



August 1, 2005

Dear Members of the Parishes throughout the Diocese of Green Bay:

For sometime we've been thinking about getting out a special letter to you because of your many years of support to the Diocesan Mission in the Dominican Republic. I realize that every time a donation is sent for the mission you receive a letter from the office, but not directly from us here in the mission.

I first of all want to say that we're very grateful for your long and generous support of the mission. Many donors have been faithful supporters of the mission long before I ever started here. In the name of our people here we want to express to you our sincerest thanks.

I'm starting my tenth year at the mission yet it seems like it was just yesterday that I arrived. Everyday I'm learning new things. I guess that's why I like the ministry so well. Everyday brings a new adventure. You may have something planned, but the plan can change in a second. For example, just the other day while at the parish office there was a knock at the door. I answered the door to find three representatives from Catholic Relief Services who were experiencing some difficulties in trying to cross the border into Haiti. I dropped everything I was doing and it was off to the Haitian border to give assistance!

The work here in the mission is as busy as ever. Since Fr. Bill Hoffman left here in 1998 I'm the only priest on staff for the two parishes. We have a staff of two women religious and two laymen and scores of volunteers. We have nearly one hundred small communities that make up the two parishes. Last year we celebrated over 1,200 Baptisms and hundreds and hundreds of children participated in religious education. We have projects to build chapels, build latrines, repair homes, repair roads, charity assistance to the poor and many other efforts. We're starting a forestry project and hope to be producing 10,000 to 15,000 fruit trees a year. These are just some examples of what we're doing.

Our newest and biggest project is our school at the main parish in Elias Peña opening at the end of this month. This first year we will operate kindergarten to seventh grade with a limit set at 250 students. We hope that by the second year the school population will double. One of the Sisters from the parish will be our principal. The community is very excited. Please keep us in your prayers.

As you can see, things are moving at our Diocesan Mission thanks to the help of so many people and groups back home in the Diocese of Green Bay. Your financial support makes a big difference in the lives of many people.

In closing, again I want to say thanks for your help. It is our hope that we'll do better in keeping you informed of our work here in the mission. God bless you.

Sincerely,

Fr. Mike Seis

Pastor-Diocesan Mission in the Dominican Republic

# Funds needed to make school dream a reality

## Dominican Republic school would charge \$5 a month tuition

By Heather Chrudimsky

For The Compass – The Official Newspaper of the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin, July 22, 2005 edition

Work is progressing on schedule for a new school to open Sept. 5 at the Green Bay Diocese's mission in the Dominican Republic, said Fr. Mike Seis, pastor. But an additional \$50,000 in donations is needed to make the parish school a reality, he said.



The school, in the former parish theater, is across the street from Santa Teresa de Jesús Church, where Fr. Seis, a priest of the Green Bay Diocese and a native of Algoma, is pastor. The building had been a warehouse for the past two years.

The school, Centro Educativo Santa Teresa de Jesus Fe y Alegria (St. Teresa of Avila Educational Center - Faith and Joy), is part of a school system located in many Latin American countries.

The staff of eight teachers are all from the Elías Piña area in the western part of the country, abutting the border with Haiti. Most are recent graduates. The Fe y Alegria school system trains the teachers, but pays no salaries, which for now will come from donations and other sources, Fr. Seis said. He hopes the Dominican Republic government will eventually pay the teachers' salaries.

Fr. Mike Seis Fr. Seis was interviewed while he was home on his annual visit to the Green Bay Diocese to see family and friends.

He said that, when he left Elías Piña, the school project was right on track. "They just installed the windows and the cement was being poured for the second story."

Work on the pre-kindergarten through seventh grade school started six months ago and has cost approximately \$15,000, which was donated by parishes, schools, individuals and groups in the Green Bay Diocese. The additional \$50,000 is needed to complete the project and to outfit the school with chairs, desks, bathrooms, books, and other essentials, Fr. Seis said.

First-year enrollment will be limited to 250 and Fr. Seis said he is confident they will hit that mark. Dominican Republic schools run in two shifts - morning and afternoon. Fr. Seis said the parish hopes to add eighth grade the next year.

The school will charge a maximum tuition of \$5 a month, he said, and special consideration will be given to the poor and students who haven't been able to attend school in the past.

"The school has been a long time dream of many parishioners because of the poor educational system in this part of the country," Fr. Seis said.

The area's public school system is far from sufficient, he said, because of numerous strikes that leave little time for education.

The school's start fuels the hope of parishioners and Fr. Seis to convert an old Dominican Republic dictator's mansion and property in Elías Piña into a vocational technical high school.

"That is the second part of the dream and plan," he said.

But first, he said, they are praying for a successful finish to the remodeling and a successful start to the school year. That's why he is focusing on raising money to keep the school open and running.

"We'd like to invite more parishes, schools, groups and individuals to help us in this big endeavor," Fr. Seis said.



**Donations can be sent to the Green Bay Diocese Mission Parish School Project, P.O. Box 1506, Green Bay WI 54305-1506.**