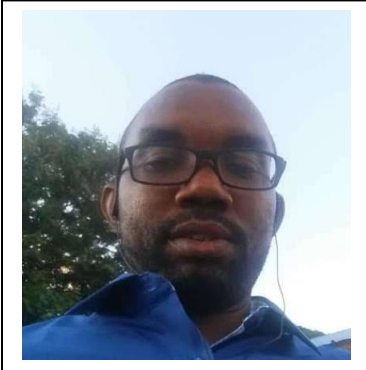


St Therese Parish Twin

Gaspard, Haiti

Our Priest, Fr Champagne



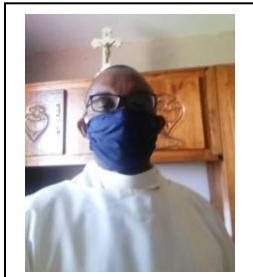
In 2017, the Bishop of Port-de-Paix appointed Father Guerson Champagne as the Pastor of St Therese Parish in Gaspard, Haiti. With the help

of Joan Martin, the St Ambrose Haiti Committee began establishing routine communication with Fr Champagne shortly thereafter.

Due to local gang violence in around Gaspard, the Bishop withdrew the previous priest for safety. While the parish was essentially closed a priest would make intermittent stops in Gaspard and the surrounding chapels to have Mass. Once the violence in the area resolved, the Bishop then reopened St Therese and placed Fr Champagne in the community.

Over the course of the last 2 years, our committee has kept in contact with St Therese Parish and Fr Champagne using *WhatsApp* (an international text messaging platform) and e-mail on cellphones. Due to the rugged terrain and mountainous region, cellphone service is often very difficult to maintain. Add in the additional struggles of a poor nation and language barriers, and you quickly realize communication becomes quite difficult.

We hope to invite Fr Champagne to visit St Ambrose Parish in the future! But for now, he continues to offer his prayers for our parish families.



St Therese Parish School

In addition to celebrating the sacraments with the St Therese Parish again, Fr Champagne has also taken on the responsibility of improving the parish school.



In October 2018, the school suffered further damage from an earthquake leaving many of the schoolrooms uninhabitable due to potential collapse.

This picture of a schoolroom shows a large crack in the wall where it joins the ceiling. Because this and other rooms were unusable, several grades moved to the church for their classes.



In June 2019, Fr Champagne began a building project for a new school. He resourcefully found some funding from a Canadian group *Solidarity Haiti* and *Caritas International* and broke ground in February 2020. The locals using their own hands, heads, and donkeys have delivered the raw materials of rock, sand, cement, and steel.



Parish Twinning Program of the Americas
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Continued "St Therese Parish School"...



The new school will include 8 classrooms and will be used by students from Pre-school through 12th grade. Primary grades will go to class in the morning. Secondary grades will go to class in the afternoon.

When *Parish Twinning Program of the Americas (PTPA)* twinned St Ambrose with St Therese, the focus was on supporting a medical clinic, which still exists today. Over the 20 years of twinning, St Ambrose Haiti Committee began to support also the educational needs of the parish school. Currently, our financial contributions help support the teachers' salaries that can often not be paid due to parents' inability to pay tuition costs.

COVID-19 in Gaspard

As many feared, the global pandemic of COVID-19 has also impacted Haiti. With such devastating poverty, vast government corruption, and inadequate healthcare systems, fears that COVID-19 could wipe out their population spurred multiple non-government organizations (NGOs) to work collaboratively on prevention strategies. Through Dr Stone's work with the *Parish Twinning Program of the Americas*, we were able to connect Fr Champagne and the St Therese community with a program called *Haiti COVID-19 Preventive Response (Haiti-CPR)*. This collaborative included *PTPA*, *Raising Haiti*, and *Food For the Poor*. Together they helped provide education to locals, using both spoken and written Creole messaging. It also helped to secure some masks and food for our communities.

Additionally, our St Ambrose Haiti Committee voted to establish an "emergency fund" for Fr Champagne to use at his discretion to obtain cloth masks, soaps, chlorine tablets, and water buckets, and drugs such as *Tylenol*, *Motrin*, and *Aspirin*.



By the Grace and Mercy of God, the community of Gaspard has been spared from any COVID-19 infection as of the writing of this newsletter. We continue to pray for the health and safety of our brothers and sisters in Haiti and give thanks to God for His continued protection.

How to Get Involved

The St Ambrose Haiti Committee is always seeking new members! By signing up to be a member you are taking another step in living out Jesus' call to "*Love one another, as I have loved you.*"

Your volunteering with the committee does not mean you have to travel to Haiti! It allows you to serve Christ, by serving the poor. In Matthew 25, Jesus said, "Truly, I tell you, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me." Come join us in serving Christ by caring for and praying with our brothers and sisters in Haiti. We meet quarterly for about 1.5 hours.

To join, simply contact John Rennekamp (rennekampfam@cinergymetro.net) or Ryan Stone (drstonedo@gmail.com). You may also contact the St Ambrose Parish Office and Leticia will put you in contact with us.

We appreciate your financial support via the monthly envelope and/or ETF programs and encourage others to join our efforts!

