

Haiti Corner – May 17 and 18, 2014

Haiti and Cholera: An Update by Lynn Connolly - Gesu Twinning Committee Member

According to an article in the April 20, 2014, New York Times, “... in some ways, Haiti is even less equipped to tackle cholera than it was three years ago.” As a registered nurse and member of the Gesu Twinning Committee, I found this article very troubling. I’d like to summarize some of the key points in the article written by Randal C. Archibold and Somini Sengupta and encourage you to read the entire article at www.nytimes.com

- A major problem is that the United Nations (UN) has only been able to raise about a quarter of the \$38 billion it needed last year to provide lifesaving supplies, especially the most basic supplies like water purification tablets.
- Clinics have run short of oral rehydration tablets to treat this debilitating disease.
- Some treatment centers in rural areas have shut down and aid groups working in these areas have moved onto other crises.
- The UN has not been able to raise the \$5 million necessary to vaccinate 600,000 vulnerable people right away, especially as the rainy season approaches.
- The UN has not publicly admitted its fault in bringing cholera to Haiti, although forensic studies, including one ordered by the UN, have proven this (see NY Times article).
- 8,562 people in Haiti have died of cholera since the outbreak began in October 2010.
- 40,000 people could become infected when the rainy season begins. It is essential for the UN to help solve the cholera problem because Haiti’s healthcare system is broken and ill-equipped to deal with it.

In my opinion, it is time for the UN to fulfill its promises to the Haitian government and its people to take active steps toward eradicating the threat of cholera and improving the water and sanitation infrastructure in Haiti. Steps you can take as a parishioner:

- 1.) Educate yourself on this important issue.
- 2.) Pray for the people of Haiti impacted by cholera. Pray for those who are assisting them in their access to clean water and better health care.
- 3.) Gesu Parish has provided funds that will allow our twin parish, Sts. Simon & Jude, to build a new water purification system which will allow the community access to cleaner and safer water. Donations are accepted throughout the year for our various sister-parish projects.