

HAITI OUTREACH COMMITTEE  
of OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHURCH

**Our mission:**

For over 15 years, Our Lady of Fatima Parish has participated in the Parish Twinning Organization of the Americas. Since 2005, we have been twinned with the College Monseigneur Jean-Baptiste Decoste in Thomonde, Haiti. "College" in French means "high school" in English. From 2006 until August 2011, Father Wilfranc S Servil was director. Father Phito Gilles is the current director.

Our major mission is paying the salaries of the teachers, providing a stable, ongoing learning environment for all of the more than 270 students. Our Lady of Fatima sends the salaries in four installments per year: \$11550 due September 1, December 1, and March 1. The Haitian government requires that teachers also be paid for two summer months, so we send a check for \$7700 by June 1.

The majority of the money we send is gathered in the green monthly envelopes included in Our Lady of Fatima's envelope packets, or donated "for our Haiti parish" through Faith Direct. **Other fund-raisers** are listed below.

Every March-April, we collect basic medical supplies, school supplies, solar calculators, technology items, and shoes, which are sent on a container ship to our sister school. The container ship, organized by the Parish Twinning Program, also carries supplies to other parishes in Haiti from their twinned parishes all over the USA. There is no other reliable and cost-effective way to send goods to the school, except to hand-carry them on an airplane.

**History**

After the four tropical storms that hit Haiti in 2008, Our Lady of Fatima began to donate money to help pay for school lunches at the College, and gave enough money to send food home with the neediest students to help their families survive the summer months.

After the earthquake of January 2010, many people fled the flattened capital city of Port-au-Prince and made their way to Thomonde homeless and empty-handed. OLOF quickly sent \$5100 to the school, to provide necessities (sandals, cooking oil, rice, and drinking water) for these families. Father enrolled as many refugee teens as possible in the high school and provided them with school supplies. On January 17, OLOF parishioners donated another \$9341 to a special collection for earthquake victims.

Members of our parish have been to Thomonde twice, first in 2005 and then in May 2009. Father Wilfranc visited us 4 times. Our goal is to alternate visits every spring/summer, so we hope parishioners will be able to visit Thomonde before the end of 2012, and that we can invite Father Phito to visit here in summer 2013.

## **Fund-raisers:**

- One weekend each fall, Colette Souder has sold her soaps and lotions after all masses and donated all the money to the school.
- Each winter the Knights of Columbus have had a pancake breakfast, with the donations going to the school.
- The 8th-grade Confirmation Class has helped us for 3 years, with either a waffle breakfast or a soup and salad supper, and given the donations to the school.
- 7th-grade CCD classes have collected and put personal labels on soap, and have also sold soft pretzels to help the school.
- The Haiti Outreach Committee has hosted a silent auction in 2009 and drawings in 2010 and 2011, in coordination with the Confirmation Class's meals. Another drawing is coming this fall, featuring another piece of furniture by Richard Harbison and another quilt by Dolores Maglione. All items are donated, and all proceeds go directly to the school.
- Our Lady of Fatima cookbooks are for sale. Just ask a HOC member and we can get you one.
- We have also sold greeting cards designed by Haitian students, as well as necklaces and pins designed by Julie Vernon, and received generous donations from individual parishioners.

**Meetings:** Usually the 2nd Monday of each month, in the Social Hall, at 6 pm. Please join us! New members and visitors are always welcome! FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO CONFIRM A MEETING DATE/TIME/PLACE, PLEASE CALL MARTY & JENNIFER DESCHENES: 865-681-3369

## **MOST RECENT PHOTOS: 2012**



**Students at our high school taking final exams.**



**Students sharing lunch at school: mostly rice. Contributions from Our Lady of Fatima have helped provide mid-day meals at school.**

**Lunch is crucial, especially for students who may walk as long as two hours to get to school.**





**Students in the hall at College Monseigneur Jean-Baptiste Decoste.**



**Students wear uniforms: long pants for boys and skirts for girls, with black shoes. Girls and boys appear to wear loafer/oxford/closed toe style shoes and girls wear white socks.**







**Views of the school's restroom facilities: urinals and what Father Phito calls "dry toilets, meaning one does not use water to flush them."**



**Students assemble at the flagpole in the courtyard.**

## Father Phito Gilles

Father Philo Gilles is the principal of our sister parish/high school. This photo was taken fall 2011, at the installation of the new student government officers.



Comment vont les autres membres du comité? De notre côté ça va bien. Nous faisons de notre mieux. Je vous prie de transmettre constamment nos remerciements à tous les autres et de les recevoir à vous en particulier. Je vous envoie certaines photos lors de la fête du collège. Le célébrant principal fut père Lévêque Bien-aimé que vous connaissez peut-être. Bon travail!  
Bonne nuit.









