

Via Latina 22

News From the General Administration - Society of Mary

EXTRA



Issue # 187 EXTRA -
January 18, 2010

Earthquake in Haiti

*Chronicle by Fr. Florian Royer-Chabot, SM,
Member of the Marianist Novitiate Community in Port-Au-Prince*

E-mails received from Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic)

This narrative picks up from the messages sent by Fr. Florian to Fr. Gérard Blais. We have kept the form of the narrative in short successive messages, in the form in which they were sent.

We are adding E-mail No. 9, written by Hervé Guillo du Bodan, this morning, 18 January 2010, upon his arrival in the region of Paris (France).

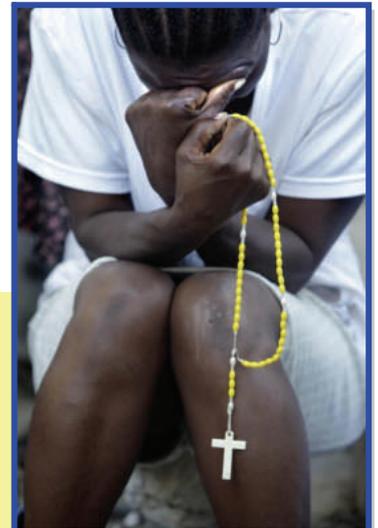
E-mail No. 1

From: florian royer-chabot
Date: Sun. 2010-01-17 09:56
TO:: Eugene Cote; Blais, Gérard
Re : De Florian

Good morning,

I'm writing just a couple of words to say that, by the grace of God, I am OK and so are all the Brothers. I am in Santo Domingo and waiting to return to Canada. But I have no passport. It is under the ruins. I have to wait until tomorrow to go to the Embassy. The two Haitian Brothers are OK for the moment. Thanks for your prayers.

I will write later if the internet is functioning. Love and peace,
Florian



E-mail No. 2

From: florian royer-chabot
Date: Sun. 2010-01-17 10:16

Greetings Gérard,

I see that you are sending out news, so I will give you the latest. We had to make decisions quickly. First of all, we were obliged to suspend the formation programs. We have spoken with our young men and they all agreed that they should return to their families. All of them were worried, both the young men and their relatives.

Telephone communications are practically impossible. Recharge cards can't be found. I'll continue this later....

E-mail No. 3

From: florian royer-chabot

Date: Sun. 2010-01-17 10:22

I'm continuing the earlier e-mail....

The prenovices left Thursday evening. Then Friday morning it was the turn of the novices. A hard separation.

5 of us SM's remain. After a quick meeting of the 5, the Haitian Brothers suggested that we leave for our own countries, since the situation here is untenable. Hervé and Stan are getting ready. For myself, I have no passport. It is under the ruins.

So Friday about noon Hervé and Stan left on a motorbike. It was the only thing we could find for transportation.

There is no more gas, since the service stations are destroyed.

I'll send you more later because I'm afraid the internet will be cut. I'll follow up.

Florian

E-mail No. 4

From: florian royer-chabot

Date: Sun. 2010-01-17 10:31

To continue my narrative.

I am here alone with our 2 Haitian Brothers. Their courage is admirable and so is their resourcefulness. For the moment we need both. What can we do? We have to abandon the house that is still standing but uninhabitable, and especially since there are two other high buildings that are threatening to fall down upon our heads. The departure of the others has consoled me a bit: at least if it collapses they will not be there. So we are gathering up all the things scattered around the house. We are stuffing it all inside. We're getting out our tents because we had found tents at the FIC [*Brothers of Christian Instruction*] and we have 6 tents for sleeping.

We still have a little food, some rice, biscuits, dried fruit. We brought everything in order to survive and to give to others.

We are locking the doors with skewers. None of the doors closed. The iron is all twisted. We put our bags on our backs and in a wheelbarrow. A young man helped us carry it all.

More later.....

E-mail No. 5

From: florian royer-chabot

Date: Sun. 2010-01-17 10:46

To continue....

I should say that before the departure of Hervé and Stan we said a short prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and I distributed all the hosts that remained. We all need strength from the Lord. We let ourselves cry about it.

So we said goodbye to the house with all that belongs to us inside it. In the street, everyone is moving with their bags, people are fleeing the city. We pass by many collapsed buildings. More than half are flattened, bodies are lying on the ground. They have not yet been picked up. The stench is terrible. People are walking around wearing masks.

We got to the Collège of the FIC at Delmas 33. They certainly received us like brothers, as did also the Sisters. We put our tents alongside theirs. It is 5:45 p.m. They tell us that more aftershocks are predicted for the night. Brother Eddy decides to return to the house in order to make contact with the night watchman whom we had met the evening before. He had said he would come tonight. Eddy returns in the evening. He had negotiated with the watchman to protect the house. That was a good thing to do.

The Sisters give us a plate of rice, the leftovers from noon, which we eat with great pleasure.
To be continued...

Florian

E-mail No. 6

From: florian royer-chabot

Date: Sun. 2010-01-17 10:52

Good morning,

I don't know if I'm getting through to you or not, but I'll continue. Three of us are still here: the 2 Haitians are thinking about tomorrow: where can they go?

For myself, I plan to go to the Embassy. The Sisters have asked me to accompany them, perhaps directly to the airport.

Good...the Sisters where I am are calling now to come to lunch. So... I will get back to you later...

Don't worry about me...I'm in god hands.

Florian

Last minute (from Port-au-Prince)

[Jean-Eddy is one of the first religious from Haiti, with Yxnoki Chevalier. They were members of the Prenovitiante community at the moment of the earthquake. We are inserting his message among those of Fr. Florian.]

From: jeaneddy pierre

Date: Sun. 2010-01-17 13:33

Dear friends, Sisters and Brothers,

In a few words here are the news from my dear Haiti.

Last Tuesday an earthquake ravaged all the areas of the Haitian capital, thousands of dead, of injured, of homeless and people left without anything. The situation is truly painful, deplorable, inexplicable, desolating, etc.....

In fact, the Marianist Brothers, the Novices and prenovices are all alive by the grace of God. **THE LORD IS OUR BULWARK, OUR FORTRESS, THE ROCK UPON WHICH WE TAKE REFUGE. YES, MAY THE NAME OF THE Lord BE PRAISED. BROTHERS STANISLAUS, HERVE AND FLORIAN HAVE GONE HOME TO THEIR COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO RECOVER THEIR STRENGTH.** Father Gustave is very well off where he is currently. The Marianist houses of Haiti are destroyed.

United in prayer,

Your EDDY who loves you much

Your EDDY

(Pierre Jean EDDY)

E-mail No. 7

From: florian royer-chabot [mailto:floralie@hotmail.com]

Date: Sun. 2010-01-17 14:37

Greetings, Gérard,

Thank you for sending out these messages. That will reassure some people. I just learned that the Sisters

of the Good Shepherd, who left this morning for the airport, will fly this evening at 5 pm, but I don't know if it is for Canada or for the USA. Their Superior General is American. It was the day that they arrived that the earthquake hit. The two of them had hardly gotten into their rooms when everything began. From her window the Superior General saw the residence of the FIC Brothers collapse. Her Sister was pinned in by a piece of furniture that fell. The 2 of them were able to escape unharmed.

To continue with my narrative. I speak with Eddy and Chevalier. Hervé had given them cash in gourdes [*Haitian money*]; I myself had practically nothing except American dollars.

All of a sudden 3 Sisters arrive and speak with the Brothers. They are Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. They come to see how they might help us. One of them makes some phone calls and then, after a time, they tell us: "Get ready. We're taking you to Santo Domingo." They are truly angels from heaven. Unbelievable. I say goodbye to Eddy and Chevalier. All three of us have strong feelings. I am crying hot tears.

They are the ones to console me. We leave in the Sisters' jeep.

I'll stop here. I'm still crying as I write this narrative to you.

Thanks to all for your prayers.

I hope to see you again soon, hoping that the Canadian government will do something for us. Thanks, Gérard, for maintaining the contact.

Florian

E-mail No. 8

From: florian royer-chabot [mailto:floralie@hotmail.com]

Date: Sun. 2010-01-17 14:55

Greetings, Eugene,

I hope you have read the narrative of the events that I have written to Gérard. I would like for you to tell Wildy that we have taken steps to contact his father. Eddy has done everything possible to find his home. His father is alive, thank God. That's all that I know. Frantzy's mother and his little brother are alive. No one dead. We have no news of Wilquin's sister. But all the South seems to have been spared. Chevalier was to leave for Jérémie yesterday. Gustave is safe. He will probably run into problems getting out of there, but at least his life is not in danger.

That was what I wanted to say to reassure our Haitian Brothers. Cap Haitien also seems safe. Eddy's mother came to see Eddy and has left. She telephoned that she had arrived. What courage!

Let's stay united in prayer. For myself, I'm still in shock. All my body is still shaking. And I am crying all day long. I am exhausted, but alive.

Bye.

Florian (Royer-Chabot)

E-mail No. 9

FROM: Hervé GDB [<mailto:hervegdb@yahoo.fr>]
SENT: Monday 18 January 2010 12:34
TO: Christiane BARBAUX; Agathe SENOU; Guillaume GERVET; Gilles de ALMEIDA; Dominique LE BRENN; Gustave LAMONTAGNE; Paul-Arthur Gilbert; Eugene COTE; Robert CHARLOT Secrétariat Marianiste; Dominique MICHEL; Jean-Marie LECLERC; Eddie ALEXANDRE; Charles-Henri MOULIN; Manuel CORTES; André FETIS SM-AG-REL; ami2tous@yahoo.fr; Sr Marie-Joelle BEC; Sr M.Laurence COSNARD; lamiotte90@orange.fr; Marie-Thérèse LAURIAUT

RE: Haiti

Dear Brothers, dear Sisters, dear friends,

This Monday morning 18 January, I have just arrived in France from Haiti at Orly Airport with our Brother Stanislaus Limdeyou and Agnes Dumas Bonkougou on the same plane. For the moment I am with my sister Françoise near Paris, Stan is at Antony, and Agnes has gone home—her husband was waiting for her at the airport.

As you all know, the situation in Haiti and especially in Port-au-Prince is absolutely terrible. It is a spectacle of total destruction with an incalculable number of victims, many of whom remain still blocked under the wreckage, with a stench of death throughout the entire city. People have assembled together in some spaces, but almost without any aid for the moment, while we have seen tons of humanitarian aid coming from many countries set down on the tarmac at the airport without being distributed. All the survivors have relatives who have died or who have been injured in this catastrophe.

As for the Marianist Family, the 5 religious, the 6 novices and the 5 prenovices are unhurt. The prenovitiate is totally destroyed, and it is a miracle that the Brothers and the prenovices were able to escape from the wreckage without harm.

The new house of the Novitiate is still standing, but cracked everywhere and uninhabitable, with an adjoining professional center of 5 stories, of which a part has already fallen into the courtyard of the novitiate, and the rest suspended in the air, threatening with every new tremor to fall upon the novitiate. All the community of the novitiate was outside the house at the moment of the quake, and no one was hurt by it. Among the novices, several have members of their immediate families who are dead, and other members from whom there is no news.

After reaching agreement among the 5 professed and after discussing it with our young men, all the novices and prenovices went home on 14 January to their respective families, in the places that had not been affected by the quake. Our two Haitian Brothers, Eddy and Chevalier, had to do the same. We are keeping in contact with them by telephone.

We have been in contact by phone with several members of the MLC, including Wesly Etienne and Louis Jocelyn of the national Coordinators; we had also met with other members, especially with Myriam Arnault (of the National Committee of Friends of Faustino) and Guirlaine (of the MLC of Croix de Bouquets), who were not affected by the quake, as well as several Faustino animators of our parish and in Croix des Bouquets.

As some of you know already, Father Florian (who has no passport), was able to take advantage of an evacuation by jeep to Santo Domingo, thanks to the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, and should be traveling back to Canada as soon as possible.

Let us remain strongly united in prayer, in these tragic circumstances where so many gestures of solidarity have been manifested.

Brother Hervé