
The 10th National Catholic Charismatic Congress Haiti 16th – 18th April 2004

Fr. Ian Taylor

Fraternity of Priests Member, Trinidad

Haiti, a land plagued by political conflict, dire poverty and the powers of darkness in Voodoo, has been the focus of much world attention with its latest bloody crisis and the hasty departure of President Jean Bertrand Aristide on 29th February of this year, amidst violent street protests and armed insurgency calling for his immediate removal.

This was the background to the hosting of the 10th National Catholic Charismatic Congress (as it is called). The chosen theme was: "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). In view of the great uncertainty and instability in the country, the Congress organizers took the decision not to invite foreign speakers but to proceed in faith with the event. This proved no slight leap of faith since much would be involved. First, Haiti comprises 9 dioceses and people would have to travel many hours to and from the venue in Delmas, Port-au-Prince, having to beat a 10.00 p.m. state imposed curfew. Secondly, travel itself would be dangerous with rebels still on the loose, police stations abandoned and U.S. soldiers only in control of the capital. Moreover, the logistics and expense of catering for a crowd upward of 70,000 created heavy demands and commitments for the National Charismatic Committee. Last year's crowds were estimated at 90,000 and the event drew the attention of both CNN and The Associated Press.

Costs would include rental of the venue, heavy advertising, rental of tents,

a massive sound system, toilets, caterers, a clean-up crew, the printing of Congress books, transport and T-Shirts. Only a very brave or foolish leader would proceed under such conditions. It was akin to getting out of the boat and walking on water. Haiti's charismatic leaders, two nuns, two laymen and one priest spiritual director, are water walkers. They thrive on a challenge and love to see God work in a big way.

I myself only received the invitation to speak there, mere days before the Congress and whereas my prior appointment was providentially shifted, Bishop Sam Jacobs could not re-adjust his schedule to be there. Aware of the risks involved, participants, leaders and speakers brought to the Congress a great and expectant faith.

Not only was this the 10th National Congress, it was also 30 years of the Renewal in Haiti, and 200 years of Independence for the eight (8) million people of the Republic of Haiti. There was much to celebrate. But perhaps the most immediate cause for joy was the departure of President Aristide two weeks earlier. While he had returned in 1994 on a wave of popularity, his political and economic excesses, and his legalization of voodoo had created much discontent among the Haitian masses triggering violent street protests and the sacking and burning of police stations.

Over the four years since I have been visiting our sister isle, it became clear that the Charismatic Renewal was offering new hope to the people, in the powerful preaching of Jesus as liberator, and the many signs and wonders worked at the

Congress, in His name. Then, as the crisis heightened, the bishops and priests spoke out boldly against the abuses of Aristide (while not mentioning his name) and against the practice of voodoo. This they did openly at the Congress and in their dioceses and parishes.

There exists a boldness in the Haitian Charismatic leaders and in the bishops and priests who support them, which I have not witnessed anywhere else in my experience. One priest, who had allegedly been targeted by the old regime, did much of his preaching in the Haitian Diaspora of Miami, New York and Boston, rousing the people to vigils, fasts and intercession on behalf of their motherland. Back home, the Renewal and the bishops and priests who perceived the spiritual warfare, multiplied vigils and processions all over Haiti, bringing the devil to his knees and overturning an oppressive political system.

Last year one Fr. Simoli had the 90,000 strong crowd doing a Jesus dance and stamping down the devil for well over one and a half hours, just minutes after we had all witnessed the phenomenon of the sun spinning in its orbit and emitting magnificent pulsating light.

This year his brother priest and fellow seminary lecturer, Fr. Champion, a favourite among the people, preached for about one and a half hours in a mighty voice calling on the people to break with all kinds of sins and to abandon their trust in voodoo. Just when I thought my word preached from Jeremiah 20:11-13 might be daring,

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted!

I always look forward to June. It seems that so much of parish life begins to slow down. We have celebrated First Communion and Confirmation, the rush of the Easter Season is over, and we are looking forward to a well deserved rest.

Even though things may slow down during the summer they are not slowing down here at the Fraternity of Priests. We just finished our annual Board of Directors Meeting in Steubenville. At this meeting we take time for prayer as we plan for the upcoming year and especially for our International Meeting during the summer. It was great to be with the fellow Board Members and to see their love for the Fraternity and their brother priests. The Lord spoke to us of our need to continue to reach out to brothers who are in need of support and healing. May we always remain true to that call.

During the same week we had a team in Ukraine for a Fraternity Conference. Frs. Brendan Murray and Joseph Meagher led a retreat for 20 priests and the Auxiliary Bishop in Berdychiv. A number of priests made a commitment to the Fraternity and will start meeting regularly as they see how best to adapt the Fraternity to their own circumstances.

As part of one of the teachings, Fr. Brendan shared that if you cannot make a Fraternity meeting you are supposed to call one of the brothers to let them know. As the Bishop was driving him to the airport he noticed that it was Friday when Fr. Brendan's Fraternity usually meets. He jokingly asked him if he had called the brothers to let them know that he couldn't attend the meeting since he was in Ukraine! Good to see that the teachings of the Fraternity are taken to heart.

Another peace of good news that we had during the Board Meeting is that we were \$7,000 in the black for the last fiscal year (April, 2003 – March, 2004). Thank you for your generosity to us. It allows us to reach out to brother priests around the world. The support that they experience is a great blessing to them.

During the next few months we will have missions to Uganda and Tanzania. We are supporting a Life in the Spirit Seminar for over 70 seminarians in Uganda and will be establishing new Fraternities both in Uganda and Tanzania.

Thanks for your generosity both in prayer and financially. It is a blessing to priests

around the world.

As life slows down during the summer the work of the Kingdom of God does not!

God is still working to renew the priesthood throughout the Church!



In Christ,

Fr. Timothy Graff

Fraternity Financial Report

One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We're providing this information to help communicate our specific need and to thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Monthly Donation Budget: **\$7,467.00**

Actual Donations: **\$5,839.00**

Budget Surplus (shortage) **(\$1,628.00)**

Current as of April 30, 2004.

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given the political climate, Fr. Simoli launched into a tirade on priests who neglect their call and instead pick up politics. Not only was he hitting his fellow priests who were involved in politics and supported Aristide, but also one bishop present at that time who had been a staunch supporter of Aristide. In fact, at the time for Mass he had departed, complaining of a headache. Fr. Simoli, calling priests back to the altar professed, "Politics is not for priests – the power of the priest is not in politics, but in the name of Jesus and in the Eucharist". As to Haiti's celebration of 200 years of independence, he declared the true independence won for Haiti was not by Toussaint L'Ouverture, but by Jesus Christ over sin, Satan and every form of evil, definitively so 2000 years ago. The crowd erupted in applause.

Present at that event was the Minister of the Interior, Defense and Security – a God-fearing man, we were told. Fr. Simoli pronounced, "Our security is not in the Security Forces. It is in Jesus; and the Chief of Security of Haiti is the Blessed Virgin Mary!" As with the word I had preached from Jeremiah chapter 20, he was reminding the population and its leaders, clerical and secular that deliverance, salvation and provision are not ultimately found in men but in God. Men will always disappoint – only God is faithful. Like the Archbishop after him, he appealed to all to find Haiti's salvation in Eucharistic Adoration. The Church in Haiti is very Eucharistic and Marian. Fr. Simoli denounced voodoo as impotent since it had failed to save the nation all these past years.

This year, as at past Congresses, the power of God was most evident. Many, many cripples got out of wheel chairs and walked, under the gaze of television cameras and a most enthusiastic crowd. The deaf heard and a mute spoke and sang, several demonized manifested violently and many were set free.

Something mighty and wonderful is happening in Haiti.

In his homily at the closing Mass, Archbishop Francois Ligonde, Archbishop of Port-au-Prince, a marked man by the former regime, but a fearless warrior, summoned his people to conversion, calling for an end to hypocrisy, division and hostility. He proffered love and conversion to Jesus as the solution to Haiti's problems. Calling too for an "oasis of adoration in the Church", he proposed Mary as the model of self-giving to help us "move from the noise to the silence of our hearts" where Christ may examine us and challenge us to change.

Thanking the Lord and Mary for Haiti's recent deliverance, he declared, "My brothers and sisters the head of the

serpent is crushed – it is just the tail that is moving."

Haiti now stands as a model of the victory of light over darkness, through the exercise of authority given the Church by Jesus who promised, "the gates of hell will not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

It stands as a model of what is possible when strong and united leadership in the Church and the Renewal rally the people to prayerful action, pulling down the strongholds of evil and lifting up the name of Jesus. Only then is victory assured. It stands as a living testimony for us that what is impossible for man is possible for God. Will we as the Church in this nation sit powerlessly by while evil continues to devour the land? When shall we rise up and boldly reclaim our land? What are we waiting for?

Prophecies from the St. Cloud Fraternity, March 21, 2004

Fr. Todd Schneider: My Precious Brothers, rest in My love as I know what you are going through. Trust in our priesthood as I call you to a deeper repentance this Lenten season. Listen not to voices of the world, know that you will be persecuted. Amidst the difficult times, come to Our Mother...oh how she loves her priestly sons.

Fr. Al Quade: Jesus, you are a hidden God, hidden under the veil of the Sacred Host. You do not overwhelm us by Your power and majesty. Rather You reveal yourself through the gift of faith. I kneel and stand before Your Eucharistic Presence in the monstrance. Give me, my priest brothers, & the people we minister to on an ever deeper faith in You. We need a stronger faith to resist the denial of You by a secular pagan culture. Give us all the grace of perseverance until You call us home in heaven with the Father, with You and the Holy Spirit. In Your holy word, You tell us that the just person lives by faith. Make that faith so strong that we will endure persecution, ridicule, being outcasts as we try to evangelize the world to You and build a civilization and culture of love and life. May Your Father's holy will be done in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Fraternity of Priests Annual Conference
will be hosted by the St. Louis Fraternity and will be held from
August 1-6, 2004.

The theme for our conference is:

**I Myself will Shepherd Them:
Repentance, Reparation, Restoration, Refreshment**

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

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 \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

July 2004						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				Rev. 1 Joseph Tyrrell <i>New York</i>	Rev. 2 Jose Clavero <i>New York</i>	Rev. 3 Pope John Paul II
Rev. Msgr. 4 James Cassidy <i>New York</i>	Rev. 5 Richard Champigny <i>New York</i>	Rev. Msgr. 6 Leslie Ivers <i>New York</i>	Rev. 7 Thomas Devery <i>New York</i>	Rev. 8 William Cosgrove <i>New York</i>	Rev. 9 Alan Shnob <i>Ogdensburg</i>	Rev. 10 Francis Coryer <i>Ogdensburg</i>
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