

## National Religious Vocation Conference     January 2010

All of us are overwhelmed by the horrific devastation and suffering that continue in the aftermath of the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti last week. I take this opportunity to share with you some of this information now and how NRVC is responding.

*(I apologize in advance if some of this information is changed or not completely accurate. Communication continues to be regularly updated.)*

- As was reported in earlier news broadcasts, the Most Rev. Joseph Segre-Milot, Archbishop of Port-au-Prince was killed in addition to other diocesan priests and seminarians. The cathedral, archbishop's residence, and diocesan major seminary are in ruins. At this time, there is only one Catholic church left standing in Port-au-Prince-- Notre Dame d' Altagrace on Delmas.
- The Inter-Institute Center for Religious Formation, known by its French initials CIFOR, was one of the many buildings in Port-au-Prince that collapsed after the earthquake. Seminarians and novices from several religious orders were in the building at the time. Those confirmed dead include one Oblate of Mary Immaculate and one Spiritan. The Montfort Missionaries also reported that eight of their students were killed when the building collapsed. The Montforts also lost their novice master as well.
- The Salesians have said that two of their members in formation died when the St. Francis de Sales Institute in Port-au-Prince was destroyed. Other schools of theirs have been demolished as well. Approximately 200 students and teachers perished. Brother Hubert Sanon, the first Haitian to profess as a Salesian brother, was also killed. He was 85 years old.
- The Daughters of Charity lost one newly professed Haitian sister in addition to several convents.
- The Brothers of Christian Instruction had two brothers killed when part of their residence was demolished.
- The Religious of Jesus and Mary say that two sisters and two candidates survived, but are homeless and injured. Their convent did not survive.
- Three Daughters of Wisdom lost their lives and three other sisters are injured.
- A children's hospital run by the Camillians was partially destroyed, but they continue to tend to hundreds of traumatized and injured children. The Camillians also run the only hospital in Port-au-Prince that was not damaged. The community and limited staff are presently providing care to hundreds of people with few medical supplies.
- Although the Christian Brothers have reported no deaths or injuries, their novitiate has been converted to a shelter for homeless religious sisters.

- St. Gerard School, which includes a primary and secondary school run by the Redemptorists, collapsed killing most of its 300 students and teachers. All of the Redemptorists are safe, but they estimate damages to be in the millions.
- One Dominican Sister of Charity of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin was injured and one of their two residences was completely destroyed.
- College Canado, Ecole St Jean run by the Sacred Heart Brothers was completely demolished.
- The Sisters of St. Ann have lost their dispensary, school, and two of their residences.
- A school run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis is also destroyed.
- A missionary Sister of the Humility of Mary, from Villa Maria, PA, suffered a concussion and broken rib.
- Although the Viatorians lost their retreat house and receptionist, over 400 people have now set up a makeshift camp on their property.
- Finally, my own Congregation of Holy Cross is mourning the death of one of our newly professed seminarians killed in the earthquake. In addition, our primary and secondary school, Ensemble Scolaire Basile Moreau, and provincial residence were completely destroyed.

It's absolutely mindboggling. Almost three quarters of the population of Haiti is Catholic with approximately 1,500 religious priests, brothers, and sisters ministering in the country. I know that there are more stories of religious congregations who have been affected by this devastation and whose members are heroically responding to the desperate situation.

To learn more about Catholic Relief Services and their humanitarian efforts for the people of Haiti, please go to their website at [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org). Further information about relief for Haiti, and a special video appeal for help by Archbishop Timothy Dolan, Chairman of Catholic Relief Services, can be found at the following link: <http://www.usccb.org/haiti/>.

Let us unite our prayers for the victims and survivors of the Haitian earthquake, for the rescue and relief workers, and for government leaders as they coordinate their humanitarian responses.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Patroness of Haiti, pray for us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Brother Paul Bednarczyk, CSC  
Executive Director