

Jesuit Journeys

Spring/Summer 2010

Institute of Latin
American Concern
answers the call
in Haiti



INSIDE:

Divine Providence –
Fr. Teske's road to the
Aquinas Medal

ALSO: The Jesuits, the Lakota and Betty Ford battle alcohol on the Pine Ridge

Answering



the Call

in Haiti



*Institute of Latin American Concern
and Creighton medical staff rush to
the aid of Haiti and quake victims*

BY FR. BILL JOHNSON, SJ

Padre, did you feel it?" asked the neighbor lady as I made my way around the running path at our grounds in the Dominican Republic that evening. "Feel what?" I asked. "The wave in the ground. And were you shaking the barbed wire fence?" she inquired.

I stopped my run and headed back into the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) center where I was told the lights hanging from the ceiling in the entrance had been swaying considerably.

Then the news hit: a major earthquake had battered our neighbors in Haiti. It was Tuesday, Jan. 12, and preliminary reports said there were possibly thousands dead or dying and many more homeless. I was in disbelief. How could this happen less than 200 miles away in Port-au-Prince and we had no damage or people hurt in the Dominican Republic? It didn't seem right or fair. But what could any of us do about it?

I had arrived in the Dominican Republic at the end of August to be director of pastoral care at Creighton University's ILAC center in Santiago de los Caballeros, the country's second largest city, situated in the middle of the Cibao Valley between two mountain ranges that traverse the island.

Because ILAC has been providing basic health care to the poor of the



Creighton University's Dr. Brian Loggie (*center*) and his team from Omaha head to the triage center on their first day at Good Samaritan Hospital, January 17th, 2010.

Dominican Republic since 1977, Creighton University Medical Center was in a unique position to respond to the tremendous needs of the earthquake victims. The next morning I received a phone call from Creighton's Dr. Brian Loggie, professor of surgery, and, with the amazing cooperation and generosity of many individuals and institutions in Omaha, we had a well-supplied, nine-member

"I was not happy, but I was full of joy to be there. Service of God's people is joy."

Fr. Bill Johnson, SJ

health care team on the ground here at the ILAC center in Santiago. By Saturday evening we were preparing for the seven-hour bus ride to Good Samaritan Hospital on the Haitian frontier in the town of Jimaní, in the southwest corner of the Dominican Republic. We arrived at Good Samaritan by mid-afternoon on Sunday and our team of surgeons, anesthetists, nurses and a pediatrician went right to work at the triage center where over 400 patients were lying everywhere waiting for care, most for broken bones and crushed limbs. Most operations those first days were amputations. Anesthesia, antibiotics and other medicines and supplies had been almost non-existent before we

→ *Haiti* on page 18



Fr. Bill Johnson, SJ used his Spanish and French fluency to translate between patients and medical staff.

“Jim Jalovec was a good man who died showing his goodness by using his gifts to serve God’s people” Fr. Bill Johnson, SJ

Showing His Goodness

Jim Jalovec was a graduate of Marquette University and friend of Fr. Bill Johnson’s since the early years of Nativity Jesuit Middle School, which Jim supported as a benefactor. Jim moved from Milwaukee to Florida in 2003 to manage business interests.

Jalovec, 53 of Naples, Fla., phoned Fr. Bill immediately after the earthquake in Haiti to offer the services of his helicopter in the relief efforts. Good Samaritan Hospital in Jimaní, Dominican Republic, where Fr. Bill and Creighton University’s medical teams were working, invited Jim and his pilot and dear friend, John Ward, to come and fly doctors and medicine into Haiti.

After three days of generous service and profound experiences, they died when their helicopter hit a mountain on the foggy night of Feb. 4. Fr. Bill presided at Jalovec’s funeral in Chicago and Ward’s in Ft. Myers, Fla. **JJ**



(Above) Jim Jalovec and John Ward with some of the many Haitian children at the mission site in Leogane, Haiti.

(Below, left) Fr. Bill Johnson, Jim Jalovec (right), owner of the helicopter, and John Ward (left), pilot, visited a mission sheltering 80 families left homeless by the earthquake. Jim and John left from this same site late the following afternoon after verifying that trucks of food, medicine and water had arrived from Jimaní, Dominican Republic, where Fr. Bill awaited them. They crashed and died enroute.



Show Your Goodness

Jim Jalovec’s T-shirt translates to “Show Your Goodness.” Jim died showing his.

If you would like to “Show Your Goodness” by purchasing a similar T-shirt go to www.showyourgoodness.com. There are many sizes and colors to choose from and the “Show Your Goodness” message can be printed in the language of your choice. All profits will be sent to the Jesuit Refugee Service in Haiti to help children suffering from the earthquake.



→ **Haiti** from page 16 arrived. Indeed, amputations had been done without anesthesia before our arrival.

Our Creighton team tried to bring some order to what looked like the chaos of a war zone, even as more patients arrived in the back of pick-ups, flat-bed trucks, ambulances and cars. Most had come from in and around Port-au-Prince, some 40 miles to the west.

Monday morning began a week of 12-hour shifts and non-stop work. By mid-day Dr. Loggie had



become in charge of the surgical area where our operating teams worked while the rest of our team selected the most critical patients for surgery and cared for wounds in the triage center on

the other end of the grounds. Because of my fluency in Spanish and French, I was put in charge of the front doors of the surgical center to allow only those with clearance to enter. At times I was called in to the operating rooms to help communicate between the surgical teams and the patients. The Haitians were amazingly patient and appreciative. Often their cooperative spirit and even smiles showed their tremendous resilience and amazing dignity.



Each day brought new duties and special moments for me. I can still feel my guts wrench when on Monday afternoon a nurse approached me at the front door carrying a large black plastic bag and asked me where the morgue was. I'd seen some caskets on the side of the building and asked what was in the bag. He told me it was the arm of the man I'd just translated for. Later, a huge man who I'd helped communicate with by telling his lovely young wife that the doctors would have to amputate his leg, died during the operation. I was away from my post at the entrance



Victims are accompanied by family members in tents set up by the U.S. military outside a Port-au-Prince hospital.

to the operatory when he died but was asked to comfort the distraught wife when I returned.

I tried to pray with her in French but it didn't come easily. The Creole the Haitians speak is quite different from Parisian French. However, a Haitian woman joined us and began singing religious songs in Creole as we held the wife. It was amazing how her breathing eased and body relaxed at the songs and caresses. The next morning I prayed with her again before she left to return to Haiti.

By mid-afternoon on Tuesday I stopped and realized that in the midst of the terrible suffering all around me I felt consolation. I had the thought that I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. I was where I was meant to be: serving God's suffering people. I was not happy but I was full of joy to be there. Service of God's people is joy. I shared that with other members of the team after dinner that night and most felt the same joyful sense of meaning and purpose in their service. Indeed, we all lamented that it took such a tremendous human tragedy to get so many good people together to do such good work. People laughed when someone remarked that they'd normally be bickering among themselves at their jobs back in Omaha.

The remainder of the week was full of blessings and challenges. We were all deeply touched by the suffering of the kids; so beautiful, eyes full of light, smiles that melt your heart, some orphaned. By Wednesday, we were able

The ILAC Center is a Catholic, Ignatian-inspired, collaborative health care and educational organization. It offers service-learning and immersion experience opportunities in dental, medical, nursing, pharmacy, law, physical therapy and occupational therapy for undergraduate and high school students, and also to faculty-led groups, medical/surgical teams and other colleges in the rural Dominican Republic.

Misión ILAC is located 7.5 kilometers outside Santiago. The ILAC center provides numerous opportunities for students and professionals to grow personally, professionally and spiritually. All ILAC programs emphasize the importance of global vision and understanding in the process of educating well-rounded individuals. The Summer Program for 2010 will give students and professionals the opportunity to live with and become a part of a family in rural communities of the Dominican Republic. It focuses on building relationships between those of the developed and under-developed worlds as well as creates the opportunity for materially poor Dominicans to receive basic health care.

More information on ILAC and its programs is a click away at www.creighton.edu/ministry/ilac.



Dan Dollison, a physician assistant at Creighton, prepares to cast a woman's arm.



Earthquake victims arrive at Good Samaritan Hospital during the first days after the earthquake by any means possible.

to arrange for our first helicopter evacuations of patients in need of special care. Over the following days and weeks many more patients were evacuated, many in helicopters from the U.S.S. Comfort, a thousand-bed hospital ship off the coast of Port-au-Prince, through the intervention of Creighton administrators and Senator Ben Nelson of Nebraska.

By Thursday, Good Samaritan was running efficiently and more than 80 operations were performed. Health teams from many other nations came and went, but our Creighton team, and several more that followed us, were stalwarts of the staffing. I was very proud of Creighton and of our country for such generous responses.

By Sunday, Jan. 24, we decided it was time for us to leave. We'd put in a tremendous week of service and helped the hospital get up and running. A new team had arrived from Creighton and other health professionals and supplies were showing up daily. We would leave after Mass at noon. The Scripture readings fit perfectly: "Today is holy to the Lord your God. Do not be sad, and do not weep" (Nehemiah 8:9). "As the body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ" (1 Cor. 12). "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 1:21). I preached having lived the readings that week with God's people, Haitian and American and many others. We had lived the words. We experienced joy.

Praise God! 

Fr. Bill Johnson, SJ has a track record for being in the right place at the right time. He also hit the ground running as the founding president of the Nativity Jesuit Middle School in Milwaukee and the student recruiter as Cristo Rey Jesuit High School Twin Cities came into existence.



Haitians needing care occupied the grounds at Good Samaritan Hospital.



Working like a "MASH" unit, patients were often shipped to hospitals after initial treatment.