

# Food abundance and scarcity

By: Cate Biro (All Saints)

## LEARN

Food. I think about it a few times a day to make decisions. What do I want for dinner, lunch, breakfast? Do I need to go shopping? If so, I have three options within half a mile, and at the store there is an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables, meats, every kind of canned goods, many types of premade meals, frozen foods of all kinds—a large amount of choice. When it comes to food, something I have never had to experience is the worry that each meal could be the last for a while. I have been lucky that I have always had food to eat and a variety of choices. Unfortunately, our friends in Belle Fontaine, Haiti, have not been so lucky. The people in Belle Fontaine often do not know when their next meal will be or what they will eat. Families struggle to provide food for their children and the elderly.

In the Fall of 2022, the United Nations reported a record 4,700,000 people facing acute hunger, 1,800,000 facing emergency hunger and 20,000 in the catastrophe hunger stage. That means 56% of the population in Haiti does not have a regular, dependable source for food. This lack of food is creating a high incidence of acute malnutrition and a high mortality rate at all ages but especially in the young and the old. It has increased incidence of selling land or eating seeds rather than planting them. Lack of food also increases petty crime, stealing items that can be sold for money or traded for food.



Another reason for lack of food is heavy dependence on imported foods, which have become unreliable. The organizations that have been helping in Haiti with food usually store food shipments in warehouses at the port. Unfortunately, the gangs have been raiding the warehouses and stealing the food. The gangs then sell the food at extortionate prices to the people.

Lack of food is also occurring due to the poor performance of gardens. Most families in Belle Fontaine have gardens that are subject to weather conditions, drought, monsoon rains, earthquakes or hurricanes, all of which affect crop yield. The loss of the fall crop, for instance, means that the crop cannot be stored to have food over the winter; it also means there are no seeds for spring planting.

High consumer prices also contribute to lack of food. They are 30% to 77% higher in Haiti than in other Caribbean countries.

A remedy to food insecurity, especially in rural areas, suggested by the United Nations, is supporting gardens with seed packets. Gardens can provide food for the farmers and give them the ability to take produce to market. Unfortunately, the gardens in Belle Fontaine are not thriving now because of drought, and there may not be seeds for a spring crop. There have been times when we have provided funding for seeds for the farmers at All Saints' sister parish.

### **DO**

Attend a daily Mass, adoration, Stations of the Cross or stop by church to pray. Give thanks for the abundance of food in our lives.

### **PRAY**

More than anything, Haiti needs our prayers right now. Please pray for the people of Haiti as they **H.O.P.E.** for the end of chaos and the return of peace to their country. This week in particular, we reflect on food insecurity in Haiti:

- **Help one another through prayer.** Pray that parishioners in our sister parish have increased access to food.
- **Open one's heart to God and fellow man.** Give thanks for the abundant access to food you have.
- **Pray daily for world peace.** Pray for peace and safety for the people of Notre Dame de Lourdes.
- **Enable to give others strength through our example.** Take time to attend a daily Mass or adoration and give thanks in prayer for the abundance of God's gifts.

Thank you for your support of our parish mission in Haiti. We would love to have you join the Haiti committee at All Saints. Please contact any member of Social Justice at St. John's for more information. We need your talents!



***Members of All Saints' sister parish receive shipments of food and seeds to help them replant their gardens after severe weather.***

If you would like to give financially, please visit St. John's website, "Online Giving," and select "Haiti Education Fund." You may also write a check with "Haiti Education" on the memo line. Each gift helps support our Haitian brothers and sisters through education, faith formation, pastoral functions and urgent needs. In particular, Haiti experienced crop failure due to drought last fall, which means they need seeds for their spring planting. Your generosity will help us send funds to Haiti to help farmers purchase seeds.

