

March 18, 2024

Re: Haiti Turmoil

Haiti Twinning Leaders,

It is with hearts full of gratitude for the countless ways you continue to provide for your Haitian communities even as travel to Haiti has not been possible due to the increased violence in this country. Many of you work to ensure individuals and families can access the most basic of needs, that the education of students can still flourish, that access to healthcare is available to as many as possible and that those projects of sustainability can continue to ensure a more solid future for the citizens of Haiti.

Certainly, we have witnessed those on the margins pushed even further to the edge. For those in Haiti, worsening conditions related to civil unrest have created a multitude of increased insecurities. Some of our Haitian twin parishes have begun to experience food shortages, power outages, lack of internet services, and unstable personal security like never before.

Through all of this, the hope for a better and more stable future still burns bright in the hearts, minds, and souls of our brothers and sisters in Haiti. For us, solidarity is critical, even as it is difficult for us to open our eyes to the reality that is before us, especially now in the most difficult of times and circumstances. Understanding people often show solidarity by increasing monetary donations and/or might have questions on the security of banks, this guidance comes to you.

Some questions regarding banking and the exchange of money have begun to come up from a couple of twinning parishes around the Diocese. It is important to offer some guidance on this. This is what we know from our leaders on the ground:

- From time to time the national bank is closed, with no business being conducted. When they are open, it is business as usual. So far, all private banks have remained open and business has been conducted.
- Stay in communication with your Haiti Twin leaders as is possible to know the situation for the bank you use. Contact the Office of Social Ministry if you need help with communication osm@richmonddiocese.org
- If you are sending money to your twin parish for the purchasing of tangible goods (i.e. books, medicine, food, etc.), it might be of help to you to make sure that these goods are being purchased from Cap-haitien. Getting items out of Port au Prince is difficult if at all possible.
- If you send money, for salaries for teachers, medical staff, or any other salary, please continue to send this money as this money is most likely accessible to those needing to be paid for services provided.
- Fonkoze (<https://fonkoze.org/>) is a safe private bank with the ability to telework and continue normal business. If you would like more information, please contact the Office of Social Ministry osm@richmonddiocese.org

Thank you for your continued dedication to Haiti Twinning Ministry and the support you provide to your Haitian Twins. Your gift of presence requires more intentionality, due to our inability to travel. Keeping pictures and photos of your twin partners within your line of sight can draw your mind and heart toward prayer. Prayer is the most needful and powerful thing you can do.

As we walk together on this journey of faith, let our steps be energized and inspired by our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

Peace,

Lape ak ou | Peace be with you,

Tina M Wandersee

Diane Atkins

Tina M Wandersee, Director OSM

Diane Atkins, Haiti Commission Chair



Tina M Wandersee
Director of Social Ministry
Catholic Diocese of Richmond | Office of Social Ministry
7800 Carousel Lane | Richmond, VA 23294-4201
Office: 804-622-5180



Diane Atkins
Minister of Outreach and Pastoral Care
Church of the Redeemer
datkins@churchredeemer.org
804-746-4911 x222
8275 Meadowbridge Rd. Mechanicsville, VA