

SPRING 2023

# Haiti Outreach



## OSPIHM board meeting

On Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2022, the OSPIHM Board met at Immaculata for their annual meeting. Sister Cathy Nally (I) and Sister Paula Jameson (I) presented the OSPIHM Haiti Outreach Committee activities report from October 2021 to September 2022. The committee reported the best we can offer at this time to the Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus (psst) is our presence in the form of ongoing prayerful support, email correspondence, virtual meetings and our donations. During one such virtual meeting, Sister Bernadette Nicolas, psst, a former General Responsible, stated she always feels that "It was our foundresses in heaven who brought us all together." She said she always feels she is an equal at the table with the OSPs and the IHMs.

Sister Denise Desil, psst, the present General Responsible, said that her priority is the safety of all the Little Sisters. The situation in Haiti is extremely dangerous. The Sisters who live at the Motherhouse and go out to their nearby ministries have expressed fear when they leave the Motherhouse. Sister Denise also shared that they had requested an ambulance in 2018. One of their benefactors from California sent the money for the ambulance and the Sisters ordered it from Japan. Because of the political situation, the ambulance sat for almost two years in customs. "We got it anyway," said Sister Denise. The gangs in Haiti often stop vehicles but are less likely to stop an ambulance.



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Sister Denise can quickly list the challenges their congregation faces. She is concerned but has a sense of enduring hope. She says, "We face the challenges because this is our country; we were born and raised in it, and we have great faith and hope in God. We enjoy our life here. It's hard, but we enjoy it. God shows us a way to survive. We are Haitian. Since we met the OSPIHM Sisters, we can say things have changed for the better for our community. Thanks a lot for your prayers and your solidarity."



†

Congrégation des Petites Sœurs de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus  
 161 Brochette 99, Rivière Froide, Carrefour, Rue Aurore  
 B.P. 11095, Port au Prince HAITI (W.I.)

Dear sister Camille

We send warm greeting from Haiti for you and your community. We thank you very much for your prayers and your economic supports. We are always grateful to you before your solidarity and your generosity the IHM sisters are exceptional.

As you know there are no changes in the chaotic situation in Haiti. Things became worst now with the kidnapping why we stay home I feel depress with this situation. Our sisters from some missions are worries

They couldn't come to the mother house. The roads are very dangerous all over Haiti. 5 days ago they kidnap one little Brother of Sainte Therese of the child Jesus and he is still in the hands of the revisers' the other is in rehab this one got shot in the shoulder and the face. He has big surgery so he is in rehab now he won't be the same person for life. Our Congregation has two branches: Little sisters and Little brothers.

We are really and danger. We have gangs all over Haiti. To go to the city we need to get a very bad road in the mountain why our car gets broke. We continue to do some repairing and building we are not finish yet with all we have started.

Last three weeks we lost two sisters, parent, couldn't attend the funeral so we use zoom to facilitate the parents for those event.

**Please keep praying for us. We will have chapter this year in July.**

**Have a blessed LENT TIME in the desert with Jesus.**

Yours,

*Sr Denise Desil*  
 Sr Denise Desil, psst

## Haiti updates on the in-country climate

The assassination of Haitian President Jovenel Moise in 2021 seems to be the event that triggered a deeper descent into chaos for Haiti. In a series of 13 short essays, *Haiti Beyond Crisis*, anthropologists Greg Beckett and Laura Wagner present authors who study or prioritize Haiti to explain the impact of Haiti's situation on the lives of its people and its struggle for a foothold in advancement. Linked articles have notes and include English, French and Kreyol (Creole) versions.

### Past setbacks:

- ◆ Bitter memories of U.S. occupation 1915-34 (and financial control until 1947).
- ◆ Labor force migration to South America in 2008 when Brazil prepared for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics. Decreased acceptance as right-leaning governments evolved.
- ◆ Loss of 2 billion dollars from the Petrocaribe program during Martelly's 2011-2016 presidency and PHTK Party domination.
- ◆ Manufacturing and upper-class support of the anti-Lavalas Party and distrust of Aristide (forced to resign in 2004).
- ◆ 2010 Earthquake and waste of donor money without obvious benefit the poor and disadvantaged (minimal housing improvement in Port-au-Prince) and underperforming factories in land seized for industrial parks.
- ◆ Resentment of Congress of Racial Equality (U.S., Canada, France, Organization of American States) recommending a stabilization mission to the U.N. 2004-2017 and subsequent cholera epidemic.

### Current environment:

- ◆ Political vacuum with no elected courts or legislators as terms have expired (many before 2022). Moise had refused to step down or call for elections. He had dissolved parliament.
- ◆ Corruption and cronyism are rampant in the government, arranging duty-free access to the U.S. for textile manufacturers benefiting from Haiti's low-paid workers.
- ◆ Street violence, especially in Port-au-Prince and murders of journalists investigating unsolved homicides and kidnappings (95% are Haitians).
- ◆ Gangs previously defense-oriented and pro-Lavalas are now evolving into for-profit groups using banditry and terror.
- ◆ Deportation of refugees at U.S. border without investigation; 20,309 persons between Jan. '21 and Feb. '22 were deported from the U.S. to Haiti.
- ◆ 24% of the population lives in extreme poverty.
- ◆ General strikes started in 2018 to protest the loss of Petro-Caribe's promised benefit. Fuel shortages and increased prices impact transportation and price of food and goods.

Zétrenne, Ritzamarum. 2022. "Martissant : des personnes passent par le morne l'Hôpital pour se rendre au centre-ville." *Hot Spots, Fieldsights*, May 3. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/martissant>



In Martissant: Crossing Mountains to Reach City, author Ritzamarum Zetrenne describes an alternate mountainous route for reaching downtown Port-au-Prince (P au P) when danger is reported on main roads. The "road to death" refers to Rte Nationale 2 [Southwest of P au P. The PSST, Little Sisters, Riviere Froid is near Rte 2]. Traveling by motorcycle taxi in the caravan with 3-5 other taxis, drawbacks are gravel and dust, the chance of stalling on steep inclines or the isolation "who will rescue us if we are attacked here?" Their guide assures his passengers that this road is safe, but still, he points out some places where people have been killed. Another driver warns, "if you take this road and don't see any other moto drivers, you must turn back." The price of the ride is not set; it varies by degree of danger and time of day.

Many words or stock phrases are repeated in speaking of "the poorest country in the western hemisphere": insecurity, violence, corruption, poor and black. The population is ignored or punished by its own government. As we deal with or fail to address our issues, we can see more clearly that we are not defined by our challenges but by our practice of resilience.

"Anthropology can allow us to move beyond the framing of Haitians as poor suffering others... to understand what crisis means. We must begin with the everyday experiences of those living with it."

Wagner, Laura and Greg Beckett. 2022. "Conclusion: Making Haiti Thinkable." Hot Spots, *Fieldsights*, May 3.

## Excerpts from Sister Denise's letters

Oct. 18, 2022

We stay home as crime increases. We were gifted a car from ADVENIAT in 2019. The roads to Port au Prince are in great disrepair and caused a grievous injury to the car. Even it has fallen victim to the political unrest in which we live.

Dec. 15, 2022

We remain home because we fear kidnapping. Gangs use kidnapping to garner large sums of money. Fortunately, we are able to attend a nearby church.

Jan. 24, 2023

The situation remains the same; kidnapping is still a big problem. Two of our sisters were hospitalized but have returned home. The hospital fees were enormous. We were so grateful to receive your donation. It was very helpful.



*Pictured from left to right:  
Sisters Bernadette Nicolas (past  
Responsible General), Marie Judith  
Prophete, and Denise Desil (Responsible  
General) Congregation des Petite Soeurs  
de Sainte Therese de L'Enfant Jesus*