

Mercy Focus on Haiti
c/o Sisters of Mercy
275 Parsells Ave.
Rochester, NY 14609
October 23, 2019

Dear Mercy Secondary School and College/University Personnel:

The Members of Mercy Focus on Haiti write to alert you, if you are not already aware, to the severe civil unrest and the looming humanitarian disaster currently afflicting the people of Haiti.

Since February 2019, frequent episodes of civilian protest have occurred; increasingly these have included violent elements: guns, fires, car and truck theft, and rock-throwing. Catholic Relief Services, which is heavily committed to serving the vulnerable in Haiti, claims that the “political paralysis” and transportation blockages, as well as the exorbitantly high cost of food, water, and fuel have caused the closing of schools, hospitals, businesses and other services across the country.

This situation, worsened by road blockages and burning tires, affects not only areas in the south, around the capital, Port au Prince, but also in the north, in Gros Morne where MFOH and our many Haitian partners minister. Jesus and Mary Primary School in Fon Ibo, which MFOH assists financially, has been closed for weeks, but the leader of the school is trying to find a way to offer the school lunches on which the children depend for their best, if not their only, meal each day. Because of fuel scarcity and its exorbitant cost, the farmers with whom our Agronomy partners work, cannot get their food to markets, and when they do the cost is impossibly high for most Haitians. MFOH has, as you know, cancelled all Student Immersions in 2019-2020.

The future of the Haitian government is extremely uncertain. Thousands of protestors as well as the Catholic bishops of Haiti have called for the resignation of President Jovenel Moise and other officials; if these desired resignations occur, it is very uncertain what will follow.

Very little information about this crisis and the looming humanitarian disaster appears in U.S. media outlets, except occasionally in the *Miami Herald* and on October 20 in the *New York Times*. An article in *The New Yorker* (October 10) was written by Edwidge Danticat, a leading Haitian-American writer and novelist. Her analysis is both reliable and foreboding.

MFOH writes to you now about this developing crisis because we have often invited you to engage in merciful response to the sufferings of our Haitian sisters and brothers. They need our prayer, support, and help now more than ever. Please encourage your students and staff to pray earnestly and daily for the Haitian people, and if they are so inclined, [to contribute to a Humanitarian Fund](#) MFOH hopes to use to assist our Haitian partners to help other people wherever they see grave needs.

The Haitians are a faith-filled, resilient, peaceable people who can no longer endure the political, economic, and social burdens that are unjustly laid upon them. We ask our Merciful God to guide, help, and embrace them in their present suffering.

Sincerely,

Mary Sullivan, RSM, and all the Members of Mercy Focus on Haiti