

Poverty & Prayer: My Journey from Hollywood to Haiti

With Gerard Thomas Straub

Monday, October 5 - 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Gerry Straub shares the story of his dramatic conversion—going from atheist to a follower of Christ—during a mystical moment in an empty church in Rome. Following Jesus led Gerry to the worst slums on earth where he put the skills he learned at a network television producer to good use. He made two dozen documentary films featuring people who lived the self-emptying love of Christ by serving the poorest of the poor. The films raised funds to the ministries showcased in the films. His ministry sought “to put the power of film at the service of the poor.”

After 15 years of filming around the world, Gerry decided to put down his camera and serve the poor himself. In May 2015 he opened the Santa Chiara Children’s Center which now the home of dozens of abandoned kids, 25 of whom are still in diapers.

Before his conversion, Gerry produced daytime dramas at all three major networks, including the wildly popular *General Hospital*.

Bio:

Gerard Thomas Straub is a documentary filmmaker and the Founder and President of Pax et Bonum Communications, which produces films focused on the plight of the poor. The goal of his ministry is to put the power of film at the service of the poor. He has written and directed 25 documentary films in such poverty-stricken nations as India, Kenya, Uganda, Jamaica, Haiti, Brazil, Peru, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, and The Philippines. Three of those films aired on PBS. Gerry also is an accomplished photographer; a film featuring his photography was narrated by Martin Sheen.

Mr. Straub had a long and distinguished career as a network television producer and executive in New York and Hollywood; he produced dramatic television series that have aired on CBS, NBC, and ABC, including the widely popular *General Hospital*.

An award-winning author, Gerry has written eight books. His book *The Sun & Moon Over Assisi* was named the “Best Spirituality Hardcover Book of the Year” in 2001 by the Catholic Press Association. A revised and updated edition of the book was published in 2015. His book *The Loneliness and Longing of Saint Francis* was a winner in the Spirituality

category of the 2015 Association of Catholic Publishers' "Excellence in Publishing Awards." His latest book, *The Sunrise of the Soul*, was published by Paraclete Press in July 2020.

Gerry also taught a course on television writing and directing at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. In addition, he has spoken at more than 240 Catholic churches, high schools, and universities across the United States, as well as in Canada, France, Italy, and Hungary. He has been awarded three honorary doctorate degrees in recognition of his work on behalf of the poor. Articles about his work with the poor have appeared in *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and was featured on the PBS show *Religion and Ethics Weekly*.

Since 2015, Gerry has essentially lived in Port-au-Prince, Haiti where he established a home for 68 abandoned kids called The Santa Chiara Children's Center. He has a small apartment in Fort Pierce, Florida which he uses for occasional breaks from the pressures and demands of his work with impoverished children in Haiti. Gerry has two adopted Haitian daughters, Bency and Judeline, and an adopted son, Peter Francis.