



History of OLOL Twinning with St. Bertin in Haiti



40th Anniversary
1982 - 2022



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LOLO Twins with St. Bertin in Haiti in 1982

Our Lady of the Lake has been twinned with St. Bertin Catholic Church in Petit Bourg de Port Margot, Haiti for 40 years. In 1982, OLOL became one of the first U.S. Catholic parishes to form a twinning relationship with an impoverished parish in Haiti through the Parish Twinning Program of the Americas (PTPA).

PTPA was founded by Theresa Patterson, a member of St. Henry Catholic Church in Nashville, after making her first trip to Haiti in 1978 with Harry Hosey (now deceased). After witnessing the extreme poverty and suffering in Haiti, Theresa made it her personal mission to seek and build long-term twinning relationships between U.S. parishes and poverty-stricken parishes in Haiti and Latin America. Today, PTPA has more than 300 twinings.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The majority of the population lives on less than \$3 per day. The parish community of St. Bertin is very poor and has very little to give to support the church. OLOL is the primary source of financial support for St. Bertin through the monthly green envelope collection. Every month, funds are sent to the pastor of St. Bertin to support the ongoing operation of the parish.





Our Mission for St. Bertin in Haiti

Our Mission for St. Bertin in Haiti

First Mission Trip in 2001

In 2001, the twinning relationship was invigorated and transformed when the first mission team from OLOL visited St. Bertin. At that time, St. Bertin's pastor Fr. Gabriel Marie Francois had requested funding for a new school building for St. Bertin. In response to this request, in November 2001, OLOL sent its first mission team to St. Bertin to conduct an exploratory, fact-finding visit. PTPA Executive Director Theresa Patterson joined Associate Pastor Fr. Mark Hunt and three parishioners - Therese Casler, Diane Huggins and Jack Kalem - on this first mission trip. The mission team was profoundly touched by the poverty of the country and the faithful spirit of the people.



Pictured from left to right: Diane Huggins, OLOL Assoc. Pastor Father Mark Hunt, St. Bertin Pastor Father Gabriel PTPA Executive Director Theresa Patterson, Jack Kalem and Therese Casler

As a result of this visit, the Haiti Steering Committee was formed to organize, plan, and oversee OLOL's Mission for St. Bertin. The vision statement developed by the Committee for OLOL's Mission is "to build and sustain a strong relationship with St. Bertin and to achieve lasting impact in serving the poor by working as compassionate, caring and loving stewards of God's kingdom." The Committee works to focus the time, talent and treasure of OLOL parishioners on key areas of need, including:

- **Medical Support** – medical missions and support of St. Bertin medical clinic
- **Dental Support** – dental missions providing needed tooth extractions and dental care
- **Education Support** – funding of wages for teachers and staff, computer lab, school supplies and equipment and other financial support
- **Parish Projects** – building construction, electrical system, latrine system, clean water projects and other sustainable projects
- **Sea Container Shipments** – shipments of needed items, including school supplies, medicines, food, equipment, tools, etc.
- **Financial Support** – Today, OLOL provides more than \$100,000 each year to support St. Bertin church and school.

OLOL's Mission for St. Bertin has lived out its vision as more than 100 OLOL parishioners have participated in more than 40 mission trips to share the Gospel and touch the lives of the people of St. Bertin.

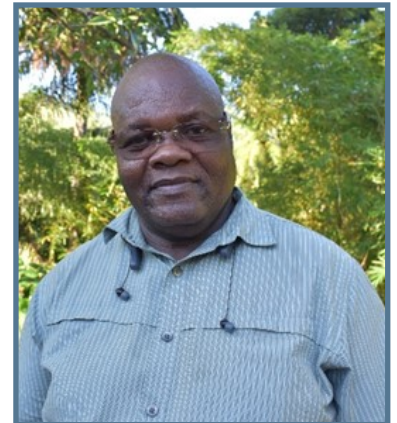
St. Bertin Pastors

We did not have the opportunity to meet the pastors of St. Bertin prior to the first OLOL mission trip in 2001. Since that time, we have had strong relationships with the pastors of our twin parish.

Father François Gabriel (2001 - 2008)

Father Louicius Laurent (2008 - 2012)

Father Jean Baptiste Geordani (2012 - Present)



From left to right: Father Gabriel with Paula Krebs; Father Laurent with Therese Casler and Diane Huggins; Father Geordani

The background is a colorful mosaic of irregular geometric shapes in shades of blue, teal, orange, and red. A large white circle is centered on the page, with thin white lines radiating from its center to the edges, creating a sunburst or star-like effect. The text is centered within this white circle.

Serving the People of St. Bertin

Serving the People of St. Bertin

Medical and Dental Missions

Through regular Medical and Dental Mission trips, volunteer teams from OLOL have been able to care for thousands of people in the St. Bertin community who otherwise would not have access to the services that they need.



In 2002, during his first visit to OLOL, St. Bertin pastor Fr. Francois Gabriel made an appeal, asking OLOL to conduct a Medical and Dental Mission to serve the people of his parish. The OLOL Haiti Steering Committee agreed to take on this mission.

After five months of preparation, on February 12 – 18, 2003, OLOL conducted its first Medical/Dental Mission with a team of 19 people, including coordinators (Therese Casler and Diane Huggins); physi-

cians (Dr. Tom Gautsch and Dr. Bobby Gailmard); registered nurses (Felicia Janco, Patty Murphy, Charlene Strickland), nurse assistant (Monika Parker); dentists (Dr. Jim Birkhead, Dr. Joe Fox, Dr. Gary Glass, Dr. Tom Heering); oral surgeon (Dr. John Shea); dental hygienist (Hillary Combs); and lay volunteers (Francine Dobson, Arlene Gomez, Chuck Gross, Jack Kalem, Chuck Scruggs). The team provided care to 1500 patients.



The OLOL parish community supported the mission through on-going prayer, financial contributions and donations of needed items. OLOL Associate Pastor Fr. Mark Hunt blessed the team at Sunday Mass the week before their departure.

For most of the team, it was their first trip to Haiti. Every team member shared a passion for helping our poor brothers and sisters in Haiti. Most of the team participated in future mission trips and continued to serve the people of St. Bertin.



Some individual reflections about this experience...

"The most rewarding experience was helping God's children...showing them we care by kindness...playing with the children."

"The spiritual experiences were most rewarding as well as the interaction with the Haitian people and the teamwork and fellowship with the team members."



"My most rewarding experience was not separate, but intimately intertwined parts of a whole far greater than its parts. One part is the lasting friendships...We shared a common experience, worked toward a common good. I cannot think of a time I've been closer to God."

"I now have a better understanding of what it means to live the Gospel (Matthew 25). We found Jesus in the people we served. My greatest hope is that we were able to make their lives better in some way."

The team went to St. Bertin in the spirit of the mission of Christ to touch lives and serve others with care and compassion. The people of St. Bertin were very gracious and appreciative, and the mission team was truly blessed.

Since this first Medical/Dental Mission in 2003, OLOL Haiti Mission has conducted 12 Medical Missions and 15 Dental Missions. These have been true missions of mercy, offering rare opportunities for the people to be treated for their ailments and illnesses.

Construction of New Buildings for St. Bertin School

The first major project for our twinned parish came in response to a request from Fr. François Gabriel for a new school building. After the first mission trip to St. Bertin in 2001, Therese and Diane presented the need for the new building to OLOL parishioners in 2002. As a result, more than \$50,000 was donated to fund the construction of a new school building for St. Bertin School. Construction began in 2003 and was completed in 2005.



The new building increased the number of students attending St. Bertin School from 300 to 500 students. This picture shows the St. Bertin School building under construction.

In 2011, OLOL began efforts to raise \$80,000 to rebuild a school building that was irreparably damaged by the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. After the earthquake, a 50-year-old structure that housed four classrooms was rendered unusable and had to be demolished, displacing more than 120 students who attended school in make-shift classrooms. OLOL committed to provide them with a suitable place for their education.



To reach this goal, in November 2012, OLOL held a benefit concert, "Stars Shine for Haiti." Eileen Minton chaired the planning committee for the event. More than 400 people attended the concert at JP II High School featuring headliner Lorrie Morgan and a number of shining stars, including PJ Anderson, Johnny and Olivia Drennan, Ashlee Hewitt, Josh Miller, Marla Morris, Marcia Ware, Olivia West, Jesse Keith Whitley and the JP II Choral Department.

The concert was the brainchild of OLOL parishioner Mark Oliverius, a producer and musician who works with Lorrie and the other stars. Mark had the vision of a star-studded concert that would bring people together to raise money and awareness for the Haiti mission. Thanks to the stars' willingness to help, his vision became reality. We met our goal, allowing us to move forward with the construction of the new school building.



Chuck Scruggs worked with a group of parishioners with expertise in engineering and construction to finalize plans for the construction of the new school building. A local contractor in Haiti was hired, and Chuck and his team oversaw construction of the new school building, which was completed in late spring 2014.



On Sunday, February 8, 2015, OLOL missionaries participated in a special celebration to dedicate the new St. Bertin School building to the memory of our beloved late pastor, Msgr. William Bevington.



It was a joyful and fitting celebration led by Fr. Jean Baptiste Geordani, pastor of St. Bertin, and Msgr. Gabriel Julmice representing the Archdiocese of Cap Haitien.



The celebration featured a fan fair band and brief program followed by the blessing of the Msgr. William Bevington Education Center.

Support for St. Bertin School



In 2003, OLOL began providing financial assistance for St. Bertin School through a Sponsor-a-Child program. This program allowed OLOL parishioners to pay tuition for children whose parents could not afford it. In its first year, the program allowed 41 students to remain in school. Over the next couple of years, the program grew quickly at OLOL, and in 2005 the number of sponsorships grew to 290 children.

While the Sponsor-a-Child program was well-received and supported by OLOL parishioners, the program faced challenges at St. Bertin. It became obvious that all families at St. Bertin were poor and in need of financial assistance to allow their children to attend and remain in school. In 2006, the focus of the program changed from sponsoring a child to funding teacher and staff salaries. This new approach benefitted all students and their families by allowing them to attend St. Bertin School for a minimal amount of tuition. This allowed OLOL to help not just some, but all students and their families.



Since 2003, OLOL parishioners have remained faithful and generous in their annual support of St. Bertin School. Thanks to OLOL, during the 2022-2023 school year, more than 800 students are able to attend St. Bertin preschool, primary, middle and high schools.



Beginning of Secondary School

In 2015, OLOL began exploring the possibility of adding a secondary school at St. Bertin to allow students to continue their education beyond the 6th grade. Marc-Endy Saintil, a member of the St. Bertin parish community and a former student of St. Bertin School, was the inspiration for this development. In 2014, Marc-Endy graduated from the University in Cap Haitien with a degree in education. It was his dream to become a principal and start a secondary school at St. Bertin.

During the summer of 2015, Marc-Endy wrote the following letter to OLOL parishioners:

Dear honorable friends at Our Lady of the Lake,

At St. Bertin, we feel grateful to you every day. It's from the bottom of our hearts. On the grounds of your help and support, now we have the most beautiful and structured school in our town. The students do not have to walk 9 km on foot every day as many of us did before. Thanks to you, they stay close to home and very safe to learn at St. Bertin School. We pray that very soon we can start a new secondary school so the students can achieve wonderful things in life. It's very significant for students to receive a secondary education, because in every 100 students, only five have chance to go to a secondary school. With your prayers and support, I will do everything I can to make that possible.

My friends, I was an orphan. I attended St. Bertin, but it was not easy for me. By the grace of God and with the help of friends from Our Lady of the Lake, I was able to complete my education and earn a degree from the University. Now my personal dream is to return to St. Bertin and start the secondary school, only with your prayers and support.

Thank you so much. We love you.

Yours in Christ,

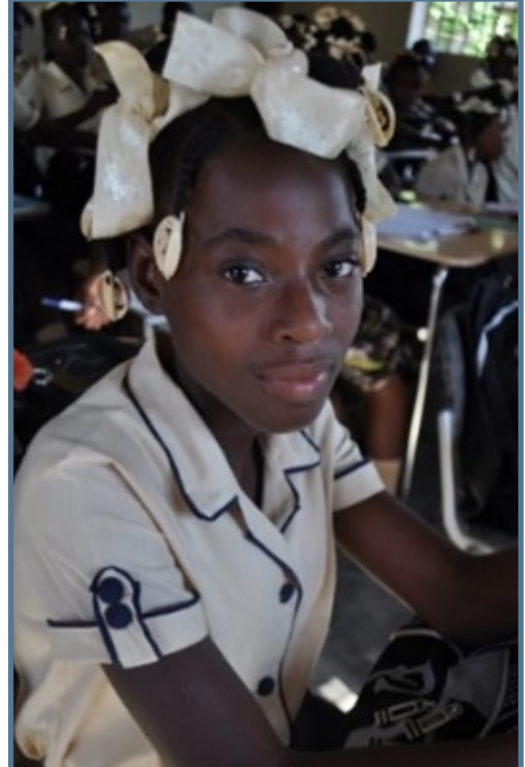
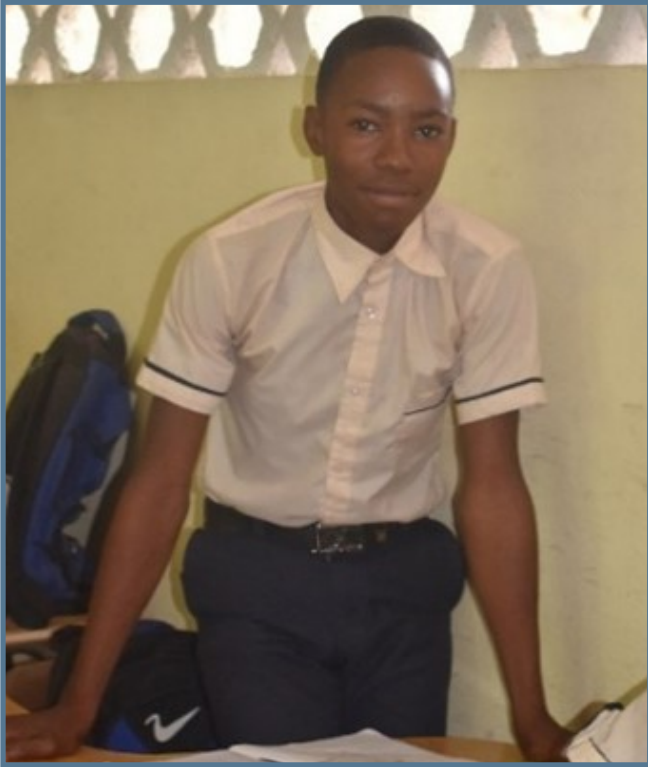
Marc-Endy Saintil

OLOL embraced Marc-Endy's dream and provided funding to begin the secondary school. The new school opened in September 2016 with 53 students enrolled in 7th grade class. This was an exciting milestone!

The 2018-2019 school year was another momentous milestone, as the secondary school was fully developed, offering 7th, 8th, and 9th grade classes with more than 100 students enrolled. For the first time ever, students were able to complete their foundational education at St. Bertin.



And there is more great news! Thanks to the help and support of OLOL, Marc-Endy has been able to expand the school to include high school classes. At the end of the 2022-2023 school year, we will celebrate the first graduating class of St. Bertin School, opening the door to greater opportunities in the future for 26 graduates!



The donations and prayers of OLOL parishioners have made Marc-Endy's dream become a reality. Thanks to the generosity and faithful support of OLOL, we are making the future brighter for the children of St. Bertin!



Building a New Church for St. Bertin

Building a New Church for St. Bertin

In October 2018, an earthquake hit the northern region of Haiti, which damaged St. Bertin church and rectory. This event was devastating for the people of St. Bertin, because they love their church. Once again, OLOL pledged to help.



OLOL reached out to Food For The Poor (FFTP), an ecumenical Christian nonprofit organization that serves the poor in Haiti and Latin America, to see if they could help. FFTP has a large in-country team, including engineers and project managers. In response to our request, FFTP sent members of their team to St. Bertin to evaluate the damage; they confirmed that the church had to be demolished and rebuilt. Thankfully, FFTP agreed to help with the church reconstruction and serve as construction manager for the project. After an extensive competitive bid process, FFTP selected and hired SOCOA, a reputable, experienced construction firm in Haiti, to build the new church. The estimated cost to complete the project exceeded \$400,000.



Upon hearing about this challenge, Lori Gettelfinger stepped up and volunteered to lead a campaign to raise the funds needed to build the new church. She organized a team, including Kim Fox and Colleen Sooker, to spearhead the campaign. In October 2020, OLOL launched One Are We, the fundraising appeal to rebuild St. Bertin Church. Once again, OLOL parishioners and other generous donors answered God's call to help the people of St. Bertin. We raised \$420,000 to make a dream come true ... to build a new church for St. Bertin!

For many months, FFTP worked closely with OLOL, St. Bertin and the contractor to oversee the design and development of architectural plans for the new church. They ensured that the plans for the new church met earthquake- and hurricane-resistant construction standards and appropriate building codes. Several OLOL volunteers with construction and engineering experience provided input and direction during this process, including Chuck Scruggs, Dave Klug, Ronnie Gibbs and Bob Donovan.



During the planning process, the situation in Haiti began to deteriorate. Political unrest and violence in Haiti following the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July 2021 caused delays in beginning the project. Gratefully, after a long delay, the demolition process began on December 9, 2021.

The continuing unrest in Haiti caused several unexpected delays during construction. Finally, 12 months after breaking ground, the construction of the new church was completed, allowing St. Bertin to



celebrate the dedication of the new church on December 4, 2022. The parish had a joyful day worshipping in their new church!

OLOL's mission team regretted that they were unable to attend the celebration in person due to the unrest and travel restrictions. Gratefully, OLOL joined St. Bertin in worshipping and celebrating the new church during Mass on the day of the dedication.

We will forever be grateful to everyone who played a role in this great accomplishment for St. Bertin. We thank FFTP for their crucial role in overseeing and managing the entire building project. Thank you to many OLOL volunteers for bringing their fundraising, engineering and technical skills to the table. And a special thank you to more than 300 donors who made this project possible through their faithful generosity. God is good!



The background is an abstract mosaic of various colored shapes (triangles, quadrilaterals, etc.) in shades of blue, teal, orange, and red. A large, irregular white rectangle is centered on the page, with a vertical line extending from its center to the bottom edge. Radiating from the center of the white rectangle are several thin, curved lines in shades of yellow, orange, and red, creating a sunburst or star-like effect.

Milestones in OLOL

Mission for St. Bertin

Milestones in OLOL Mission for St. Bertin

Since 2001, OLOL Haiti Mission has conducted 42 mission trips to St. Bertin. A total of 110 people participated in these trips. There have been 12 Medical Missions and 15 Dental Missions.

Since 2001, OLOL has sent 17 sea container shipments to St. Bertin with needed supplies and materials, including school supplies, food, medical and dental supplies, dental chairs and equipment for the dental clinic, etc.



In September 2008, the OLOL Haiti Mission team presented patchwork quilts to St. Bertin at Sunday Mass. The quilt patches were created by OLOL CCD students and the quilts were made by several lady quilters in the parish. The people of St. Bertin were touched by this symbolic expression of solidarity.

In 2011, OLOL donated a tabernacle and monstrance to St. Bertin.



In 2011, thanks to a few key donors who provided money and supplies, OLOL was able to replace the leaky, deteriorated roofs on two St. Bertin School buildings.



Beginning in the 2013-2014 school year and for several school years, OLOL worked with LifePoint Health to provide laptop computers for a computer lab for students at St. Bertin School. LifePoint donated retired laptops for the computer lab. John Hoscheit, Jr. has also provided laptops and other essential equipment for the school.

In 2018, OLOL Haiti Mission funded the construction of a new sanitary latrine system and electrical system for St. Bertin School.



In 2019, OLOL funded the expansion of the electrical system with the installation of a solar panel system to provide electricity for St. Bertin School and Clinic.

During the 2017-2018 school year, with the support and encouragement of French teacher Allyson Thomas, 13 students at Pope John Paul II High School in Hendersonville initiated pen pal relationships with St. Bertin secondary school students. Ms. Thomas' idea was to allow the students to practice reading and writing in French, learn about Haiti and make friendships. JPPII students wrote letters of introduction to St. Bertin students to initiate the connection. These letters were delivered to St. Bertin students during the February 2017 mission trip. The students at St. Bertin eagerly wrote back to their new pen pals. JPPII students were delighted to receive the exchange letters and photos from their new friends in Haiti.



Mission Leaders and Volunteers

The following individuals have served as members of the OLOL Haiti Mission Steering Committee, helping to support our work for St. Bertin:

Co-chairs – Therese Casler and Diane Huggins

Fundraising for church rebuilding project – Lori Gettelfinger

School Support – Francine & Ray Dobson, Paula & David Krebs and Diane Huggins

Medical Mission – Arlene Gomez, Felicia Janco, Lauren Reilly and Laurie Gibbs

Dental Mission – Dr. Jim Birckhead, Dr. Joe Fox, Dr. Tom Heering, Dr. John Shea and Therese Casler

“MacGyver” Support – Doug Blake, Mike Manor

Parish Projects – Tom Benim, Chuck Scruggs, David Krebs, Bob Donovan, Ronnie Gibbs and Dave Klug

Sea Container Shipments – Brian, Lisa & Pat Vaske, Paula & David Krebs, Lauren Reilly and Mary Beth & Pat Bradshaw

LOLO Missioners

The following individuals have given their time, talent and treasure to travel many times to St. Bertin with LOLO mission teams.

Five (5) mission trips:

- Tom Benim
- Bob Donovan

Six (6) mission trips:

- Ray Dobson
- Francine Dobson
- Darlene Hand
- Felicia Janco

Seven (7) mission trips:

- Dr. Joe Fox
- Dr. Gary Glass
- Jon Hoscheit
- Cathy Mortensen

Eight (8) mission trips:

- Chuck Scruggs

Ten (10) mission trips:

- Dr. Jim Birkhead
- Doug Blake
- Dr. Tom Heering
- Patti Johnson
- Joyce Stelzer

Eleven (11) mission trips

- Arlene Gomez

Twelve (12) mission trips:

- Hillary Combs
- Laurie Gibbs
- Dr. John Shea

More than twenty (20+) mission trips:

- Therese Casler
- Diane Huggins



The Next Generation, Continuing the Legacy

LOLO Haiti Mission has been blessed by the involvement of many young people who visited St. Bertin with family members during mission trips. The following young people have had an incredible impact on the people of St. Bertin:

- Chris Casler, son of Therese Casler
- Kate, Anna and Sam Fox, children of Kim & Dr. Joe Fox
- Adria Gibbs, daughter of Laurie & Ronnie Gibbs
- Jon Hoscheit,, Jr., son of Kim & Jon Hoscheit
- Hawken Kirchner, grandson of Diane & Mike Huggins
- Ayla and Seth Manor, children of Lisa & Mike Manor
- Andrew Scruggs, son of Sharon & Chuck Scruggs
- Jack Shea, son of Jennifer & Dr. John Shea
- Jordan Wales, granddaughter of Therese Casler



Top left:

Seth Manor

Top right:

Jordan Wales

Bottom left:

Hawken Kirchner

Bottom right:

Jack Shea





St. Bertin Mission: Stories of Faith, Hope & Love

St. Bertin Mission: Stories of Faith, Hope & Love

Memorable April 2010 Medical Mission by Laurie Gibbs

As a seasoned OB nurse, I desired to perhaps assist in a delivery during one of our medical missions to Haiti. My “wish” was granted in April 2010 when our team was in Haiti later than usual due to the devastating earthquake near Port-au-Prince.



On our last day in clinic on Thursday, April 22, a young pregnant woman came in around 3:15 p.m. as we were packing up to leave the next day. She was approximately five months along with her third pregnancy. Fortunately, she had had an ultrasound in Port-au-Prince and revealed she was having twins. She was visiting her brother in Ti Bouk (nickname for Petit Bourg de Port Margot). She presented with pain and contractions. Immediately I thought I'd try

“hydrate and sedate” in an attempt to stop labor. For a short while, the treatment seemed to be helping. Around 5:30 p.m. I took out her IV and was planning to send her out the door. We helped her up to urinate in a box and she delivered the first tiny twin—a still-born boy. Our mission doctor specialized in geriatric medicine and told me he didn't deliver babies, so it was up to me and my daughter, Adria, a new nurse. Together, along with Sourette and other village women we supported the laboring woman in the mosquito-infested dental clinic. About an hour and a half later she delivered the second twin “in the caul.” The tiny infant lived about 30 minutes until he expired in the arms of loving women. The young woman failed to deliver the placenta(s), and began bleeding after a fashion.

Pere Laurent baptized the babies in a brief ceremony and then took her and her brother for medical care in Limbe. Her brother buried the babies beside the parish hall clinic as a matter of course — life and death in Haiti. The next year during our Medical Mission, the young woman who lost the babies returned to see us...definitely a bright spot in the emotional work of healthcare in a developing country.

The Blessings of Love and Family: The Story of Woovens Scruggs

In 2003, an infant from Haiti named Woovens came to the U.S. to undergo surgical treatment for a condition called hydrocephalus. PTPA executive director Theresa Patterson and her husband Dr. Warren Patterson found a physician in Nashville to perform the surgery, and a family from OLOL in Hendersonville – Arlene and Pete Gomez – agreed to host and care for Woovens during his surgery and recovery.

Thankfully, Woovens' surgery and recovery went well. However, continued treatment by healthcare professionals would be crucial to a positive outcome for Woovens. His family in Haiti realized that the care and treatment Woovens needed for survival and quality of life were nonexistent in Haiti. They asked Theresa if she could find a family willing to adopt Woovens and make sure he received the care that

he needed. When Theresa reached out to Chuck and Sharon Scruggs, they immediately said, "Yes." Woovens was warmly welcomed and lovingly embraced by father Chuck, mother Sharon, sisters Kara and Angela, brothers Chad and Andrew and the entire family.

Today, Woovens Scruggs is a happy young man, who loves his family and the OLOL parish. OLOL is truly blessed to have Woovens as an active and well-loved member of our parish family. The Scruggs family's ties to Haiti remain strong. They stay close in touch with Woovens' biological parents. Chuck is actively involved in the OLOL Haiti Mission, and Andrew has lived and worked in Haiti on sustainable economic development projects.



The picture shows Woovens in the Sacristy at OLOL preparing to serve Mass.

A Saint Among Us: Beloved Cathy Mortensen



One of the most inspirational Medical Mission memories is of the late Cathy Mortensen. A retired registered nurse, Cathy participated in seven (7) medical missions at St. Bertin, touching the lives of hundreds of people in Haiti. She was 81 years old when she made her last mission trip in 2013. Cathy was a good and faithful servant of God and an exceptional role model for others. She passed away in 2016 at the age of 84. We will always remember Cathy for her faithful service and dedication to the people of St. Bertin.

This picture shows Cathy caring for children during an OLOL Medical Mission.

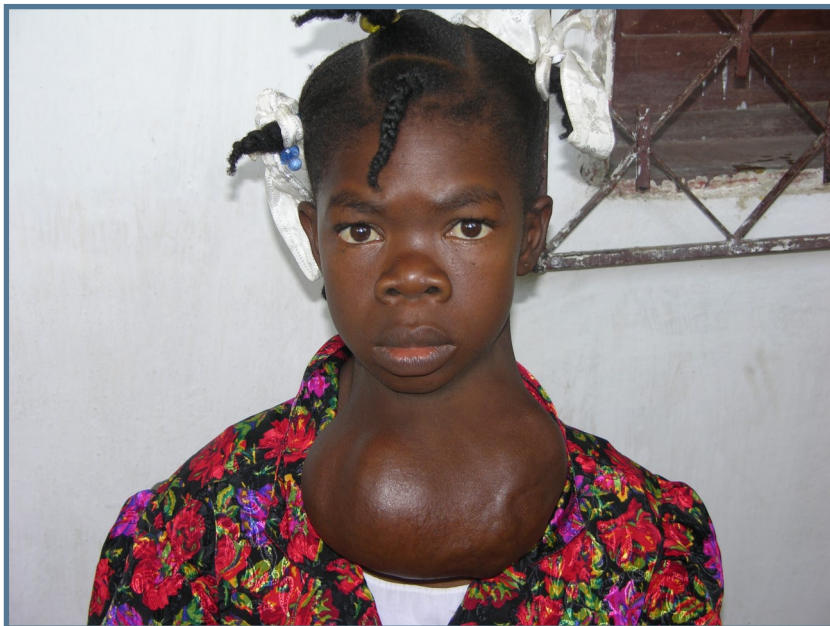
A Life Forever Changed: The Story of Antoinette

During a Dental Mission at St. Bertin, oral surgeon Dr. John Shea met Antoinette, a young woman who suffered from an extremely large goiter. After returning home, Dr. Shea searched for and found a qualified surgeon in Nashville who was willing to perform the surgery to remove Antoinette's goiter.

On a return visit to St. Bertin, arrangements were made to bring Antoinette to the U.S. to receive the care she needed. In October 2012, Antoinette left home for the first time in her life and flew on a plane to Nashville. She arrived on October 5, and stayed at the home of Therese Casler.

Therese cared for Antoinette during and after her surgery until she returned to Haiti on December 12, 2012. During her visit, Antoinette attended OLOL Oktoberfest, where she danced to the music and celebrated the beginning of a new life, free of the discomfort and physical deformity of the goiter.

Since that time, Antoinette always comes to visit Therese and OLOL mission teams during trips to St. Bertin. Antoinette is a member of St. Bertin's St. Vincent de Paul Society and her son is a student at St. Bertin School.



Marc-Endy Saintil: From Orphan to Secondary School Principal, A Story of Faith and Hope

On the first mission trip to St. Bertin in 2001, Therese and Diane met a 16-year-old boy named Marc-Endy Saintil. Marc-Endy was one of many young people who gathered on the grounds of St. Bertin to meet some of the first “blan” (i.e., white people) to ever visit the village of Petit Bourg de Port Margot. Marc-Endy stood out in the crowd, because of his beautiful smile, his ability to speak English and his kind and gentle spirit.



On the second visit in 2003, Marc-Endy showed up again to greet the first Medical/Dental Mission team. He wanted to help, so we put him to work sterilizing dental instruments. He proved himself to be a reliable and good worker, and the team enjoyed getting to know him. This picture shows Marc-Endy at work during OLOL Dental Mission.

During this visit, Marc-Endy's uncle approached Diane Huggins and explained that Marc-Endy was an orphan. His mother left when he was a baby and his father died when he was 9 years old. Marc-Endy needed money to stay in school. He asked Diane to become Marc-Endy's sponsor and pay for his education. Diane agreed and then shared Marc-Endy's story with the mission team. Everyone was surprised to learn about his personal circumstances and wanted to help him.



During a subsequent mission trip, Diane went to Marc-Endy's house to see where he lived. It was both shocking and humbling to see the small mud shack that was his home. He showed Diane his report card with high scores on all subjects. Despite his poverty and living conditions, Marc-Endy excelled in school and was driven to do his best.

Marc-Endy's house deteriorated and eventually washed away. In 2010, he moved to Cap Haitien to continue his education and attend the University. A family took him in and rented him a room.

Despite all odds, in 2014, Marc-Endy graduated from the University with a degree in education. During a visit to St. Bertin, the OLOL Haiti Mission team had a joyful celebration in honor of Marc-Endy's graduation.

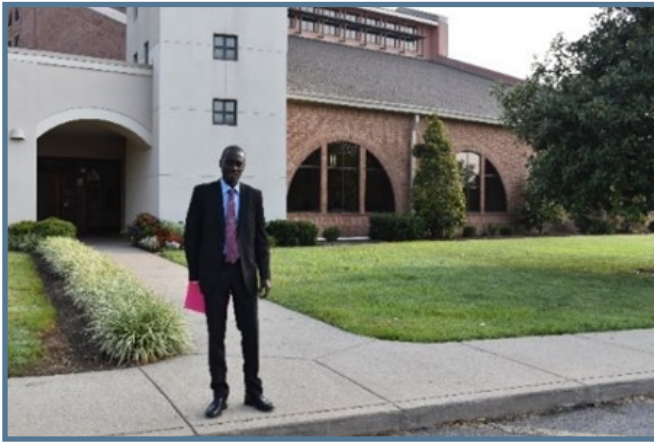


After graduation, Marc-Endy begins a new journey to pursue a life-long dream...to start a new secondary school at St. Bertin. During 2015, he works hard to lay the groundwork. He works with St. Bertin pastor Fr. Geordani to garner his support. He visits other schools to seek advice. He develops a budget, and he seeks and obtains financial support from OLOL. He plans the curriculum, recruits students and hires teachers. He successfully prepares the school for opening during the 2016-2017 school year.

In 2015, Marc-Endy pursues another dream. He asks the love of his life, Nanie Rigaud, to marry him...and she says "yes." In February 2016, Nanie and Marc-Endy say, "I do" and become husband and wife.

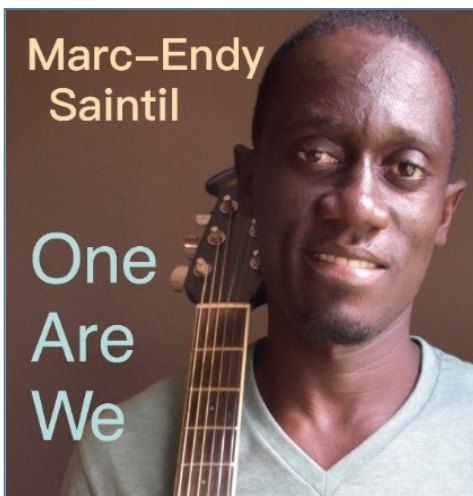
Later that year, in September, the secondary school opens its doors with Marc-Endy as the principal.





During the summer of 2017, Marc-Endy achieves another monumental goal. After going through the application process for five years in a row, he finally is granted a non-immigrant visa, allowing him to come to the U.S. to visit OLOL and personally meet parishioners for the first time. Along with Doug Blake, he performs a “music in the round” concert with Dug ‘n Buds for the parishioners of OLOL.

Marc-Endy returns during the summer of 2018, and while in the U.S. he travels to Washington, D.C. to visit our nation’s Capital and the White House.



During the summer of 2019, Marc-Endy once again visited OLOL and experienced new opportunities. He addressed the parish community at Mass to express his gratitude for OLOL’s support for St. Bertin School, and he sang a song he wrote, “One Are We.” Parishioners were very touched by his talent and humble spirit. Many requested copies of his song. With the help of Doug Blake, Kenny Janson, SMS Studios, several professional musicians and a back-up singer, Marc-Endy recorded and produced an album of three original songs, including title song “One Are We.” Parishioners purchased copies of the CD, and proceeds were used to support Marc-Endy’s work for St. Bertin School.

Marc-Endy’s story is one of faith and hope, of inspiration and transformation. Once a lonely and abandoned orphan, Marc-Endy is now a school principal, a loving husband, a member of a wonderful family and part of our parish community. Many OLOL friends love him dearly. Thanks to God, his story continues to unfold. His horizons continue to expand as God calls him to do more work in His name. Marc-Endy’s heart is always open to answer God’s call. God is good!

The background is an abstract mosaic of irregular, multi-colored shapes in shades of blue, teal, orange, and red, separated by white lines. A large, white, irregularly shaped rectangle is centered on the page, containing the title text. Radiating from the center of this rectangle are several thin, white lines that extend towards the edges of the page, creating a sunburst or star-like effect.

Scenes from St. Bertin & Petit Bourg

St. Bertin Church Facilities



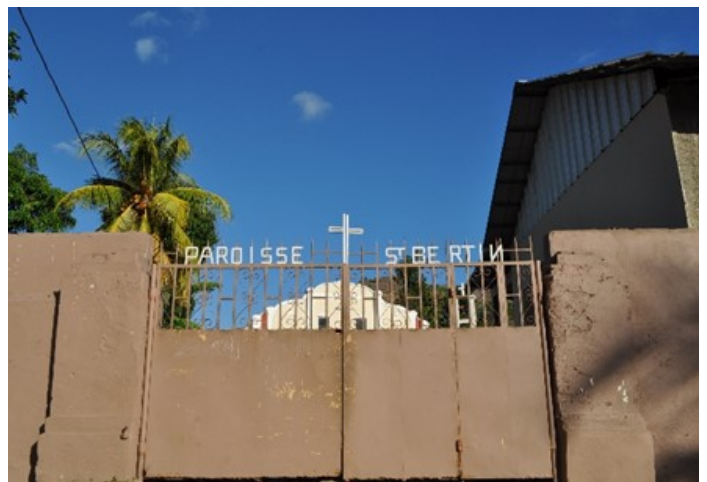
St. Bertin Church circa 2005



St. Bertin Church circa 2015



St. Bertin Parish Hall



St. Bertin Entrance Gate



St. Bertin Rectory circa 2005



St. Bertin Rectory circa 2018

St. Bertin School



St. Bertin School



Village of Petit Bourg de Port Margot





