

Common Apostolic Mission: Report on Trip to Haiti

Central Region invited members to travel to Hispaniola to celebrate the World Day of Prayer in Haiti on March 25th. Ambassadors included Central EA JP Horrigan, SJ., National EA Trevor Scott, SJ., Magee McGuire of Central Region and Dominique Cyr from CVX Canada. The insertion experience was hosted by Fr. Mario Serrano, who directs activities from the centre for Social Justice, Centro Bono. Although we did not meet up with him, he was in constant touch with us through JP who was our point person.

Highlights included a visit to the Jesuit School sponsored by CLC Central Region and CVX Canada, called St. Ignatio. Magee left a donation given by her CWL for them to receive backpacks as per their stated need prior to the trip. We also visited a student who received a wheel chair for her mobility needs last year from Central Region. She is now in High School and doing very well. It was a pleasure to see how promising this school is for 30 students, many of Haitian descent.

We met with University students at Centro Bono who spoke about the challenges of finishing their education in a country that denies their citizenship and therefore their existence.

We moved on Dajabon, the city that borders Haiti where we met the directors of the shelter project for street boys entering the DR from Haiti. There were about 30 teenagers participating in a mixed program of improving their mental, emotional and physical welfare. Their Teacher was a volunteer from Chile and she had still not been able to establish an education program in full but we witnessed one project where they built shoe boxes to be sold to or used by people in the trade of shoe polishing.

We traveled to Port au Prince by air as the highways remained dangerous even though the violence pre election announcement had settled down. We were hosted by the Jesuit fathers there and on the Sunday, the highlight was the meeting of the communities from Port au Prince. The day was full of song, sharing and stories.

This trip passed by at lightning speed and still has continuing impacts on our understanding of the challenges for Christians in Hispaniola. We have yet to share our pictures and stories to make any presentations. We look forward to the first one which will be presented hopefully by Fr. Trevor Scott at the Central Regional Assembly on June 5-7.

As an aside, it is very disconcerting to know that a father of the Church, Cardinal Rodrigues, admonished Fr. Mario Serrano publicly in the media for his involvement in justice causes. This requires our response at some point in the near future.