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### Current Status of Our Lady of Fatima and Bassin-Zim:

Based on the limited communication with Fr Meres and other contacts, Bassin-Zim and the central plateau area do not appear to have been materially impacted by the earthquake itself. Structures, including our new Parish Hall, remain standing. However, many of the parishioners of OLF have lost friends and family that were in Port au Prince and surrounding areas. It is with great sadness to learn that Fr Meres lost his sister to this catastrophic event. Our prayers go out to him and his family.

While OLF and Bassin-Zim were not impacted by structural damage, our concerns are growing regarding the availability of needed resources, such as food and fuel. We face two primary challenges:

- 1) Port au Prince serves as the primary port and supplier of food and fuel to Hinche and the rural towns in the central plateau (including Bassin-Zim). The port is only partially functional and current relief efforts are using every available resource possible to sustain life in the impacted areas.
- 2) The Haitians in the impacted areas will more than likely begin migrating out to the rural areas in search of extended family, food, and some means to sustain themselves. This will deplete existing resources in those areas.

Resources (food and fuel) will become sparse and very expensive – very quickly!

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### Our Haiti Outreach Strategy:

Our mission remains the cornerstone of our Outreach program:

*We are a non-profit organization focused on creating a lasting sister parish relationship between Saint Brendan Catholic Church and Our Lady of Fatima in Bassin-Zim, Haiti. We work hard to develop a mutual and enriching relationship of sharing, solidarity and understanding. Our efforts will result in sustainable programs and resources that accompany our engagement and relationship building.*

The following key components support our mission and long term commitments to our sister parish:

- **Relationship** – maintaining our commitment and relationship with OLF is of primary importance to this organization; we will continue to communicate our solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Bassin-Zim, and work with them to make mutual decisions about how we can help them meet the needs they identify.
- **Haitian Displacement Protection** – working with Fr Meres to understand needs and opportunities to ensure sustainability for the church and its parishioners in the event displaced earthquake victims find their way to Hinche and Bassin-Zim. The committee will establish a plan of action and make the necessary funds available for OLF and any actions necessary locally or elsewhere.

- **Long-term Development and Sustainability Programs** – continue our focus on the key programs like Klorfasil (Clean water), SEEDS (micro-loans), and education. These programs not only support the long-term improvements, but will also help in the short-term given the potential for displaced Haitians.
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### What you can do to help:

The earthquake in Haiti is devastating and the Haiti Outreach group and our church are responding appropriately. We ask that you respond as well. The following are the best ways to respond in a situation like this:

- **Pray** – powerful and positive things can happen with prayer. Make time!
- **Communicate** – awareness is an absolute necessity. Learn the facts at [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) and [www.haitireach.org](http://www.haitireach.org). Use your social networks – friends, family, and co-workers –and the powerful tools at your disposal – in person, phone, email, and Facebook to spread the news.
- **Donate Money** – Cash quickly gets to the organizations already on the ground allowing them to respond effectively. Collecting items such as clothing and food, although admirable, is not an effective means of donation right now given the logistical challenges. We ask that you give those items to your local charities – St. Brendan’s own “St Joseph Food Pantry”, Knights of Columbus, etc.

The two primary organizations we recommend for cash donations are:

- 1) **St Brendan’s Haiti Outreach** – this group will be focused on supporting our Lady of Fatima given the immediate concern for resource depletion and for long-term sustainability. The committee may decide to contribute a portion of the money raised to CRS once we have confirmed the needs of OLF. You may donate by writing a check to St Brendan’s Haiti Outreach (put Earthquake in memo section) and sending it to the address below or you may make an easy, fast, and secure donation online at: [www.haitireach.org](http://www.haitireach.org).
- 2) **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)** – this is the official international humanitarian agency of the U.S. Catholic Church, has been in Haiti 55 years, and has 300+ people in Haiti right now supporting the relief efforts with resources in Haiti and in the surrounding countries, including the Dominican Republic and USA. 100% of your donations to CRS will be used for the Haiti Earthquake Relief. You can donate:
  - a. online at [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org), or
  - b. TEXT the word **RELIEF** to **30644** and follow the instructions, or
  - c. By mail to Catholic Relief Services, 228 W. Lexington St. Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3413, or
  - d. By telephone to 1-888-277-7575

We ask you to discern the best organization for you to give money to, but do not hesitate! No matter who you give to; help for the Haitians will be provided.

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If you have any questions regarding the St Brendan’s Haiti Outreach, Fr Meres and Our Lady of Fatima, or our strategy given the catastrophic events in Haiti, please feel free to reach out to anyone of the committee members. Our contact information is as follows:

Haiti Outreach  
St Brendans Catholic Church  
4633 Shiloh Road  
Cumming, GA 30040  
[committee@haitireach.com](mailto:committee@haitireach.com)

**God Bless**