Kobonal Haiti Mission

Transforming the Poor in Christ’s Name

— Kobonal, Haiti —

“...I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

Acts 26:18
Project Synopsis

Description
Bring poverty relief, economic empowerment and spiritual transformation to poor Haitian families through a local Catholic mission.

Purpose
Since 1989, Father Glenn Meaux’s Kobonal Haiti Mission has served as a beacon of hope amid deep need. Based in the Diocese of Hinche, the American priest and his all-Haitian staff provide immediate aid and long-term solutions for poor families seeking a better life.

Location
Kobonal, a rural community in Haiti’s Central Plateau Province.

Cost
$1,321,073 is needed to fund the Mission’s crucial outreaches through the current calendar year.

Highlights
• Fr. Glenn Meaux has raised up a thriving Catholic community in a village once dominated by fear, suffering and squalor.
• Through the Kobonal Haiti Mission, families torn apart by domestic strife and black magic superstitions have been brought back together, baptized into the faith and grounded in a life of prayer, devotion and neighborly love.
• Today, the Mission provides poor, local families with crucial services including housing, food, water, education, agriculture and microenterprise.
• Many lives have been changed, but deep pockets of need remain.
• Your gift through Cross Catholic Outreach will support the Mission and its many Christ-centered programs, so the light of hope can continue to shine upon the poor.
The Need

Haiti’s rural poverty

Nearly a third of Haiti’s population lives in metropolitan Port-au-Prince, and that ratio may even increase as rural families continue to flee their isolation and poverty for the dream of something better. They come to the city seeking a modern life with running water, reliable electricity, public transportation, jobs and social services, but sadly, these families more often end up in even worse circumstances. They become trapped in Haiti’s notoriously filthy, crowded, crime-ridden urban slums.

Uneducated and without a penny to spare, the poor seem to have only two options — live in city squalor or endure the poverty in the countryside. But a better alternative is possible! The Church has seen their despair and is actively working to help the rural poor improve their lot without fleeing to the city’s slums.

Father Glenn Meaux’s role in this effort began when, at the invitation of a local bishop, he came to Haiti and started a Catholic mission in a poor, remote village called Kobonal. The bishop had described the area as the “darkest corner of the Diocese of Hinche,” and Fr. Meaux could only confirm this view. He found starving families, sick children, polluted water, sun-scorched fields, crumbling mud shacks and a near-total absence of jobs or opportunities. The suffering of these destitute people — many of whom had nothing but mangoes to feed their children — broke the Louisiana priest’s heart.

“Once I was exposed to the poverty,” Fr. Meaux said, “seeing the children in the streets, I fell in love with the country. I fell in love with the poor.”

The “darkness” of Kobonal was not just material but also moral and spiritual. Fr. Meaux said, “The family unit itself had been reduced to grandmothers struggling to care for babies who had been abandoned by their parents, and teenage girls who were having children every year by different men.” These families had no concept of a God who loves and values them. Fr. Meaux discovered that they were “enslaved and oppressed by black magic priests and their ritualistic services. Voodoo was prevalent, superstition was strong, and zombiism and human sacrifice were practiced.”

Fr. Meaux established a local Catholic community as a beacon of hope amid despair. That community, the Kobonal Haiti Mission, has a vision to change lives — a vision that can only move forward through the generosity of American Catholics like you.
Ministry Description

Transformed by the Light

Since its founding in 1989, the Kobonal Haiti Mission has been used by God as a channel of divine mercy to the poorest of the poor — and it all started with a school.

Before Fr. Meaux’s arrival, most local children were growing up illiterate and deprived of the basic skills needed for gainful employment. In response to this need, the Mission opened a small school and enrolled its first 50 students. The community was thrilled. The provision of a free education helped Fr. Meaux earn the trust of local families, who now knew for a fact that the priest was not just another outsider trying to scam them with empty promises.

As the school expanded to two campuses and the Mission continued developing programs to meet the community’s needs, another change began to take place — a spiritual change. Villagers abandoned voodoo and embraced Christ. The fear of curses was overcome by the joy of the Gospel. Broken families were reconciled, teenage pregnancy declined, discord gave way to neighborly love and the people came together to hear the Word and receive the Blessed Sacrament.

“Through the sacramental life, you build the body of the Church,” Fr. Meaux said. “Through the process of the Gospel, the Eucharist, we build and transform the community.”

Today on an average Sunday, 600 villagers walk to the Mission — some from hours away — to attend Mass. They are an extended family, linked by faith, worship and a shared responsibility for one another’s welfare. Enter the gate, and you’ll find a campus buzzing with activity as the Mission’s all-Haitian staff works together with local families to keep the flame of God’s love burning bright.
Meeting Diverse Needs in Christ’s Name

Kobonal has been radically transformed, both materially and spiritually. But for every story of a family empowered to rise out of squalor, there is a story of someone else struggling to put food on the table. As long as there are families trapped in misery, Fr. Meaux and his all-Haitian staff are committed to meeting them in their hardship and mending their broken lives. Today, the Mission serves the region through a variety of faith-centered outreaches including:

**Housing:** Families living in fragile mud-and-stick huts or other inadequate housing are blessed with sturdy new homes that keep out the rain and can withstand natural disasters. Each house has a durable cement foundation, cinder block walls, four rooms, a patio, a door and windows with locks, and a galvanized steel roof. The Mission is able to provide this incredible gift to a needy family at very low cost (as little as $6,000), while also donating a farmable plot of land if the family has no property of their own. The change from sleeping in the mud on someone else’s land to having a real house and a family garden on one’s own property brings dignity, security and hope.

**Education:** At little to no cost to their families, local children receive books, backpacks, supplies, shoes, cloth for uniforms, daily nutritious meals and a high-quality, faith-infused Catholic education. Cross Catholic support includes the 1,273 children currently enrolled at the Mission school, as well as financial support for 190 students to advance to secondary school or, in some cases, to receive vocational training or enroll at another local primary school. By giving the gift of education, you can empower the next generation to break the bonds of poverty, take care of their families and build a more prosperous Haiti.
**Water:** To help improve health and sanitation, the Mission digs wells to provide clean, abundant water that won’t make families sick when they use it for drinking, cooking and bathing. Each hand-pump-operated, wall-protected well provides an abundant supply to an average of 30 families. A typical well costs around $12,000 to build. Then a water committee, made up of Haitian community members, maintains the well and collects a small fee for repairs. This strategy ensures the well’s longevity and instills in the beneficiaries a sense of responsibility and ownership over their well.

**Job Training and Microenterprise:** By providing microloans and training in a culturally appropriate trade such as farming or tailoring, the Mission empowers men and women to increase their earning potential and support their families. In 2012, Cross Catholic Outreach funded small business loans for 250 community members. Most of those loans were repaid in full to the Mission, and now the program continues as a self-sustaining way for poor but hardworking individuals to generate income and support their families.

**Food for the Destitute:** The Mission distributes monthly food staples like corn, beans, oil and soap to 390 elderly and destitute villagers and their families. These supplies, which are provided at a cost of just $29 per month to each beneficiary and their family, are a lifeline for those who are homebound or can’t afford a daily meal. On food distribution days, the people arrive at the Mission carrying bundles of firewood as a token of their appreciation. These twigs and branches are then used as fuel for the school’s cooking fire.

**Animal Husbandry:** The Mission distributes animals to needy families and teaches them how to turn this gift into a perpetual resource for food and income. Each family signs a contract agreeing to give one offspring back to the Mission in return for each animal they’ve received. In this way, the program continues to benefit many more families year after year. To ensure the program’s success, the Mission also offers vaccinations and veterinary services free of charge to the families who receive animals.

**Agriculture:** To help support the school feeding program, the Mission grows its own produce. Volunteers from the community come to tend the Mission’s farm while also learning to grow food in their own gardens on what was once a barren wasteland. For some of the crops, the Mission has recently adopted a farming approach called “permaculture,” which strives to create a holistic, sustainable ecosystem between nature and people. The intensive vegetable-growing techniques can quickly produce a large amount of food in a relatively small space, reducing the cost to feed the students.
## 2015 Support for the Kobonal Haiti Mission

**Total Aid Needed This Year**

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<th>Project #</th>
<th>Type of Aid</th>
<th>Amount Needed</th>
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<td>Cross Project Management</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Sponsorship Levels**

- **House Construction**: $6,000 per house
- **Well Construction**: $12,000 per well
- **Scholarship**: $360 per child per year
Help Now!

God is working through Fr. Meaux to transform the lives of the poor in Central Haiti, and you can be a part of it!

Your gift through Cross Catholic Outreach will keep the light of Christ burning at the Kobonal Haiti Mission by covering the many costs of this dynamic Catholic outpost to the poor and needy. You will bring food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, shelter to the destitute and the peace of the Lord to the downtrodden.

Right now, thousands of men, women and children are depending on the Mission to relieve their suffering and give them hope for a better future. They are praying and trusting that God will move the heart of a friend like you to give them the aid they so desperately need. Won’t you stand today in solidarity with these precious children of God? They will be so grateful for anything you can contribute to make their hard lives a little brighter. Give a gift that will change a life!

Our Promise to You!
Proceeds from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred during the current calendar year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.