



Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Haiti Twinning Ministry Minutes
2020-2021-Education/Vocation School, Playground, Stationery/School Supply Shop

Vision: We, the parishioners of the Sacred Heart have been called to enter in a twinning relationship with our brothers and sisters at Saint Gabriel, Haiti. Together, we follow the principals of Catholic Social Teaching to foster faith-filled relationships, self-sustainability and an end to dependency. **Mission Statement:** End Dependency while following the principals of Catholic Social Teaching.

14th ANNIVERSARY OF TWINNING—A CELEBRATION
SACRED HEART PARISH AND SAINT GABRIEL PARISH
 Tuesday, May 11th, 2021 (6:30 pm – 7:30 pm via Zoom)

Members/Supportive Members & Guests Present: Brendan Pigott, Pat Walsh, Alison Boolba, Patricia Britz, Laura Harpring, Silver Ibenye, William Wallace, Frank Murphy, Fr. Kesner Joseph, Fr. Fitho Jean, Elisabeth Batue, Kathy Dowdy & Francesca Smith. Fr. Paul currently visiting family in Uganda.

As of tradition, the members hosted A Celebration of the 14th Anniversary of Twinning between Sacred Heart Parish and Saint Gabriel Parish in lieu of the May meeting, this year, via Zoom.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CELEBRATION: Brendan Pigott welcomed Pat, Fr. Kesner, Fr. Fitho, Outreach partners, members/supportive members, and guests. Fr. Kesner congratulated SH and SG on their 14th Anniversary of Twinning, thanked us for inviting him, and our warm reception. Fr. Fitho thanked the members for dedicating the month of May to getting to know each other and for the invitation to continue twinning. Fr. Fitho met Neil Walsh on various occasions in Haiti. He was glad to meet Pat Walsh.

OPENING PRAYER: William read “A Prayer For The People Of Haiti.”

INTRODUCTION BY ALL: Everyone had an opportunity to introduce him/herself and tell connection with the ministry.

INTRODUCTION TO TWINNING: Brendan gave a summary of the SHP and SGP Twinning history.

ACTIVITIES:

- Silver Ibenye showed pictures from the start (school, clinic, latrines, cafeteria, auditorium/3 classrooms, furniture, school supply shop, water shop).
- Laura Harpring and Pat Walsh gave their personal testimonies.
- Francesca led the 14 Multi-Choice Questions for 14 years of Twinning. All participated.
- William Wallace, and Patricia (Sustainability) gave their personal testimonies.
- Francesca led the 14 Quotes for 14 years of Twinning—answers provided by the attendees.

CLOSING REMARKS & THANK YOU: Brendan thanked everyone for participating and announced that the celebration had concluded, and the room would be left open for attendees to converse.

CLOSING PRAYER: William read “Prayer For Our Twin Parish, Saint Gabriel.”

MORE DETAILS FOR FRIENDS WHO WERE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND.

Introduction to the Celebration, Prayers, Introduction to Twinning, Personal Testimonies, and 14 Quotes:

INTRODUCTION TO THE CELEBRATION—Brendan Pigott (MC)

My name is Brendan Pigott. I have been a member of HTM since July of 2016 and am the Assistant Chair of the HTM. This evening, Sacred Heart and St. Gabriel are celebrating our 14th Anniversary in twinning. We wish to welcome Fr. Kesner Joseph, first Haitian priest working in the Richmond Diocese, at Glen Allen. Also, Fr. Fitho Jean, who will be the new pastor



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at St. Gabriel in Lascahobas starting May 21st. We congratulate him on his 14th year of Ordination, June 6th. Bienvenue! We thank all guests here present for your continued support with prayers, time, and donations for our mission. Let us start with an opening prayer.

OPENING PRAYER—William Wallace

A PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE OF HAITI

Out of the depths we cry to You, O God.

We cry to You for our Haitian sisters and brothers.

We thank You for upholding them in their suffering.

Give them continuing strength and comfort.

Give us love and courage to stand with them and work with them

as they struggle for justice and freedom.

Keep us committed to the truth and empower us with Your Spirit of love;

A love that always sees possibilities for peace founded on justice;

A love that seeks justice without vengeance and retaliation;

A love that reaches out to enemies, as Jesus taught us.

We trust in Your continuing mercy as we bring to You our own desire to be in active solidarity with our Haitian brothers and sisters.

O Holy Spirit descend on us: we have a mission for Haiti. Amen.

INTRODUCTION TO TWINNING—Brendan Pigott

Much has been accomplished in equal partnership; our Haitian twin built a school (1st-13th) and its campus and is now developing sustainable projects that are source of revenue and employments. SH is glad to be investing in such projects, to help our family at SG to become increasingly independent. Together we look forward to continuing growing in friendship, faith, and partnership.

Sadly, 8 years ago, because of regular transfers, we had to say goodbye to Fr. Bernard, the 1st pastor and friend that we twinned with. This month, after 6 years we will also say goodbye to Fr. Ady, another lifetime friend. Soon we will welcome Fr. Fitho Jean. We are confident that Fr. Fitho will continue the vision of the two extraordinary pastors before him. We are dedicating the month of May to wishing Fr. Ady all the best in his new parish, Saint Yves in Savanette Cabral, near Lascahobas, and to getting to know Fr. Fitho.

Would Fr. Fitho wish to say a few words to the members of his soon to be twin parish? Would Fr. Kesner wish to share his impression of his one-year work in the Richmond Diocese, with a focus on twinning?

Father Kesner thanked the ministry for its invitation to the celebration. He is most grateful for the good and long-lasting twinning relationship. He wished the members a successful continuation in this faith-filled friendship and look forward to more discussion on the progress made in twinning. He sent his regards to Fr. Paul.

Father Fitho also thanked the members for their warm invitation. He will be visiting Fr. Ady this week to learn of his responsibility at his new parish, SG. He was glad to meet everyone and starting to learn about each member. He is looking forward to meeting Fr. Paul.

TESTIMONIES—Laura Harpring, Pat Walsh, William Wallace, and Patricia Britz

Testimony 1—Laura Harpring (Growth through Strength): Laura shared a personal story from her pilgrimages to SG--the strengthening of our relationship as we continue to grow, pray, and walk with each other. Our relationship continues to evolve and change. A need was presented, we listened, and we answered. As we continue to pray for each other and over



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time, funds were created to address some medical, lunch, scholarships, teacher/nurse salaries assistance, and sustainable projects that are a source of income for the school.

Testimony 2—Pat Walsh (Strength Walking with One Another): Pat shared one of her stories from one of her pilgrimages to SG. She thought she was prepared physically to walk in Haiti. However, walking up hill to visit a chapel school, her physical strength was tested when it came time to walk down the hill. Sister Anita, an active parishioner at SG came to her rescue and helped her down the hill. “In America we think we have everything and what I needed most in Haiti was Sister Anita’s helping hand. We became friends and Pen Pals.”

Testimony 3—William Wallace (Spirit of Joy/Welcome/Hospitality): William shared one of his stories from his 2 pilgrimages. His favorite was the visit to the Sisters of Mary, who teach in their Elementary School in Lascahobas. He has always had great admiration for teachers and everything they do. “The spirit of joy, welcome, and hospitality was everywhere at SG”. It made him appreciate what he has.

Testimony 4—Patricia Britz (Sustainability):

Phase 1-I strongly agree with the pilgrims who just talked about their visits at SG and how happy they were to receive beautiful hospitality and friendship. After 21 pilgrimages to SG, I find our family there to be caring, hospitable, family and community oriented, hardworking, and joyful. Our SG family accepts and respects the poor, loves the church, pilgrimages, and feast days. Our family loves to sing, dance, make music, and smile. When a visitor comes to their home, all members of the household meet the guests and show interest and respect. In 14 years, we know the names of many parishioners, and those of their families. We have seen babies born and children growing up. We have shared our daily lives both at home and at church though pen pal letters and visits.

Phase 2-Nurturing strong relationships was the base to what was to come, answering the need of SG to build a high school. The Haitian people did all the hard work while SH provided some of the funds. With the school, came a full campus with a clinic, cafeteria/kitchen, additional classrooms, and latrines. Fr. Ady often said that SG was the best school in Lascahobas. Making the school attractive to parents, will draw parents who want a good education for their children.

Phase 3-Once the school and the campus were finished/self-sustaining, we continued paying some of the OC of the school with Lunch, Teachers, Medical Assistance. Also 20 scholarships, an endowment that Neil Walsh and his aunt Mrs. LeMay funded. OC is ongoing and is part of the function of the school.

Phase 4-Twinning is based on strong faith-filled relationships and **mutual empowerment in leadership** in treating one another with Christian love and dignity. Neil often talked about the young boy he met in Hinche who told him: “Do not perpetuate a system of dependence for our people.” **We believe that income generation, not charity, is the solution to independence from donors.**

Phase 5-3 years ago, during a pilgrimage, we started a conversation with Fr. Ady about **investing in projects that would be a source of employment and revenue for the parish.** He embraced the opportunity. This led to the building of a water and fresh bread shop, a stationary shop, and a water system for the parish community building which can operate a conference hall, and 3 bedrooms. This revenue will replace some of the funding that SH send quarterly. As donations decreases, SG will be able to increase its independence from donation with those projects and continuing making SG the best school in Lascahobas. Parents will continue to enroll their children in that school and pay for a good education.

VISION: Is to continue investing in projects that will help SG to decrease its dependency while nurturing a strong mutual relationship.

14 Quotes for 14 Years of Twinning—Francesca Smith with all attendees.

Entering a twinning relationship with SG Parish has been:

1. Fun.
2. Joyful.
3. Faith Making.
4. Life Changing.
5. Strengthening.



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SG has helped me to:

Focus on others. Get to know the Haitian People. Strengthen my faith. See world from a difference perspective.
Challenge our paradigms on charity.

Being part of the Haiti Twinning Ministry is:

Great way to meet new people. Life giving. Love. Fun. Life changing.

HYMN: Silver sang “O Holy Spirit Descend On Us” in Haitian Creole and English.

CLOSING PRAYER—William Wallace

PRAYER FOR OUR TWIN PARISH, SAINT GABRIEL

O God, bless us and the people of our twin parish
With courage to stand in love,
Walk in friendship
And share struggles,
Until the world is transformed into a land
According to Your vision
Of peace and justice.
Watch over us and our family at Saint Gabriel and give us Hearts that
Are bold and loving. Amen.

SAVE THE DATES:

Yard Father’s Day Sale #8—Next HTM Sale for SG is on Sat, 5/15/021, 9 AM to 2:00 PM at Cherie’s house in Norfolk. To Benefit the Saint Gabriel School. POC: William. Francesca and William coordinate. Most needed: tools, toys in good condition, and a different location a couple of times annually.

Walking With William—will resume in the spring Mon. or Fri. at 3:30 PM. Freewill donations may be made. Supports Lunch and Medical Funds. POC: William.

Annual Haiti Twinning Ministry Regional Gathering via Zoom—May 22nd 9 AM to Noon—Patricia reported that Mary Ann Collins and Planning Committee meet regularly. Guest Speaker: Fr. Kesner Joseph, who attended the celebration today. See info. below the calendar. Theme: Investing in Projects that are Source of Revenue. Host: Mary Ann Collins, Prayer: William/Mike K., Flyer and introduction to the theme: Patricia, Technical Support: St. Mark Parish. POC: Patricia. RSVP by May 16

Post Celebration Notes:

Pen Pal Notes & Birthday/Greeting Cards: Please turn in notes for Fr. Ady, Fr. Fitho, & pen pals to Francesca via email, smithf236@verizon.net, by May 20, 2021. She will consolidate the notes & forward to Patricia who will email them to Fr. Ady & Fr. Fitho. Thanks to all who did in Apr. & have already done so for May. Fr. Ady and pen pals appreciated the notes very much. Susie is currently writing Mother’s Day cards for May 30th. Thank you, Susie!

Fair Trade Coffee, Just (ice) for Haiti continues out of parish. Contact Patricia if you would like to buy some bags of ground coffee, medium or dark, \$12/bag. [Fair Trade: A Just World Starts with You | Benjamin Conard | TEDxSUNYGeneseo - Bing video](#)).



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Next Meetings: Tues. Jun 15-Commons, Tues. Jul 6-Commons, Prayers (William & Silver)—Meeting 6:30 -8:00 pm—
 Guests are welcome!

MAY 2021	
5/1-	Feast of St. Joseph the Worker (the Dignity of Workers)
5/9-	USA Mother's Day
5/15-	Father's Day Yard Sale @ Cherie Geiger's home, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
22-May	Annual Eastern Regional Haiti Gathering via ZOOM, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm Fr. Joseph, Haiti
5/30-	Haiti Mother's Day
Wed. May 11	Haiti Twinning Ministry Meeting & 14th Anniversary in Twinning (May 10th actual date)
Thurs. 5/13-	Ascension of our Lord Celebrated May 16 th
Sun. May 23-	Pentecost Sunday

Good News from Both Parishes: 5/1-31/2021—May is Mary’s Month; **5/6/2021**—Fr. Fitho Jean’s 14 Anniversary of Ordination; **5/6/2021**—Water System & Bread Shop completed on 5/7/2020; **5/9/2021**—Mother’s Day in USA (Haiti & France (31th); **5/10/2021**—Bishop Dilorenzo agreed to twinning with SGP (May 10th 2017)—14th Anniversary of our Twinning Relationship; **5/13/2021**—Our Lady of Fatima; **5/16/2021**—Ascension of the Lord; **5/17/2021**—Neil & Pat’s 52nd Wedding Anniversary; **5/18/2021**—Haiti Culture & Heritage Day; **5/21/2021**—Fr. Fitho become Pastor at SG; and **5/23/2021**—Pentecost Sunday.

MEET FR. JOSEPH AT THE MAY 20TH REGIONAL HAITI GATHERING



In 2020, Bishop Jean Desinord in Hinche, Haiti nominated Fr. Kesner Joseph to a pastoral ministry to the Diocese of Richmond. He is the first Haitian priest to serve in the Diocese of Richmond, starting in August. He was ordered in 2000, trained at Notre-Dame du Mont Carmel, Saut d’Eau. He was pastor at Notre-Dame de Lourdes in Belladere, and La Sainte Famille, Cerca Cavajal. He is currently at St. Michael’s in Glen Allen, VA. Fr. Keke is loved by all who know him. SH pilgrims have met him at SG on various occasions.

Neil, his pen pal Mr. Vennel Lamy and his family

