

## Church of the Incarnation & Little Brothers and Little Sisters of the Incarnation

### **History of Our Twinning Relationship**

The Church of the Incarnation is twinned with the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of the Incarnation in Pandiassou, Diocese of Hinche, Haiti. Being in a twinning relationship allows us to see from another's perspective. We have the opportunity to shift our lens of focus from the American culture to see through the eyes and the experience of some of the most impoverished people in the world—to see from where the Haitians stand. Witnessing Haiti through their eyes brings us closer to Jesus, who was in solidarity with the poor. We are challenged to be awakened to Christ in both the suffering and in the joy of our Haitian sisters and brothers and then allow ourselves to be touched and transformed so that we can transform our hearts and the world.

Our twinning relationship began about 20 years ago. The first project the Little Brothers and Sisters asked for our help with was the building of a butchery for the village of Pandiassou. This was not what we had anticipated! While this was a difficult "sell" in our parish, the purpose was to allow the farmers of the village to process their livestock locally. This was completed within the first year of our relationship.

The Little Brothers and Sisters then asked for our help with supporting two schools in the area of Haiti where they worked. Our parish enthusiastically accepted this, and, soon, even boxes of school supplies were being sent down with every trip that we made. We continue to financially support these schools with money for teachers' salaries on an annual basis. It was on the third parish trip to Haiti that the concept for a medical clinic was developed. This was a major project but one that met with enthusiastic support from the parish. Approximately \$65,000 was raised within a period of less than six months. The students and faculty of the technical school run by the Little Brothers in Pandiassou built the clinic over an 18-month period. This was a "double blessing" because building the clinic offered work experience and employment for the technical school students while building a structure that would hopefully meet the needs of the village for years to come.

The clinic has subsequently been intermittently staffed by several young Haitian physicians fulfilling their public health requirement. Our parish continues to donate \$10,000/year in support of salaries for a physician and nurse in the clinic. Donations of medications, medical supplies, books, and equipment have also been a routine part of the contents of suitcases brought down by the parish health care workers when they volunteer their time in the clinic.

Several years ago, the Haiti Committee helped with funding to start a feeding program for the children in the Tipa Tipa primary school. In the past, the children received a daily mid-day meal supported by a grant from the George Soros Foundation, but those funds were exhausted. More than 500 children attend the school (a number that surged after the 2010 earthquake as refugees left Port Au Prince), and, for many of these children, the midday meal is the only substantive nutrition they receive regularly. The Little Sisters run the school and have estimated that it costs \$0.40 per meal to feed these children—a total annual cost of \$12,000. We continue to support this very necessary ministry. Thank you for your support!

We also helped to build what has become a maternal health clinic in Pandiassou. With limited prenatal care available in rural areas, this clinic is crucial to efforts that will reduce malnutrition and infant mortality rates. In 2012, we received a matching grant from a Diocese of Richmond fund to help fund a chicken-and-egg microfinancing project in the Pandiassou area; this helps families to have an additional source of food and, more importantly, to have a sustainable income that can support things like regular meals, repairing a roof, or sending children to school.



Haiti covers about one third of the island of Hispaniola, which is also home to the Dominican Republic. It is located in the Caribbean Sea, southeast of Florida.



Pandiassou is a town located in the Central Plateau district of Haiti, in the Diocese of Hinche. Look closely at the green section of the map in the center to see the city of Hinche.



The Diocese of Hinche surrounds the city of Hinche and includes Pandiassou, where much of the work of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of the Incarnation is conducted. Pandiassou is located to the west of Hinche.