



Center for Evangelization, Spirituality and Mental Health

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti - At the invitation of the Montfort Province of Haiti, under the aegis of the Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Monsignor Francisco Escalante MOLINA, took place at “*Saint Louis Roi de France*” Parish in Port-au-Prince – after the Eucharistic celebration of 10:00 a.m. - the inauguration of the new buildings of the Center for Evangelization, Spirituality and Mental Health (CESSA), Sunday January 21, 2024.

CESSA, a small seed thrown into the ground, germinated and gradually grew. 14 years ago, in fact, on January 19, 2010, a Center for the integration of spirituality in the treatment of trauma was born in the thought and heart of Fr. Wismick JEAN-CHARLES, SMM, its founder and current director, in the desire to tackle the construction and reconstruction of the “*Haitian being*” weakened by the symbolic wounds resulting from the devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010. In the open air or in restricted spaces, CESSA has always been inhabited by a presence of Christ Wisdom and dedicated from the start to the restoration of human vital forces.

The Eucharistic celebration brought together around the Apostolic Nuncio, priests and consecrated persons, therapists and students from schools where CESSA offers psychological assistance services to traumatized children and vulnerable adolescents, as well as the faithful of the “*Saint-Louis Roi de France*” parish. The readings and the gospel of the day highlighted the value as well as the liberating power of the Word of God, committing us to pronounce within a helping relationship a word which raises and gives meaning to engage the brother or sister in distress to make a new start.

In his appropriate remarks delivered during the homily, Monsignor MOLINA addressed the faithful and the therapists. To the faithful, he strongly advised the path of conversion, the one which requires leaving the net, *"the security of the profession of fishermen"* in the case of the first disciples, with a view to working for the advent of the reign of God, not as geographical place but as a person: Christ. To priests and therapists, he recommended *"working with faith, passion and professionalism"*, because through them, *"it is Christ who continues his work of redemption"*. He then continued by addressing the ethical dimension of their mission: *"Do not give in to the temptation of abuse of power or harassment, do not abuse the fragile people who come to you, but pursue the mission of the Church which is an expert in humanity."*

Divine Providence did not allow itself to be overcome in generosity. Concerned about the development of CESSA, he inspired our Holy Father, Pope Francis, through the Dicastery of Charity to donate funds, via the Nunciature, for the construction of this new building to house this Center called to be a place for psychological assessments, a space for the protection of minors, a home for the growth of vulnerable people, wishing to cultivate a unified life and grow in humanity.

Before the final blessing, the Reverend Fr. Jean Jacques SAINT LOUIS, SMM, Provincial Superior, first thanked the Lord; then in turn, expressed his gratitude to Our Holy Father, Pope Francis for his great concern, the Apostolic Nuncio Monsignor Francisco Escalante MOLINA, for his closeness, the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince Monsignor Max-Leroys MESIDOR, the Previous and current Montfort general administration, the engineers, the faithful, all those who played their part so that CESSA can, from January 22, 2024, inhabit a new space *"with pride and dignity"*.

At the end of the Mass, there was then the procession of the Church towards the new building for the cutting of the ribbon and the prayer of blessing led by the Apostolic Nuncio, the handing over of the parchments to the first group of participants of the *Program "Psychotherapy and Mental Health"* implemented by CESSA for the benefit of school principals, teachers, nurses, and community and religious leaders. Children benefiting from the *"CESSA Psychological Assistance Program" - the "Cit  Soleil" school and the Foyer Notre Dame orphanage -* were present to brilliantly perform dances from our rich and harmonious folklore. Fr. Robert Junior REMARAIS, SMM, for his part, with his guitar, kept the audience in suspense with his magnificent song. Fraternal feasts to the delight of all the guests closed this solemn day.

On this Sunday of the Word of God, it was time for gratitude. Common thanksgiving where we remained linked: offering of our lives, offering of this magnificent work, welcomed as a gift!

"In the era of daily stress in Haiti and the repeated collective trauma of the population", it is good to know that there is still an oasis of peace, a living space to cultivate empathy, strengthen resilience and revive hope, a place where everyone can have access to dance therapy or through play.

It must be emphasized, according to the Provincial of Montfortains, that this space is a first step towards the major project of setting up the *"Villa Mervent"*, in Furcy, where residential treatment will be offered for priests, seminarians, religious and consecrated women of the Church of Haiti in situations of distress and in search of human, spiritual and psychological rehabilitation.

That under the movement of the Holy Spirit, with the help of the Virgin Mary, Queen of All Hearts – under the intercession of our Founders, Saint-Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort and Blessed Marie Louise of Jesus, CESSA, the seed which bears fruit on Haitian soil - can contribute, through the primacy of the holistic dimension of its mission, to the development of every man and of all man.

Sister Rose-Marly JOSEPH, FdIS