

From the Diocese of Chicago

January 13, 2010

Dear Friends in Christ,

Like all of you I am shocked and saddened by the news of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti yesterday afternoon, causing massive destruction and loss of life in the capital Port-au-Prince , and surrounding communities. This is a terrible situation for the people of Haiti , our hemisphere's poorest nation, who have lived without adequate housing, education, employment and services for decades, and now face a crisis of unimaginable proportions in the wake of this catastrophe.

Haiti is home to the largest diocese in the Episcopal Church, the 'Eglise Episcopale d'Haïti, which has over 180,000 members and 98 churches, and over 200 schools. Many of these churches and schools have been damaged or destroyed, and members have died or been injured. With phone and internet service disrupted, it has been difficult to determine the extent of the quake's impact on the church and communities. We do know that Haiti 's bishop, The Rt. Rev. Jean Zaché Duracin and his wife are safe though his wife suffered an injury to her foot during the quake. Churches in Grand Colline and St. Etienne were destroyed as were the St. Vincent's School for the Handicapped in Port-au-Prince , and the Ecole Le Bon Samaritan in Carrefour. Ecole Le Bon is a Jubilee Center whose liaison is our diocesan Jubilee Ministry officer, Philip Mantle.

More troubling is the lack of contact with two volunteers serving in the Episcopal Church's Young Adult Service Corps, one of whom is from our diocese: Mallory Holding of St. Mark's in Glen Ellyn . We have reports that the apartment where she lives in Port-au-Prince is still standing though buildings in the adjacent college and seminary complex were heavily damaged or destroyed. I ask your prayers for Mallory, and her colleague Jude Harmon of the Diocese of Massachusetts, and the dean of the theological seminary where Mallory worked, The Rev. Oge Beauvoir. Also keep in prayer Mallory's mother, the Rev. Suzann Holding, former rector of Church of Our Saviour , Elmhurst , who now is serving as the canon to the ordinary in the Diocese of San Diego.

For me the sight of the destruction in news reports is particularly painful having been in Port-au-Prince just four months ago for a Province 9 meeting of the Center for Theological Education for Latin America and the Caribbean. The buildings we toured, The Holy Trinity Cathedral and its school, the convent of the Sisters of St. Margaret, and the College of St. Pierre are now destroyed or heavily damaged; and the faculty, students and clergy displaced. A once vibrant city is facing its gravest challenge since its founding more than 200 years ago. As our presiding bishop noted in her message to the church, this disaster will seriously set back the development work underway in Haiti by our church

agencies and of other churches and non-profits. So in addition to your daily prayers, I ask you to make a gift to Episcopal Relief and Development in support of their emergency relief and recovery work in Haiti . The agency has established a special Haiti fund that you can give to online at <https://www.er-d.org/donate-select.php> On behalf of Bishop Lee, I am also encouraging our congregations to designate the offering for Sunday January 24 for the Episcopal Relief and Development Haiti fund. Our diocese, which has been a staunch supporter for the relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina and the South Asia Tsunami, now is given another opportunity to show its generosity and commitment to our baptismal pledge to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves. Both Bishop Lee and I thank you for your untiring support and heart-felt giving to our brothers and sisters in Haiti .

When we learn of any news of Mallory and our church partners in Haiti , we will post the information on the email network and the Connect newsletter. For now please pray for the people in Haiti , and the volunteers and workers who will be assisting them in their recovery.

Yours in Christ,

Victor A. Scantlebury

Assistant Bishop of Chicago

Update late January 13, 2010 from St. Mark's: Mallory Holding is ok and camping in a tent in Haiti.