



Catholic Courier

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 107 NO. 23 ■ THURSDAY, March 7, 1996 ■ 75¢ ■ 12 PAGES

Haiti



Courtesy of Rose-marie Chierici
A boy sits in a doorway in the village of Borgne, where Corpus/Haiti is helping to rebuild the health clinic.



Courtesy of Robert McNamara
Robert McNamara, a St. Louis parishioner who oversees New York Friends of the Orphans, poses with Haitian children.

Diocesan Catholics work to help nation

With the help of parishioners at St. Louis Parish in Pittsford, hundreds of Haitian orphans in the capital city, Port-au-Prince, are clothed, fed, and sheltered as they learn to read and write in a safe environment.



Thanks to parishioners at St. Joseph's Parish in Penfield and physicians in the Rochester area, Port-au-Prince clinics are receiving medical assistance and supplies for severely impoverished inhabitants.

And with the aid of Corpus Christi Parish in Rochester, Borgne, a rural town of 6,000 people on Haiti's northern coast, will soon have a health clinic and residents will begin to fix the town's mammoth sanitation problems. According to Corpus volunteers overseeing the project with Borgne residents, a temporary health clinic was erected next to the site of the future clinic Feb. 26.

Again and again, diocesan volunteers stress how they could not pass up an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of their hemispheric

neighbors.

"I think it's important to be involved with the poor in general," commented Deacon Thomas R. Ecker of St. Joseph's, who has traveled to Haiti with medical supplies. "I think we are baptized to take care of the lesser of our brothers and sisters ... (Haitians) are in such desperate need of help. That's kind of where I want to be."

Volunteers at all three parishes are united in their concern for the Haitians, who, according to U.S. government and United Nations reports, are the poorest people in the Western Hemisphere. Until 1994, Haitians enjoyed little, if any, respite from almost 200 years of brutal dictatorships, some propped up by U.S. military and financial support, such as when U.S. troops occupied Haiti 1915-34 to help install a repressive dictatorship.

Meanwhile, Haiti observers note that a mostly indifferent wealthy elite ignored the needs of the country's people.

Continued on page 10

Story by staff writer Rob Cullivan