

Fall/Winter 2024

Haiti Outreach

Publication of the OSPIHM Haiti Outreach Committee



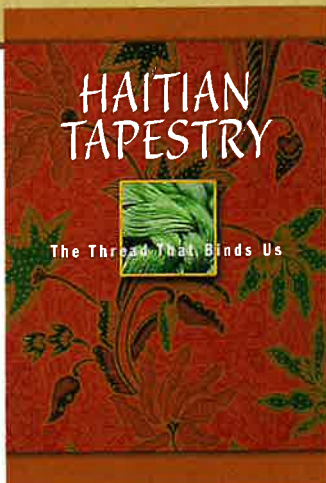
The Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, psst

Sister Denise Desil, psst, who is pictured below, has emailed updates over the last several months. Below is a short summary. Sister Denise always sends gratitude to us for our thoughts, prayers, and donations. The Little Sisters of St. Therese pray for us also. She always says the Sisters are okay and that the situation is still bad. She has not seen some of their Sisters for three years as travel is dangerous. They worry about how powerful the gangs have become. The gangs make noise with their guns during the night and the day. The Sisters are seriously bothered by the disturbance. Trying to run their schools is more than challenging. The Sisters stay home and when they need things they send others to buy them for them. Sister Denise says otherwise the Sisters try to live their daily lives. They did try to go to Port au Prince, but their car could not make it back up the mountain road. Their eldest Sister passed away at 104 years and 11 months. They always hope and pray that the next year will be better.



OSPIHM Haiti Outreach Committee Goals

1. Continue our partnership with the Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus
2. Educate our Sisters about the needs of Haiti
3. Communicate advocacy for Haiti within and across our congregations
4. Encourage participation in projects for Haiti



Book Review by S. Anne Murphy, (M)**Hold Tight, Don't Let Go**

Magda is shelling peas as the earthquake of January 2010 strikes. Her sister, Nadine, covered in white dust, wanders into the courtyard of the large house where their mother is the housekeeper, they soon realize that their mother, Yolette, is dead. Their 'mother' is their aunt. Nadine is not Magda's sister but a cousin. The two girls are inseparable although Nadine's father lives in America and is trying to arrange a visa for her. Soon Magda's uncle, Elie, whose own house collapsed in the quake, takes on the role of guardian and moves with her into a camp and tent compound. Elie repairs radios and TVs, and he spends a lot of time searching for work. His girlfriend, Michlove, and their baby move in. Elie finds a church that will teach Michlove to read.

Nadine's visa comes through, she leaves with promises to get a visa for Magda as soon as she can. As they travel to the airport Magda looks with Nadine at the city streets. She wants to say, 'Hold on to all of this...not because it is all beautiful... but because it is ours.' As Magda struggles to put aside small amounts of money for airfare the possibility of joining her friend recedes inexorably.

Magda had set her sights on moving to Florida. Besides carrying water, cooking, and cleaning their living space she tends to isolate. There is no money for school, and she misses it. She is waiting for Nadine to send for her. She becomes irritable, remote, and bitter. Convinced she could find a way to earn some money, Magda contacts a friend of Nadine's and tries to sell packets of treated water. She escapes a trap, ashamed of her naivety.

Magda has returned to the home she left at age three. The peacefulness of her ancestral village, concern from her many relatives, and attention from a handsome boy are a respite from the clamor of the city. She is tempted to stay in the fruitful (mangos, breadfruit, avocado) countryside but convinced that success is only available in Port au Prince. This story begins in an earthquake and ends in a dream.

The author Laura Rose Wagner is a cultural anthropologist who has coedited a series of short articles in *Haiti Beyond Crisis* documenting the elements of social breakdown. This novel puts the reader close to the fragility of urban Haiti. The scarcity of food and sanitation (cholera), detailing what passes for meals, noise, and the instability of living structures, financial realities, vulnerability on the taptaps buses. Laced with proverbs, it highlights the sharing of meager meals and space on communal floors or beds. Published in 2015, it pre-dates the current level of gang violence. The book also provides a brief history of Haiti, a glossary, and suggestions for further reading in fiction and non-fiction.

OSPIHM Haiti Outreach Committee Members

S. Anne Marie Murphy, IHM (M), S. Camille Brouillard, IHM (M),
S. Susan Hadzima, IHM (S), S. Eileen Coleman, (S), S. Jane Gaughan, (S),
S. Cathy Nally, IHM (I), Mary McGarrity, (I) and S. Paula Jameson, (I)

Service at the Border With Haitian Migrants

I'm grateful to share my two weeks of experiences at the border. I had the profound privilege of serving together with our OSPIHM community, engaging with Haitian migrants. I witnessed firsthand the hardships faced by Haitian migrants. Their stories of struggle, perseverance, and hope in the face of adversity left an indelible mark on my heart. Through conversations and shared moments, I gained insight into Haitian culture's richness and resilience. Their warmth and gratitude, despite adversity, profoundly inspired me.

This experience had a lasting impact:

1. Deepened empathy and compassion.
2. Broadened understanding of migrant struggles.
3. Fostered appreciation for diversity and cultural exchange.
4. Strengthened commitment to service and advocacy.

The OSPIHM community's unity, selflessness, and dedication inspired me. Together, we:

1. Provided essential support.
2. Shared meals and stories.
3. Facilitated meaningful connections.

This experience forever shapes my perspective such as:

1. Renewed passion for social justice.
2. Gratitude for enriching cultural exchange.
3. Unforgettable memories.



Thank you for the opportunity to share.

Congregational Responses to Haiti

We, the Oblate Sisters of Providence and the IHM Sisters, impelled by the Gospel, stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti, the poorest nation in the Americas, in their struggle for dignity, life and human rights both in Haiti and the United States.

The Immaculata IHM Sisters conscious of our humble beginnings pledge to raise awareness of the needs of the Haitian people. We support sustainable projects, assist indigenous religious congregations, and communicate opportunities for advocacy on behalf of the people. We participate in Haiti Outreach as an outgrowth of our charism to serve the most abandoned poor.

The IHM Sisters and Associates, impelled by the gospel, stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti, the poorest in the Americas, in their struggle for dignity, life and human rights both in Haiti and in the United States.

With a profound commitment to religious life, we proclaim God's unconditional love for all by channeling our energies to foster respect for diversity. Our participation in the Haiti Project is an expression of our commitment to bridge the gap between the rich and poor. We desire to channel our energies and resources to promote justice.

