



Overseas Update

A Report on our Overseas Ministries
Number 26

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IHM's Respond to the Earthquake in Haiti

The day after the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti, the IHM Haiti Committee* met to make decisions regarding our IHM response to the greatest humanitarian disaster in our times. With the approval of Leadership, our Committee recommended that "IHM Haiti Earthquake Relief" be channeled through *Catholic Relief Services*, *FONKOZE* and *Partners in Progress*. \$2,100 from our "Pennies for Progress in Haiti" fund was immediately divided equally among our three trusted agencies. Sisters and employees were encouraged to give contributions in safe collection boxes placed around the Motherhouse. An invitation to contribute was sent via e-mail to everyone on our IHM congregational mailing list. Information about our IHM Haiti Fund Drive was also published in the *Monroe Evening News*. As of March 15, a generous response of \$28,000 had been received.

A few days after the earthquake, we received photos of Fondwa from a university professor who survived the quake. All was destroyed - the Sisters of St. Antoine Motherhouse, the school, the University, the Guest House, the health clinic, the orphanage, etc. More than 30 people were killed. For about three weeks, the traumatized sisters, together with 52 orphans, lived under bed sheets without adequate food and water.



The University of Fondwa in ruins

Dr. Richard Gosser, Director of *Partners in Progress*, went to Haiti to visit the sisters and assess their needs. He was persistent in contacting CRS to obtain help for them. They are now living in tents. Dr. Gosser also visited Genese, the student sponsored by the IHMs at the University of Fondwa. Her elderly parents survived the quake but several of her relatives were killed. Her little wholesale business was destroyed. The money that was left in her business/education account was wired to her through her FONKOZE account in Haiti for emergency needs and to help rebuild her business.

For almost two weeks, we tried to get information from the Little Sisters of St. Therese in Riviere Froide. For 15 years, the IHMs in Scranton, Philadelphia and Monroe, together with the Oblate Sisters of Providence, have “twinned” with this native Haitian congregation. The Scranton Sisters received word that four sisters, three lay teachers and 150 students were killed -- and the entire complex was turned to rubble – the Motherhouse, the school, the Guest House, the Orphanage, etc. For a long period of time they did not receive any assistance.

Joan Mumaw contacted Bishop Tom Gumbleton. When he went to Haiti, he visited the sisters and urged the IHMs to give them “support and encouragement.” Joan was also persistent in contacting CRS until they finally sent some aid. Fr. Christopher Promis informed Joan that the “Sisters now have tents, water, food...and celebrate Mass.” They have also hired some construction workers and rented special equipment to clear the rubble with dollars received from a local benefactor. The most traumatized sisters were transferred to congregational houses elsewhere in Haiti. The Sisters of St. Therese have identified seven priorities for reconstruction. The OSP/IHM representatives will meet in Scranton from March 26-28 to discuss future support plans.

Juliana Casey, IHM, Executive VP for Mission Integration for Catholic Health East, had secured an IHM Ministry grant in 2009 for St Frances de Sales Hospital in Port au Prince – which was 70% demolished in the earthquake. Juliana visits the hospital and travels with mobile clinics into the surrounding area. Since the earthquake, patients at St. Francis de Sales Hospital have been treated under tents and tarps. Grants and

contributions from various foundations within the Catholic Health East system are being made to help with the reconstruction effort.

We are grateful that Anne Marie Murphy, IHM, was able to participate in a medical mission delegation to Mirebalais, Haiti, with the Haiti Outreach Mission group from March 19-26.

We as IHMs are proud and grateful that we have deep roots in Haiti. At this time of crisis, our sisters and benefactors have been very generous. OSP/IHM will continue our “twinning” with the Little Sisters of St. Therese and will give as much long-term support and encouragement as we are able.

Anne Wisda, IHM and IHM Haiti Committee

*Members of IHM Haiti Committee: Barbara Berg, Judith Bonini, Camille Brouillard, Dorothy Diederichs, Margaret Ann Henige, Anne Marie Murphy, Anne Wisda



APF Guest Center

South Africa: “Sweet Sixteen”

So said the headlines on April 27, as South Africa celebrated 16 years since its first democratic elections in 1994. We are a teenage South Africa, said one writer, with all the problems of adolescence.

Interviews in the press with some 16-year-olds of all races—members of the “born free generation”—revealed their optimism and hope for the future:

“We can be friends with anyone, no matter what colour they are.”

“It is a gift not to have to go through apartheid.”

“Hearing about all the stories that happened before

is amazing. It's always good to see that our country is moving on."

"Lots of my friends are black, and I think as time goes on we as a country are going to move forward together."

"This government, like me, is only 16. We are still young and we have a lot to learn about the outside world."

This optimism from the youngest generation is very encouraging.

With the opening of the World Cup on June 11 just a few weeks away, the South African team, Bafana Bafana, is going to need all the support the country can give them. The team has not done well in the last few years and is only in the World Cup because it is the host country. One sports commentator said that their first match on the 11th is like a final since if they don't do well, it is all over.

Estimates of overseas guests coming for the biggest sports extravaganza on the planet (forget the World Series and the Super Bowl—the world plays football—known in the US as soccer) have been lowered from 500,000 to about 275,000. The stadia are ready, the hotels and B&Bs are polishing their front doors, most tickets have been sold. Chief worries are whether Bafana Bafana will do South Africa proud, crime and getting all those visitors around the country on time for the matches.

Many Anniversaries

The year 2010 marks several important South African anniversaries. March 21, celebrated as Human Rights Day, commemorated 50 years since the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960. On that day the police fired on people in the township of Sharpeville, south of Johannesburg, who were protesting the pass laws (under apartheid all black adults had to carry a "pass" showing where they were allowed to live). Sixty-nine people died and many were injured.

February marked 20 years since the ANC was unbanned and Nelson Mandela walked free after 27 years in prison. There was much soul-searching in the country about what has happened in these 20 years. Yes, people are free, but most are still very poor. HIV and AIDS continue to ravish the country, although anti-retrovirals are now more available thanks to a huge shift (at last!) in the government's policy. The schools are not in good shape and many young people leave high school barely literate.

There are many service-delivery protests across the country. Poor people in townships and rural areas take to the streets to demand water, free electricity, decent roads, good schools, jobs—all of which have been promised for 16 years but have not yet been realized. In some towns and cities the middle class is protesting the lack of city services, such as garbage collection, maintenance of roads, problems with sewerage and the water supply, by putting their local taxes into trusts and hiring people to do what their taxes are supposed to pay for.

Pietermaritzburg, the capital of the province, and the city near where I live, is now under "authorization." The previous city government, controlled by the ANC, had driven the city into extreme financial crisis and the city coffers are empty. In March the mayor and the ANC city councilors were dismissed by the provincial government and an expert in city government from Cape Town has been brought into to sort out the mess. Residents pay very high taxes but get little for their money. City employees are frequently on strike because they prefer to work overtime (thus increasing their take home pay two to three

times) rather than during normal working hours. The city now doesn't have the money to continue to pay them extravagant overtime pay.

One Year of President Zuma

May 9 marked one year since Jacob Zuma became president of South Africa. It has been a controversial year. He has made some good cabinet appointments (e.g. in health) and reached out to opposition leaders, something former president Thabo Mbeki never did, since to him the idea of an opposition party when the ANC is in power was an oxymoron.

But in trying to placate all sorts of groups and individuals, Zuma is now criticized for a lack of leadership and vision. As the president of the ANC he speaks one language, that of ANC policy. His State of the Nation address in February was heavily criticized for its “nuts and bolts” approach—the “government will do, will do that, etc”—without a sense of vision for the country.

And his personal life has hit the headlines throughout the year. He has married his fifth wife and earlier this year the nation learned that he is the father of a baby girl by one of his girl friends. He has acknowledged paternity for 20 children. The government's spin doctors did their best to say these were “private affairs” but this is not true, especially when the government funds support the wives and the children.

A year ago South Africans were holding their collective breath as Zuma took the oath of office. And now right behind him, and praised by Zuma as a future president of the ANC (and possibly of South Africa), is Julius Malema, the president of the ANC Youth League. Living very high-off-the-hog indeed, Malema spouts vitriolic racism and populist rhetoric. Amongst other ideas, he is demanding the nationalization of the mining industry. People point out that this would make sense if the government was managing well what it already owns—South African Airways, Eskom (the electricity supplier) and others. But they are all in trouble.

Life is never dull and predictable in South Africa.

Sue Rakoczy, IHM

The Challenges of the Violence in Juarez

During these last two years, the people of Juarez have experienced a very high level of violence daily because of a war between drug cartels and the failure of all levels of government to control and prevent this insecurity. At the present time, Juarez is considered to be the most violent city in the world with more than 4,000 deaths related to drug traffic in the last two years. The majority of these killings have not yet been solved despite the city, state and federal police forces present in the city.

In our ministry we experience the suffering and death of Jesus as a daily reality in the lives of the families with whom we live and work. We hear the voices of the women in Juarez, mothers, wives, daughters, sisters of people who have been killed. Here are some of their thoughts and feelings.

Voices of the Women of Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico

How does the situation of violence in Juarez affect our lives?

- The insecurity in the streets and in general, the whole city the police and the soldiers have not been able to control the violence.
- We can not live a normal life: “My sister and her family left Juarez because of threats of kidnapping. My daughter and her family can not

- Other consequences:
 School desertion: Ganges, no money for fees
 Many widows and orphans, inconsolable mothers
 Limiting out normal activities day and night
 High unemployment: many businesses have closed because extortion (pay a quota or close down or be killed)
 Increased tension and health problems (psychological, emotional, physical)
 Abuse of authority and corruption
 We feel limited in our ability to accompany families who have suffered the loss of a member of the family to the violence.

How do we feel with the reality of this violence?

- We feel like prisoners in our own homes. Our children cannot play in the park because of the insecurity.
- We feel divided, separated from others; it's difficult to be united.
- There is a sense of powerlessness and sometimes without hope.
- There is anger against and fear of the authorities (Government, police and soldiers).
- There are many questions and no answers.
- How can we be with families suffering from violence, knowing that we can also become victims?
- We feel sad, insecure and powerless because of all the killings as our authorities do nothing to resolve this problem.

How are we responding to this situation?

- In the family
 Maintain communication; know where the family members are, have times of leaving and arriving, avoid late hours, teach the children prevention to look out for one another, pray with neighbors, try to create opportunities to share and celebrate together.
- Continue our normal lives, not stopping doing the things we ordinarily do.
- With God, denounce the injustices and abuses.
- We responded with fear and apathy.
- We hope that we won't be attacked.
- No one knows what to do.
- Some families are more united.
- Those of us who are humble and unprotected support one another morally.

- We accompany people who are suffering and try to share words of comfort.
- While we are alive, we must struggle for those who have died unjustly. We are the voice of justice.

Saludos from Maureen Kelly, IHM, and Maria Antonia Aranda Diaz, IHM

News from Uganda

We have had many catastrophes this year. Since we are in the rainy season there has been a lot of rain. In the North East, in March there was a mudslide and 500 people are known dead with 305 missing. The students and faculty were very generous in donating food, money and clothing that will be given to the people through the Uganda Catholic Relief Services.

Uganda Martyrs University continues to thrive. We had an Open Day for parents and surrounding community in early March, to see all the different programs offered here at UMU. There was a good turnout and it was mainly run by the students. The same material was also presented in Kampala in February.

We celebrated UMU Day with the theme “Modernity vs. Tradition” with dances and dress. There was a good turnout of parents.

During Lent the religious and priests went to the Sacred Heart Sisters’ lake resort for our retreat.

I am teaching Quantitative Methods to first year business students. They have been broken into two groups: 60 in A and 61 in B. Each meets four times a week.

I hope to continue teaching for one more year, but that is up to the Senate and Council and the Immigration Office. Wish me luck.

Marie-Esther Haflett, IHM

Thanks to...

all those who pray for our ministries and contribute in various ways to them.

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The Next Issue

will be published in October 2010. Please send any news and articles to Sue Rakoczy, IHM, (SRakoczy@futurenet.co.za) by Sept. 15. Thank you.