

VISIT TO TOIRAC, CAMP PERRIN & CAYES

We, the ICM (Immaculate Cœur Immaculé de Marie) Sisters and RJMs (Religious of Jesus and Mary) started our three day visit to the south on 24th August. We were 7 sisters, ICM 6 and RJM 1 with two cars, one sent by the Parish Priest of the Holy Family Church, Toirac and the other was from us RJMs. Since we were a big group even two cars were not enough to take the people and plus all the supplies. We had requested the HAITI TRANSPORT to send us a small truck which they did. Haiti Transport is providing this service free of charges to all the Congregations or Organizations taking aid to the south of the country. They were a group of 3 men, a driver and 2 helpers. One sat with the driver and the other at the back to guard the supplies. In total we were 12 people.



After loading the supplies, our small convoy left Port-au-Prince at 7:30 in the morning. We passed Martisan without any event. Martisan is an area in Port-au-Prince where the gangs are very active, they attack vehicles and robe whatever the people have. We had a peaceful journey until we entered Toirac, because of the broken roads, the truck driver denied to go further. It took us some time to convince him and called his boss to give him permission to take that road because there is no other alternative road. Meanwhile people started gathering and asking us to give them aid too. It was a bit frightening moment but it passed and we were back in our cars to continue the journey to Toirac. The Boss, Mr. Guy-Emmanuel Thomas is a kind person, he apologised and asked that we continue to count on their service in order to help the most deserving.

We reached Toirac around 3:30 p.m and the Parish Priest, Fr. Bernard with his team was ready to welcome us. These men took all the supplies and put them in a hall where we later prepared the kits with basic necessities for 100 families. Each kit included; rice, bean, oil, flour, sugar, spaghettis, bath soap, washing powder, toothpaste and toothbrushes. 6 Tarpaulins were given to

Fr. Bernard for the use of the church services and the rest to some of the deserving families. There was a funereal service going on when the terrible earthquake took place. The priest was not hurt but 20 people died. The driver of Fr. Bernard who drove us from PAP to Toirac lost 5 members of his family. It was very distressing to hear all this and to see the church badly damaged. There are now some families living in the Parish house with the priest, others have put up tents in the courtyard in front of the Parish house while some others come only at night and sleep wherever they find a little space. Thank God the parish house is not affected.



After we finished making the kits, we were back on the road for another 45 minutes to go to Cayes to the Sacred Heart Brothers, who very generously had offered their house for us to stay.

The next morning we left the Sacred Heart Brothers' house at 8 a.m to go to Toirac to distribute the kits accompanied by Fr. Bernard and his team.

Most of the houses there have fallen flat.



People have lost almost all they had. It was very sad to see them in this condition.



We distributed the kits to small groups of 4 to 6 families gathered at one place to receive the aid.





Even with all that planning some people followed us back to the Parish house and demanded to get the kit. They got angry with us and with the Parish Priest that they didn't get anything and at that point we had nothing to give them. This was the most difficult part. With heavy hearts we had to move on.....



The good thing was that other organisations are coming and giving them food, hygienic kits & tarpaulins. At least these things will keep them going for some time.

We went with one of the community leaders and also a principal of a school, Mr. Jude Bolivar to Mailloux to see the damaged houses and meet some of the families there in order to plan our next trip. In this area many houses are damaged with big cracks but not fallen like in Toirac. They are not safe to sleep in so mostly people sleep in the courtyards. They mainly asked for medicine and tents or Tarpaulins. After our visit at around 3 p.m we had lunch in the parish house and headed back to Cayes. It rained the whole night and part of the morning I could get my mind off the families without any shelter.....

The third day we couldn't leave before 9 a.m because of the howling winds and heavy rain. It seemed like a mini cyclone. Bro. William, the superior of the Sacred Heart Community in Cayes accompanied us to visit some of the camps. In one of the Protestant Churches, Legliz Jesus Christ they have about 225 families who have taken shelter in. They are using the classrooms for the Sunday school, halls and have put some tents in the courtyard. It was very painful to see them displaced like that. They were looking at us with hopeful eyes to get whatever they could.....





That day the church team looking after them had no donations to cook anything for them. Since we had nothing with us we went to the depot to buy some sacks of rice, beans and gallon of oil for them and returned with these things. It brought them some joy and hope for tomorrow and a satisfaction to us to be able to help our brothers and sisters in these crises in whatever little way we could.

The same day we also had a meeting with some of the members of the teaching staff from the schools of the Sacred Heart Brothers. Almost all of them in one way or the other are affected and asked for tents or tarpaulin so they have somewhere to stay and safeguard whatever is left of their belongings. Looking too for some medicines as the nights are a bit cold in the south and without any proper shelter, many people are getting sick. It rains in the south, the earthquake affected areas of Haiti almost every second day if not daily.



We left Cayes early morning on the 27th August to return to Port-au-Prince and plan our next trip. After listening to the people and seeing them for ourselves we, ICM & RJMs Sisters will be focussing mainly on having mobile clinics and giving Tarpaulins to the affected families as the tents are not available in Haiti. We will continue to buy some food supplies too as it is always a necessity.

Some organizations with connections abroad have been able to bring in tents. There are many rules and regulations of bringing the aid to Haiti and the organizations have to be registered in Haiti to do that. Apart from that one has to have connections and pay a lot of taxes to get the donations coming in the country which is harder than one can imagine. If anyone would like to help in any way the best option is to send the money and we buy things locally and distribute to the people.

St. Claudine Thevenet encouraged us Religious of Jesus & Mary Sisters to live this excerpt “when we go alone on a long and difficult journey, we soon grow weary ... on the contrary, when several go together, they walk with assurance, courage, and fresh support.”

It goes well with our present mission in Haiti. I take this opportunity to thank all my RJM family, ICM Sisters, Sacred Heart Brothers, Family and Friends who have supported this mission in Haiti with their unwavering prayers, support and finances. Without their moral and financial support it would not have been possible to reach out to these beloved people of God who are now suffering and are in pain.

Port-au-Prince Community

Middia Doute, RJM

Yudith Pereira, RJM

Farzana Philip, RJM



The Core Team

From right to left

Sitting: Farah Julone (Postulant ICM),
Sr. Moreno Ledenila ICM

Standing: Sr. Annamma Augustin ICM,
Sr. Aballe Maria Herminia ICM,
Sr. Farzana Philip RJM,
Sr. Kiabembua Mayibelanga Veronique ICM,
Filerme Pierline (Postulant ICM)

Dironel Augustin (Driver of RJM community Port-au-Prince, apart from being a good driver, he has been a guardian and great force for us)

We were a good mixture of an international group of Haitians, African, Filipinos, Indian and Pakistani.

This photo is taken at SOUS LAVI (the source of life) in Toirac. It had an orphanage with 6 children. The priest, Fr. Emile Beldor, responsible of the place died but children were rescued.

In the Photo the Chalice and Monstrance you see the two sisters holding in their hands were found on top of the debris when we arrived. They will be given to Fr. Edmond Paschal, the founder of the orphanage, SOUS LAVI.

Some offhand information:

According to some people the earth just opened and many people disappeared during the earthquake.

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