



Saint Viator Students Reach Out to Their Counterparts in Haiti



Students don jeans as part of their fundraising efforts for the Viatorians in Haiti.

Saint Viator High School students watched in horror as more than 100,000 people in Haiti lost their lives last month in the catastrophic earthquake. But the devastation hit home when they learned of the losses sustained by the Clerics of St. Viator, the religious order that runs their high school and staffs 40 priests and brothers in the country.

In a direct appeal from the president of the school, the Rev. Robert M. Egan, C.S.V., he told families of a retreat center in Port-au-Prince run by Viatorians that was destroyed in the quake, and the loss of seven staff members. He added that a parish staffed by Viatorians and its residences also were destroyed, though all of the religious survived.

Most of the priests and brothers have been able to find shelter, Egan added, but several Viatorians have opted to remain with the displaced people they serve in the rural parish and at the retreat center, sleeping out in the open and ministering to their needs.

In response to the disaster, and heeding the call of the order's Superior General, the Rev. Mark Francis, Egan invited Saint Viator students and their parents to help provide relief to the thousands of people served by the Viatorians in Haiti.

"Many of our parents have asked if they can participate in some way," Egan said. "I realize that many have already contributed to other relief efforts, but I invited them to participate in this collection that would directly support Viatorian missions in Haiti."

In just four days last week, the school collected more than \$29,000 from its students and their families.

School officials called it a "dress-down collection" allowing students to put aside their uniforms this week in favor of jeans and Saint Viator spirit wear.

However, they felt the generous response reflected more than a break in school dress code.

"We raised this much money in just four days," said an astounded JoAnne Francis, student affairs director. "It was a heartfelt response from our students and their families who were looking for ways they could help."

Making a direct donation to the Viatorians --- who have been working in Haiti for years, and draw many of their religious vocations from that country --- was their link.

Donations continue to be accepted by the Clerics of St. Viator in their Canadian province, which oversees their mission efforts in Haiti. Those interested in making a contribution should make it out to the Clerics of St. Viator and mark it, "Haiti relief."

Mail donations to: Les Clercs de Saint-Viateur, 450 Avenue Querbes, Outremont QC H2V 3W5, CANADA.