Fraternite Notre Dame has been recognized as an NGO in Haiti.

The year 2020 in Haiti was marked by a catastrophic socio-economic situation, putting the country under high political tension. You should know that statistics show that 70% of the population only receives \$ 2.00 daily to survive. With the COVID-19 crisis, this has of course worsened. In Haiti, half of the population is affected by the scourge of malnutrition and since September 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has dangerously increased famine.



The economy keeps shrinking, the cost of living keeps rising and starvation is present day to day.

In 2020, most children did not start the school year until January 1st due to daily insecurity. People, at the start of this year 2020, could not even move about to collect food and water in the city because they risked being kidnapped, ransomed or even killed. Insecurity has become pervasive in the country.

To this alarming situation was added the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The most vulnerable populations have not been able to confine themselves for lack of means as every day is already a struggle to survive and to get food for their family. The resources of NGOs and organizations have been drastically reduced, due to the decrease and even the cessation of financial and material aid.

Poverty in Haiti - which involves more than half of the population - has further increased. In addition, in very vulnerable areas like ours where crops depend only on the rains to grow, farmers lost

their entire harvest, as there was no water from January to June.

At the school of Fraternite Notre Dame, in regular time, our children get two meals a day, but the schools were closed for more than 4 months due to the confinement and we found that the children were even more malnourished. Many tell us that they only eat once a day, or even every other day. This confirms the UN statistics revealing that in Haiti, there would be a 25% increase in malnourished children due to the COVID-19 crisis.

We have therefore increased the requests for food aid in order to deal with the most urgent needs and allow these children to have food every day, taking safety measures so that no one gets sick. People had to be taught what this disease was and how to prevent it. To this end, the Digicel Foundation helped us buy soap so that people could wash their hands.



Many organizations have not received containers from foreign countries for several months. It was difficult to find the food to meet all of these needs. Moreover, in poor countries, many do not believe in the disease. They're already used to all kinds of illnesses, so for them it's just one more and they're unaware of the contagion.

In these mountains without news, without television, (they only have the radio) they are not educated. It was therefore necessary to constantly repeat to them to wash their hands, to practice social distancing, to wear a mask, to be very careful when they go into town and not to bring the children to the market ... Thanks to this vigilance in our areas, we have not had any virus cases.

We never stopped working to help the poorest and our work has been rewarded as we were able to control the virus



thanks to the hygienic measures we have continuously taught the local people and those of the neighboring mountains.

Since 1996, Fraternite Notre Dame has been working in the 2nd and 6th Section of Pétion Ville, especially in Jacquot, and intervenes all over the “Aux Cadets” area. The population of these mountains is very vulnerable, living without electricity or drinking water. It numbers about 15,000 people.

His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie, Founder of Fraternite Notre Dame sets his priorities in terms of education, health, nutrition and the protection of children, women, but also the elderly and disabled.

You should know that in the Haitian urban areas, the public health system is very weak and that a minimum of medical care can be given only in private hospitals, and only to a minimal percentage of the population. This situation worsened with the problem of the pandemic.



However, following the example of their Founder, His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie, the Religious of Fraternite Notre Dame dedicate themselves - without personal interest, without salaries, without counting their time - to save, care for, console, feed and clothe these unfortunate Haitians. Thanks to the organization “Operation Blessing” which gave us bleach, we were able to give it to the most vulnerable families to protect them from COVID-19. Thanks to Saint Luke’s Foundation and Hospital, we have cooperated in treating the sick who cannot pay.

In these very remote mountains, deprived of everything, under the leadership of His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie, Fraternite Notre Dame has set up an educational program for children with a canteen service, a football school, a nutrition program expanding to more than 600 children; a support program for the poorest families; medical intervention at a dispensary.

In addition, we have set up assistance for the elderly by providing meals, food and medical visits to about fifty people who live alone in these mountains. In addition, sewing classes were organized to enable women and children to become independent.

Agriculture is also something to be exploited and we have organic millet farming projects. This cereal does not need water and is very suitable for our areas. This project will start in March 2021.





The aim is to help the population learn to create jobs to meet their needs in places where agriculture is essential for survival.

In Haiti, Fraternite Notre Dame works with energy and perseverance to stimulate “Food For The Poor” to help us set up a new project to bring water to the mountain road and in two other areas and up to the mission of Fraternite Notre Dame. This water, which will be treated, will supply 15,000 people and can also be used for crops.

This project has been submitted and we hope it can be completed in 2021. Since the 2010 earthquake, many sources have disappeared and water is a vital problem. It takes two hours to get water for just a bucket of water!

Deforestation is a real scourge. When there are heavy rains, like this year, the water is not retained and devastates the roads and homes, which are makeshift houses made of wood or dirt. The children, most of whom sleep on the floor on pieces of dirty cloth,

are sick. With the humidity, they catch scabies, infected pimples, flu, asthma, cough...

The increase in poverty, accentuated by the COVID-19 crisis, drives the poorest people to burn forests to make coal and sell it.

In addition, the year 2020 has been a year of cyclones. We had three big cyclones which destroyed our mountain road and caused landslides, which made it impossible to climb up to our Mission. Fraternite Notre Dame had to provide in buying \$ 6,000 worth of stones to redo the devastated road by hand with the people of the area.

This year, the Digicel Foundation built us a school for children aged 3 to 14, with nine classes and a library. This school was inaugurated on November 6th, 2020, to the delight of 270 children and their parents. They were proud to see that their children could receive an education in healthy, clean, well-spaced buildings which allow them to learn better.... It changed the lives of these parents and children.





We would particularly like to thank “Food For The Poor”, “Love a Child”, “Bomberos Unidos Sin Fronteras”, the “Madrid Athletic Foundation”, the German Embassy, La “Dinasa”, and the “DIGICEL Foundation” as well as its director Mr. Marteen Boute, who has just built a small dispensary and the school. Their help for our Mission is very precious.

In terms of education, at the request of His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie, Fraternite Notre Dame offers this school in rural and mountainous areas, where children benefit from total care and receive school bags, uniforms, books and free school supplies, thanks to the support of benefactors. In order to ensure a nutritious food balance, we serve breakfast and a meal to the children. This helps them achieve better academic results. Remember that half of the students have to walk for an hour and a half to come to school and just as much to return home.

Every afternoon after class, children participate in different programs such as sewing, sports and football competitions or remedial lessons, which encourages children to be diligent in school.

Once these activities are completed, they return home where they are again faced with great poverty. They have to hurry to do their homework before dusk and take care of the family chore of walking for two hours to fetch water from the spring - water that they drink untreated and which gives them rash (fungi and infections).

So, we have set up a rainwater collection and purification system at school, so that at least, children can drink clean water at school, depending on the rainy seasons.

In these mountains far from the city, one of the problems to be remedied is the educational level of the children: 50% of these families are illiterate, few





good teachers agree to work in these rural areas deprived of everything.

Children are affected by the lack of family support and lack of health at home, which leads to poor school attendance.

Due to the lack of infrastructure, children have to walk for hours to go to school and during the rainy seasons it is difficult for them to be on time. The standard of living of these families is deplorable. The majority of them live on agriculture, subject to the fluctuation of the seasons. Due to diseases, many fruit trees have disappeared only mango trees remain from May to July, after which there are no fruits.

As the land is very poor, in the area where we are located, they can only grow peppers and tomatoes.

Due to the lack of road infrastructure, women have to walk from two in the morning with their few small vegetables, in order to be set up and ready to sell them before dawn. Most of them only manage to earn 250 gourdes

or \$ 3.40, and this to provide a whole family. Thus, they return to the mountain with their donkeys only in the end of the afternoon, after walking for long hours under the oppressive sun.

Our children have the chance to eat at our school in the morning and at noon. But when they don't come to school, they only have one meal a day at home, with rice and peas when there are some, and in the evening they drink tea with salt to cut hunger.

Without clean water and economic resources, children suffer from parasites, skin infections and dehydration. Mothers who do not have milk to breastfeed their babies give them coca cola, which is less expensive than milk, hence our concern to find them milk.





In all the areas we help, there are 26,000 inhabitants. The men without work, if they cannot cultivate, make charcoal to earn a little money, by burning trees in the mountains, which causes a lot of problems in the rainy season, because the water is no longer retained.

From a medical stand point, we operate all over the “Aux Cadets” area where road infrastructure is nonexistent. People walk four to six hours climbing the mountains to come for free treatment at our mission. Due to the absence of road infrastructure, access is only

possible on foot, on horseback or by polaris. Patients arrive from all sides and for some, they are transported on wooden boards in order to have the chance to be consulted by a doctor who comes to the dispensary once a month, depending on the possibilities. However, Fraternite Notre Dame follows up with all these patients by creating a medical file for each of them. The most frequent pathologies are hypertension and skin diseases and we have cases of hepatitis A, linked to malnutrition and the problem of drinking water. Of course, we give them the drugs free of charge as prescribed and for the duration indicated by the doctor. Since then, strokes and eclampsia in pregnant women have been reducing, thanks to diligent medical monitoring.

In recent months, thanks to these interventions, the cases of AIDS and tuberculosis have declined. We intervene with the help of Geskio Hospital. Thanks to the construction of our dispensary, we can provide first aid in a healthier and more humane way. In cases of emergencies, we can transfer them to hospitals, especially to Saint Luke’s Foundation, an American foundation - with a hospital and a maternity ward - who admits them free of charge.

For destitute elderly people

As for the elderly, we offer them medical consultations at home and meet their



dietary and hygienic needs. For some of these people, they are abandoned by their families who see them as an unnecessary expense and another mouth to feed. If we didn't feed them every day, they would starve. Some of these elderly people are disabled or blind.

With the serious problems in the country and currently with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult to obtain the food necessary for all these people, therefore the lives of these elderly people, malnourished children, and the sick, are in danger. Many have told us that they hear the cry of the elderly, begging for someone to bring them food, which is truly incredible in our so-called modern times.

Childhood malnutrition & mothers' health

At the request of His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie, we have focused on nutrition by opening a special program for all malnourished children from 16 surrounding areas. Therefore, these children walk for hours with their parents to come to our mission so that we can weigh them, measure them and meet

the personal needs of each one of these little ones.

One of the primary reasons for malnutrition is poor nutrition from mothers. The mother's breast is not nourishing them the way it should be. Babies have severe anemia, and some are malnourished, causing them to swell. We give them vitamins. The second reason for malnutrition is the number of closely successive pregnancies, so breastfeeding is cut off systematically and the child does not have time to enjoy it. Therefore, any health problems that the baby will encounter are the result of the sudden cessation of breastfeeding.

In terms of nutrition, we work in very close partnership with "Food For The Poor" serving young children, pregnant and nursing women.

As His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie taught us, we provide a weekly social program to the poorest families. This consists of moral, religious and material support.



Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis has extremely affected NGOs like ours and those with whom we work. On all fronts, organizations are having difficulty receiving containers. We therefore receive three times less food and medicine than before.

The Nutrition Program provided to 600 children is greatly affected. Families have become poorer, we see children who have not eaten for three days, come to the clinic because they have stomach aches. We get hardly any medicine anymore, so access to free drugs is very compromised. COVID-19 in Haiti affects the middle class more, the poor are in some way more spared by it but they suffer from a considerable lack of resources.

Fraternite Notre Dame works with local but also international organizations; various NGOs such as “Saint Luke’s Foundation”, “DIGICEL”, “Love a Child”, “Operation Blessing”, “Lumos”, “Food for the Poor”. This collaboration takes place for one-shot but also long-term actions, in terms of health, food, education, and agriculture, in areas where extreme poverty reigns. It is important to combine all our efforts according to the charisms of each organization.

To conclude, with the support of our Founder, His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie, of each and every one, we continue to unite for the same goal, that of saving as many human lives as possible.



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