



Montfortian Participation at Vatican conference on the Rebuilding of Haiti

At the Vatican on Saturday, January 10 a conference was held to reflect on the 5th anniversary of the 7.0 earthquake which destroyed much of the Haitian capital. Over 300,000 people perished. The Company of Mary suffered a tremendous loss of one priest and ten scholastics.

The Pontifical Council *Cor Unum* and the *Pontifical Commission for Latin America* sponsored the conference in collaboration with the Haitian episcopal Conference. The presentations and conversations focused on the work of rebuilding the many structures that were destroyed over the past 5 years. But there was also even more conversation on the work of “rebuilding” people who were so deeply impacted by the earthquake and recovery efforts in 2010. Representing the SMM was Father Jim Brady, our General Bursar, and Father Gerd Euteneuer of the German Delegation who has been personally involved in many projects in Haiti for more than 40 years. There was also the presence of the Daughters of Wisdom, Isabelle Retailleau and Anne Marie Beaudoin. Isabelle is one of the General Councilors and Anne Marie is the General Bursar.

A highlight of the day was an audience that the group had with the Holy Father at midday. He greeted the whole group and then each participant individually. His remarks challenged the work that still must be completed because he asks that all the efforts of rebuilding be concentrated on helping the people and not just being concerned about buildings. All the efforts being done must be complementary, he said. Also, the work of rebuilding must give witness to the strength of the Church’s unified efforts to live according to the Gospel’s mandate of a life of charity. The Church is to witness the love of Christ in how it works together and this includes the different dioceses, religious institutes, non-profit organizations and governmental agencies with which it collaborates. The Holy Father expressed his deepest gratitude for the sacrifices that have been made on behalf of the Haitian people and promised his prayer for the continued efforts to reach the goal of rebuilding the identity and joy of the Haitian people.

After the audience with the Holy Father the Montfortian delegation had a chance to speak with the recently appointed cardinal of Haiti, His Eminence Chibley Langlois who expressed his deepest thanks for the Montfortian family’s long commitment to the people of Haiti and for all that has been done to work with the local church in the effort of reconstruction.

-Fr. James Brady, SMM