

## ***The beginning...***

In 1990, Sacred Heart Church made contact with the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas (Nashville and Port-au-Prince). The initiative was taken by Father Roger Chabot and the first "sister parish" link was established with St. Peter-Paul Church in the Haitian Diocese of Jeremie. In 1998, Sacred Heart Church became a sister parish to Sacre-Coeur de Meyer, Diocese of Jacmel, on recommendation of the Twinning Program.



Sacre-Coeur de Meyer Rectory

## ***Where and Why ...***

Meyer is located near Jacmel, a city and arts center on the south coast of the island nation. The Meyer town is built along a major east-west route. It has some commercial sites, areas of small farms and orchards, and many roadside vendors. Most homes are made of concrete block, metal roofs, with one or two rooms. Water is drawn from a pipe at the roadside.

The principal need in 1998 was for a rectory since the "chapel" at Meyer had been designated a Parish and no residence existed. The rectory was built with a private donation from a Yarmouth parishioner to honor Father Richard O'Donnell of Sacred Heart Church upon his retirement. The residence was opened in June 2001 under the pastoral leadership of Father Hugues Berrette. In subsequent years, the Yarmouth church began regular financial help to Meyer, made an effort to understand the Haitian community and organized an exchange of visits.

## ***In gratitude...***

The Parish Commission on Social Justice and Peace believes that a solid sister parish relationship has been achieved because of support from parishioners at our four churches. It has been steady and generous over many years. Once a month, you have made your donation into the basket at the church door as you departed the weekend Mass. Through a parishioner, the Social Justice Commission was offered contact with the Roberts Foundation and received significant funding as a result. We simply say thank you and we hope you share pride in what we have accomplished with our Haitian friends.

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**Commission of  
Social Justice and Peace**

**Parish of the Holy Eucharist**

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**Our Sister Parish of Sacré-Coeur de Meyer**

*Piti piti zwazo f nich.  
"Little by little the bird  
makes his nest."*

**A Haitian creole proverb,**



## ***Earthquake - January 2010...***

A massive earthquake in Haiti destroyed the old church in Meyer. A plan began immediately for a new Sacre-Coeur. Father Simon Francois was pastor and built a temporary shelter for an outdoor Mass during the interim period. The plan for a new church was supported by parishioners of Sacred Heart Church, Yarmouth, and St. Jude Church, Freeport. Significant funding was offered by Catholic foundations -- the Koch Foundation of Florida and the Margaret A. Roberts Charitable Foundation of Kansas. In June 2014 the new Sacre-Coeur de Meyer was dedicated -- 18 months after the earthquake. Total cost was \$350,000.

## ***Build community...***

In 2012, the Meyer Parish developed a plan for improving its community support. It

focused on the work conducted by religious Sisters who had been invited to Meyer in 2009. These women were from the Congregational of Our Lady of Perpetual Help based in the Dominican Republic with the



Sisters Brigida Ruiz-Severino, Eulalia Reyes-Matos, Estelle Compradore.

motherhouse in St. Damien de Buckland, Quebec. They needed a facility for a children's food program, a place for training in job skills, for administering basic health aid and conducting religious studies. A residence was also needed for the Sisters. Construction began in 2014 and the new Cyvadier Parish Center was dedicated in June 2015. The cost was \$158,000 for the building and \$40,000 for the security wall around the compound. The building cost was covered by the Roberts Foundation. The wall was financed by our Parish and the religious order.

## ***Special project - church at Marbial...***

The January 2015 visit to Haiti by Father Daniel Greenleaf and several parishioners included another community in the Jacmel area, but one more remote from the coast, The purpose was to meet Father Phelan Chery of St. Therese of the Child Jesus Parish. The Twinning Program had identified this parish as a place in need. Discussions led to two initiatives: a commitment to support the parish school for a year with \$12,000; a plan for a medical team to conduct a clinic. In the next year, both goals were achieved.

## ***Support to Haitian churches...(not construction projects) -***

In the past year, funds were transferred to and accounted for by the current pastor at Meyer, Father Bertrand Dieuville, and by Sister Brigida Ruiz-Severino of the Center. This support includes the following:

- \* Quarterly funding for pastoral ministry for the Meyer church and rectory.
- \* Gifts to the Meyer parish on feast days of Christmas, Easter, June Feast of the Sacred Heart.
- \* Funds for school enrollment in September.
- \* Special assistance - hurricane aid, drought crises, food shortages.
- \* Support for the Meyer/Cyvadier Center, including a private monthly donation to maintain a feeding program for children.
- \* Education at the Marbial parish school with extra funds - designated for teacher salaries and food program for students.
- \* Totals are approximately \$11,000 annually to Meyer and \$12,000 to Marbial in 2015-2016.



Women learning handicrafts

## ***And a good story....How to rebuild a church in Haiti....***

After the January 2010 earthquake, Canadian military engineering units were assigned to the Jacmel area of Haiti for recovery efforts. In our concern about the Meyer church, three initiatives took place separately ...without coordination. A member of the Meyer parish council went to the Canadians at a temporary base in Jacmel and asked for help in clearing the destroyed Sacre-Coeur Church. This person was an older lady, petite but self-assured. At the same time, a retired Canadian Admiral contacted the Yarmouth church to offer help from his Parish of the Sacred Heart in Victoria, British Columbia. He then sent a message to the Canadian military command in Jacmel through Ottawa and suggested helping Meyer. Our Parish took the initiative to contact the Canadian military engineering base at Gagetown, New Brunswick, asking them to inform their units in Haiti about Meyer. The result....in March 2010 before the Canadian units withdrew from Haiti, a bulldozer, trucks and heavy equipment arrived in Meyer and cleared the rubble of the church.