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Passionist News Notes

St. Paul of the Cross Province



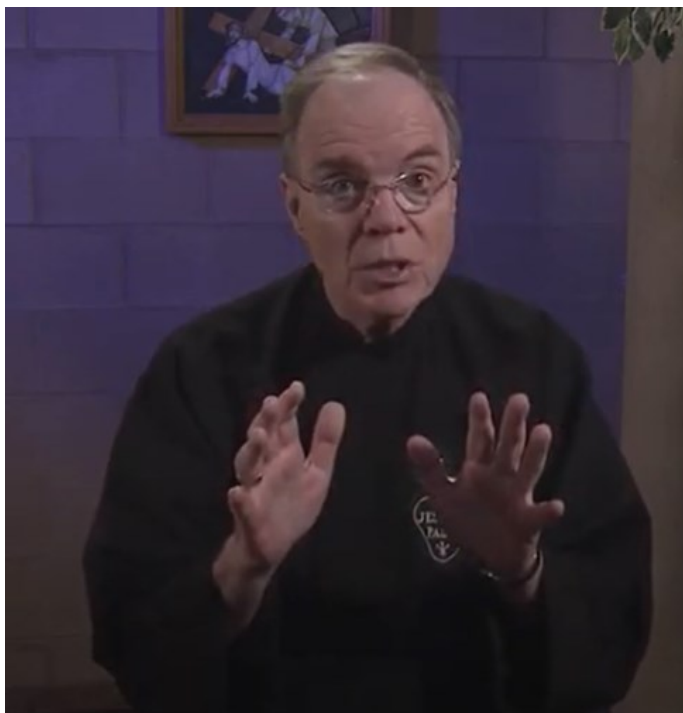
A Silent Debate - A story

by Fr. John Powers, C.P.

Day	Birthday
2	Gaston Nsongolo
7	Terence Kristofak
	Claudio Piccinini
11	Augustine Lowe
15	Theophane Cooney
17	Moises Rios Ruiz
20	Thomas Bonacci
26	Robin Ryan



Day	Ordained
28	MOCCIA, Bonaventure



[VIDEO](#)

St. Paul of the Cross Monastery Church open after renovations

by Tom Smith in South Pittsburgh Reporter Paper October 13, 2020

A little over two years ago, in July 2018, the future of St. Paul of the Cross Monastery and Church was cloudy at best.

The Passionist community of about a dozen priests heard a presentation at a house meeting from a New York firm outlining how the Church could be used as a museum, a small house erected on the property for the religious to live in, keep the retreat house open and demolish the Monastery. The New Yorkers said with the Monastery gone the property would be worth millions of dollars to build condominiums.

Fr. Justin Kerber C.P. had just arrived at St. Paul's Monastery a week or two prior after having spent the past 20 years in Raleigh, NC.

"I was getting annoyed with them, this is one of the most historic places that we have in the world," Fr. Kerber said. "This is the first church in the world named after St. Paul of the Cross. This is the first Passionist foundation in the New World."

He added that so many of the Passionists were trained at the monastery.

"One hundred and thirty of our men are buried here. We have the crypt downstairs where saints are buried. Bishops are down there," he said.

"This is our Monte Argentario of the New World (where the Passionist community was founded)" Fr. Kerber said in an impassioned speech at the time. "This is crazy."

The Provincial, the head Passionist of the United States, was in attendance at the meeting and was asked if the community could elect a new Superior then instead of in the fall. Every four years a Superior is elected to lead the foundation. Even though he had only been at the Monastery a short time, Fr. Kerber received every vote from the community the next day.

That October, he was scheduled to go to Rome with the Provincial to meet with the Pope and represent the community in electing a new General. In his meeting with Pope Francis, he was permitted to ask for one thing and he asked the Pope to pray for the Church in [Pittsburgh](#) in light of the troubles at the time.

After being in Rome for 35 days, Fr. Kerber returned and began having doubts about his ability to carry out what looked like a monumental task ahead of him.

"What am I doing here, this place is a mess, it's falling apart, it has no money, it's going to close. We have no young people, everybody is old and I remember thinking 'I shouldn't go through with this,'" he thought to himself.

Even though it was 2 a.m. at the time, he went into the church to the tomb of Fr. Theodore Foley and prayed out loud "If you want me to make us all holy and keep us all good and you want us to do something here, send money."

Fr. Foley was a rector at the monastery and is a candidate for sainthood.

The next day the Rector received a call from a well-known [Pittsburgh](#) builder asking, "what are you going to do for the place?"

The builder said he had been helped by Fr. Theodore and prays to him every night and offered to send \$500,000 by December 10 and another \$500,000 by January 10 to put toward renovations to the church.

Fr. Kerber remembered the builder saying "that's a million dollars, could you fix up the church?" He was also asked if he could raise that much money to add to the project. He answered yes, having raised \$74 million to build a cathedral in Raleigh.

The ensuing capital campaign raised more than \$2 million for renovations to the church. "This is God's doing, this isn't my doing," he said.

The renovations were just about completed and Fr. Kerber said he was prepared to make the final payment on the work when they found the ceiling and floor were collapsing. The additional work needed to make the repairs put them almost a half million dollars over budget. The builder's company did the work and gave them generous terms in paying for the additional work.

When the construction on the church was almost completed, the builder offered to make renovations to the monastery, adding bathrooms to all the priests' rooms and making other amenities.

Fr. Kerber said he didn't want to change the nature of their lives and asked instead if he would consider making improvements to the Retreat House. The builder offered enough money to fix up the Retreat House.

Fr. Kerber said they have received some criticism for putting so much money into renovations to the church and now the retreat house. He explained the money for the renovations was donated for specific projects and they were unable to use it for anything else.

The Passionists continue to provide services to the greater community. Among other things, they operate a food pantry serving more than 50 area families each week and hear confessions every day.

"You have to use the money for the intention it was donated for," he said. "I did not take any money to better our lives. I took money so that people would come here and we could preach and we could do God's work."

He stressed the project hasn't been his doing, that the whole Passionist community has undertaken the renovations and has been informed and involved every step of the way.

The Monastery Church reopened, with proper covid-19 restrictions, several weeks ago and is planning a re-opening Mass with the Bishop.



The Passionist Monastery Church of

St. Paul of the Cross

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
South Side



Monastery cornerstone laid - August 7, 1853

Church dedicated - November 13, 1859

(Pittsburgh Historic Landmark)

Retreat Center dedicated - November 21, 1920



Passionist Mission Haiti—website

By Fr. Hugo Esparza-Pérez, CP

PASSIONIST MISSION HAITI

Issue 001



Passionist Mission Haiti

JANUARY 2021

WWW.SPPHAITI.COM

IN THIS ISSUE

In Season and Out of Season

By Hugo, CP

A few months ago, I found Nopales here in Haiti. Nopales, a type of cactus, are part of the diet for most Mexicans. Nopales are delicious and nutritious. I was able to get some nopales and decided to learn how to grow them.

Nopales can only really thrive in dry climates. To make things worse, I got my nopales during the beginning of the rainy (Hurricane) season here in Haiti. I asked a few friends and watch a few tutorials and decided to plant them

I was warned that due to the humidity and inappropriate weather my nopales may not make it.... Or that would have to provide extra care for them. Although out of season and with all the circumstances against us, I went for it! I had to find the right type of dirt, the right type of place for sunlight, and little to no-water

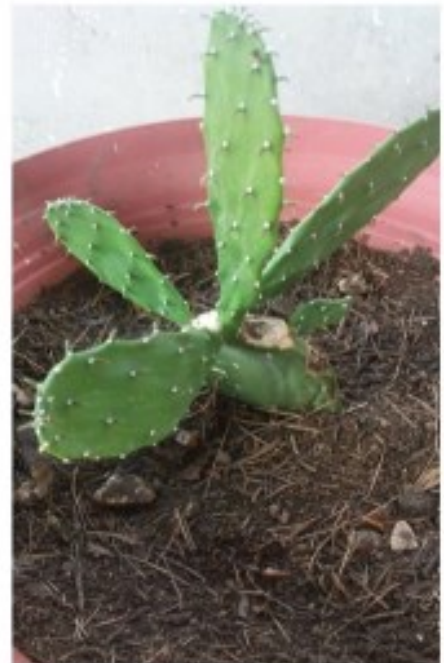
for them to begin to grow. I had a bad feeling about it. My gut was telling me that they would most likely rot due to too much water and not enough sunlight. I took extra care to grow my nopales and, more so, the risks to see it all fail.

Four months after I planted them, I must report that only one of the cactus died and the six others are growing. They are not growing as fast as I thought but they are slowly but surely gaining size. My little experiment with nopales is the story of my life and work here in Haiti.

Since September 2019, Haiti has been plagued with violence due to our political instability.

(Continue on pg. 2)

Our Mission and Programs Pgs. 3-4



My nopales are thriving. I cannot wait to prepare them for one of my meals.

In Season ... *(continued)*

The current government together with the oppositions has taken our country hostage. Monferrier Dorval, head of the bar association in the capital, Port-au-Prince, was killed after a radio interview where he spoke against the current situation of the government, who is basically in a dictatorial mode with no other powers for checks and balances.

During 2020, the country experienced rapid currency depreciation and rampant inflation. The American Dollar lost 40 percent of its value in the

Country. The price of Gasoline, Diesel, and basic food items were not lowered.

Also, Tropical Storm Laura hit Haiti. While Laura did not cause massive deaths, it hit close to home. A 29-year-old mother and physician was dragged by the torrents to her death. Unfortunately, Doctor Jessica drowned together with her baby boy no more than three miles from our home. Dr. Jessica had finished her internship at St. Damien's Children Hospital a year before her tragic death.

In these few days of 2021, we have seen social insecurity skyrocket. There were at least 40 kidnappings reported during the first weekend of this New Year.

At least two priests and a woman religious (all Haitians) were victims. Luckily, all of them have been released after paying hefty ransoms. On top of this, robberies are rampant. One of

our interns was robbed outside our gates as she was coming to teach in our Adult Academy.

Although I take all the necessary precautions, I feel afraid of being robbed or kidnaped. However, the thought of leaving Haiti has not crossed my mind. I do not feel emboldened, that is not who I am. I wrestle with my fear and try to overcome it every day. I feel a sense of duty to continue to be present to the dozen families we serve even if the circumstances seem so bleak. I have to take the risk to continue planting out of season. I just have to do it with more care for my life, the life of those we serve, and with deep reverence to life and its goodness, just like I have been doing with my nopales.



Barricades with burning tires are set up in strategic places of the Capital, Port-au-Prince as the oppositions demand the ousting of the current government.

BR. DANIEL'S VISIT

During three months we had the blessing to receive Br. Daniel Guiveas, CP. Br. Daniel is doing a pastoral year. He joined us to complement our work and presence in Haiti.

Br. Daniel offered a course of English for the volunteers in our pastoral center. He was also involved in developing our murals.

The time went by very fast and Br. Daniel was a positive presence to work and to our community. We pray that the time Br. Daniel spent in Haiti helped him grow in his commitment and vocation as a Passionist.

Br. Daniel celebrated his 35th birthday with us in Haiti.



MISSION AND PROGRAMS



Young Women Support Group

Our young women from Kominote Rit-Naomi participated in a workshop to end violence against women in Haiti.



Our young know how to serve

Before we painted our murals we decided to clean the area. The adjacent street to our property is known to be hot spots for robberies. Our witness for the peace began by us showing that we care for our spaces.



Our New Normal

To ensure the wellbeing of all our children we have committed ourselves to healthy social distancing, wearing our face-covers and to the continual washing of our hands during our Little Stones Kids' Program



This mural is the fruit of the reflection of our young in our Little Stones Program. After they studied the violent context of our country they decided to put what they learned through art.

To love Haiti: You must love its culture, its people and land.

To NOT Kill Haiti: Is to construct, to protect and better the country.

Our Passionist Mission in Haiti

Our Passionist presence as a mission officially began in 2015 in Port Au Prince Haiti. Through our journey here we have discerned how we are called to accompany and preach Christ Crucified with and to our Haitian brothers and sisters.

San Pastoral Pasyonis Haiti (SPPHaiti)

SPPHaiti is a project of the Passionist Community in Haiti.

Our vision is to become **MANY HANDS AND ONE-HEART** as we carry out our mission to create local alternatives to **SERVE, UPLIFT, and EMPOWER** our neighbors in Port-au-Prince.

This work began in 2017. Through relationship building with our neighbors, a few of their needs were addressed. We began helping people better the quality of their homes by sharing building materials with them. We also began to address the needs of the sick in the community. Through this work, other possibilities were addressed like the lack of toilets or latrines, easy access to water, and the fact that the majority of

children are not in school because of lack of money. This prompted us to open a physical space for the community to carry out our initiatives. Hence, SPPHaiti. You can learn more about our work through our web page (www.spphaiti.com).

OUR PROGRAMS 2020-2021

Pi Pre Fanmi (Prepared Families): This is our food solidarity program. Every month we share food with 100 vulnerable families. Each family is asked for a small donation. This donation is used to buy building materials to help some of these same families better their houses. So far, we have been able to fundraise enough money to continue this program until May 2020. We need \$3,000 USD a month to keep our program going.

Konbit Pierre Toussaint: This is a year-long internship for Haitian University Students. Through a monthly stipend, training, and community building these interns help our weekly Adult Academy and our Children's Program, Little Stones. Our Goal for 2021-2022,

is to be able to have 10 interns to help us serve.

We need to fundraise \$1,500 USD per intern.

Little Stones Program: We strive to create a weekly space for our children (6 to 17 years old) through human and religious formation. We offer breakfast every week for over 100 children and for 25 adult volunteers. We need \$300 USD a week to keep our program going.

Akademy SPP: This is our Adult Academy for men and women learning basic academic skills. We serve 25 adults in different levels of knowledge. We also have a computer class. Our goal is to have 20 laptops to continue our service to our youth and adults (so far we have 7 laptops).

Menm Kontre (Lazed Hands):

This initiative for entrepreneurs. After formation in basic business planning, 5 workshops, we seed \$400 USD for our participants to start or continue their business. We ask for a return of 25% of our seed money. So far we had 6 women go through our pilot program. Our goal for 2020-2021 is to work with 5 entrepreneurs.

Kay Sen Gabriel Ospitalite: Our hospitality house is an initiative that will begin in February 2021. We will open our Ex-seminarians' house for young women who are studying or working in our area. We have a safe and dignify space for at least 10 young women. We will offer a living space in exchange for 5 hours of work a week.

Konminote Rit-Naomi: This a support group for young women.

In the spirit of Ruth and Naomi, from the Bible, our young women help each other develop a dream and reach it for their life. Our commitment is to help these young women with scholarships to further their academic life.

Kominote Ebe-Nassi (from Slaves to Princes): This a support group for young men who are searching for masculinity that is life-giving for all. Our commitment is to help these young women with scholarships to further their academic life.



Support our Mission

For 300 years, The Passionists have provided ministry, hope, and support to those our Founder, *St. Paul of the Cross*, said are the "crucified" of today.

He wanted to keep the Passion of Christ *alive* in the words and actions of all Passionist Priests, Brothers, and those connected through their work with the Order.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

You can visit us at:

www.spphaiti.com

Instagram: @SPPHaiti

Please consider making a one-time or recurring gift to our Mission here in Haiti. A recurring gift goes a very long way to the ongoing support of our work.

You can find the opportunity to give via credit card on our safe and secure form through our Congregation's website:

thepassionists.org/give/donate

The generosity of our few but faithful benefactors have allow us to support our friend Marthine.

Marthine is 30 something year-young, nurse and mother of 3 who is battling cancer since February 2020. We thank all of our benefactors for their support that has given Marthine a fighting chance.



Marthine and her children.



WWW.SPPHAITI.COM

Passionist Mission Haiti

En ESPAÑOL

ENERO 2021

EN ESTA EDICION:

Mision y Programas pgs. 3-4

Dentro Y Fuera de Temporada

By Hugo, CP

Los nopales solo pueden prosperar realmente en climas secos. Para empeorar las cosas, conseguí mis nopales durante el comienzo de la temporada de lluvias (huracanes) aquí en Haití. Pregunté a algunos amigos y vi algunos tutoriales y decidí plantarlos

Me advirtieron que debido a la humedad y al clima inadecuado, mis nopales podrían no llegar.... O eso tendría que proporcionarles un cuidado especial. Aunque fuera de temporada y con todas las circunstancias en nuestra contra, ¡acepté! Tenía que encontrar el tipo correcto de tierra, el tipo correcto de lugar para la luz solar y poca o nada de agua para que comenzaran a crecer. Tuve un mal presentimiento al respecto. Mi instinto me decía que lo más probable es que se pudran debido al exceso de agua y la falta de luz solar. Tomé un cuidado especial

para hacer crecer mis nopales y, más aún, los riesgos de verlo fallar.

Cuatro meses después de plantarlos, debo informar que solo uno de los cactus murió y los otros seis están creciendo. No están creciendo tan rápido como pensaba, pero están ganando tamaño de forma lenta pero segura. Mi pequeño experimento con los nopales es realmente la historia de mi vida y mi trabajo aquí en Haití.

Desde septiembre de 2019, Haití ha estado plagado de violencia debido a nuestra inestabilidad política.

(Continúa en pg. 2.)



Mis nopales están creciendo lento pero seguro. Espero pronto poder prepararles en una succulenta comida.

Dentro y ... (continuación)

El actual gobierno junto con las oposiciones ha tomado como rehén a nuestro país. Monferrier Dorval, director del colegio de abogados de la capital, Port-au-Prince, fue asesinado después de una entrevista donde habló en contra de la situación actual del gobierno, que se encuentra básicamente en un modo dictatorial sin otros poderes de control y equilibrio.

Durante 2020, el país experimentó una rápida depreciación de la moneda y una inflación galopante. El dólar estadounidense perdió el 40 por ciento de su valor en el país. No se rebajó el precio de la gasolina, el diésel y los alimentos



Instalan barricadas con llantas en llamas en lugares estratégicos de la capital, Puerto Príncipe, ya que las oposiciones exigen la salida del actual gobierno.

básicos.

Además, la tormenta tropical Laura azotó Haití. Si bien Laura no causó muertes masivas, golpeó cerca de casa. Una madre y médico de 29 años fue arrastrada por los torrentes a su muerte. Desafortunadamente, la doctora Jessica se ahogó junto con su bebé a no más de tres millas de nuestra casa. La Dra. Jessica había terminado su pasantía en el Hospital de Niños St. Damien un año antes de su trágica muerte.

En estos pocos días de 2021, la inseguridad social se ha disparado. Se reportaron al menos 40 secuestros durante el primer fin de semana de este Año Nuevo.

Al menos dos sacerdotes y una religiosa (todos haitianos) fueron víctimas. Afortunadamente, todos ellos han sido liberados después de pagar considerables rescates.

Además de esto, los robos son rampantes. Una de nuestras

pasantes fue asaltada afuera de nuestras puertas cuando venía a enseñar en nuestra Academia de Adultos.

Aunque tomo todas las precauciones necesarias, tengo miedo de ser asaltado o secuestrado. Sin embargo, no se me ha pasado por la cabeza la idea de irme de Haití. No me siento envalentonado, eso no es lo que soy. Lucho con mi miedo y trato de superarlo todos los días. Siento el deber de seguir presente para la docena de familias a las que servimos a pesar de las circunstancias tan sombrías. Tengo que correr el riesgo de seguir plantando fuera de temporada. Solo tengo que hacerlo con más cuidado por mi vida, la vida de aquellos a quienes servimos y con una profunda reverencia a la vida y sus bondades, tal como lo he estado haciendo con mis nopales.

VISITA DEL HNO. DANIEL

Durante tres meses tuvimos la bendición de recibir a hno. Daniel Guiveas, CP. Daniel está haciendo un año pastoral. Se unió a nosotros para complementar nuestro trabajo y presencia en Haití.

Daniel ofreció un curso de inglés para los voluntarios de nuestro centro pastoral. También participó

en el desarrollo de nuestros murales.

El tiempo pasó muy rápido. Daniel fue una presencia positiva para nuestra comunidad. Oramos para que el momento en que eDaniel pasó en Haití lo ayudó a crecer en su compromiso y vocación como Pasionista

Daniel celebrated his 35th birthday with us in Haiti.



MISION Y PROGRAMAS



GRUPO DE APOYO DE MUJERES

Nuestras mujeres jóvenes de Kominote Rit-Naomi participaron en un taller para poner fin a la violencia contra las mujeres en Haití.



NUESTROS JÓVENES SABEN SERVIR

Antes de pintar nuestros murales decidimos limpiar el área. Se sabe que la calle adyacente a nuestra propiedad es un punto caliente para los robos. Nuestro testimonio de paz comenzamos demostrando que nos preocupamos por nuestros espacios.



NUESTRA NUEVA NORMALIDAD

Para asegurar el bienestar de todos nuestros niños, nos hemos comprometido con un distanciamiento social saludable, con el uso de nuestras cubiertas faciales y con el lavado continuo de nuestras manos durante nuestro Programa Infantil Little Stones



Este mural es fruto de la reflexión de nuestros jóvenes en nuestro Programa Little Stones. Luego de estudiar el contexto violento de nuestro país decidieron plasmar lo aprendido en el arte.

Amar a Haití: debes amar su cultura, su gente y la tierra.

NO matar a Haití: es construir, proteger y mejorar el país.

NUESTRA MISION EN HAITI

Nuestra presencia Pasionista como misión comenzó oficialmente en 2015 en Port Au Prince Haití. A lo largo de nuestro viaje aquí, hemos discernido cómo estamos llamados a acompañar y predicar a Cristo Crucificado con y para nuestros hermanos y hermanas haitianos.

CENTRO PASTORAL PASIONISTA HAITÍ (SPPHAITI)

SPPHaiti es un proyecto de la Comunidad Pasionista en Haití.

Nuestra visión es convertirnos en MUCHAS MANOS Y UN SOLO CORAZÓN mientras llevamos a cabo nuestra misión de crear alternativas locales para SERVIR, ELEVAR y EMPODERAR a nuestros vecinos en Port-au-Prince.

Este trabajo comenzó en 2017. A través de la construcción de relaciones con nuestros vecinos, se abordaron algunas de sus necesidades. Comenzamos a ayudar a las personas a mejorar la calidad de sus hogares compartiendo materiales de construcción con ellos. También comenzamos a abordar las necesidades de los enfermos de la comunidad. A través de este

trabajo se abrieron otras posibilidades, como la construcción de baños o letrinas, el acceso al agua y becas, ya que la mayoría de los niños no asiste a la escuela por falta de dinero. Esto nos impulsó a abrir un espacio físico a la comunidad para llevar a cabo nuestras iniciativas. Por lo tanto, el centro pastoral SPPHaiti. Puede obtener más información sobre nuestro trabajo a través de nuestro sitio web (www.spphaiti.com).

NUESTROS PROGRAMAS 2020-2021

PI PRE FANMI (Familias Preparadas): Este es nuestro programa de solidaridad alimentaria. Todos los meses compartimos alimentos con 100 familias en estado de vulnerabilidad alimenticia. A cada familia se le pide una pequeña donación. Esta donación se utiliza para comprar materiales de construcción para ayudar a algunas de estas mismas familias a mejorar sus hogares. Hasta ahora, hemos podido recaudar fondos suficientes para continuar con este programa hasta mayo de 2021. Necesitamos \$ 3,000 USD por

mes para mantener nuestro programa en funcionamiento.

KONBIT PIERRE TOUSSAINT: esta es una pasantía de un año para estudiantes universitarios haitianos. A través de un estipendio mensual, capacitación y desarrollo comunitario, estos pasantes ayudan a nuestra Academia de Adultos y Programa para Niños, Little Stones. Nuestro objetivo para 2021-2022 es poder tener 10 pasantes para ayudarnos a servir. Necesitamos recaudar \$ 1,500 USD por pasante.

PROGRAMA LITTLE STONES: Nos esforzamos en crear un espacio semanal para nuestros niños (de 6 a 17 años) a través de la formación humana y religiosa. Ofrecemos desayuno todas las semanas para más de 100 niños y para 25 voluntarios adultos. El costo de nuestro programa es de \$ 300 USD por semana para mantener nuestro programa en marcha.

AKADEMY SPP: esta es nuestra Academia de adultos para hombres y mujeres que aprenden habilidades básicas escritura, lectura y matemáticas. Atendemos a 25 adultos con diferentes niveles

de experiencia académica. También tenemos una clase de conocimientos básicos de informática. Nuestro objetivo es tener 20 computadoras portátiles para continuar nuestro servicio a nuestros jóvenes y adultos.

MENM KONTRE : esta iniciativa para emprendedores. Después de la capacitación básica en planificación empresarial, 5 talleres, plantamos \$ 400 USD para que nuestros participantes inicien o continúen su negocio. Solicitamos una devolución del 25% de nuestro capital inicial. Hasta ahora, 6 mujeres han pasado por nuestro programa piloto. Nuestro objetivo para 2020-2021 es trabajar con 5 emprendedores.

KAY SEN GABRIEL OSPITALITE: Nuestra casa de hospitalidad es una iniciativa que comenzará en febrero de 2021. Abriremos nuestra antigua casa de seminaristas para mujeres jóvenes que estén estudiando o trabajando en nuestra área. Contamos con un espacio seguro y digno para al menos 10 mujeres jóvenes. Ofreceremos un espacio habitable a cambio de 5 horas de trabajo a la semana.

KONMINOTE RIT-NAOMI: este es un grupo de apoyo para mujeres jóvenes. En el espíritu de Rut y Noemí de la Biblia, nuestras jóvenes se ayudan unas a otras a desarrollar un sueño y lograrlo en su vida. Nuestro compromiso es ayudar a estas jóvenes con espiritual, moral y con becas para que continúen su proceso académico.

KOMINOTE EBE-NASSI (De esclavos a príncipes) - Este es un grupo de apoyo para hombres jóvenes que buscan una masculinidad que les dé vida a todos. Nuestro compromiso es ayudar a estas jóvenes con apoyo espiritual, moral y con becas para que continúen su proceso académico.



APOYA LA MISION

Durante 300 años, los Pasionistas han brindado ministerio, esperanza y apoyo a aquellos que nuestro Fundador, San Pablo de la Cruz, dijo que son los "crucificados" de hoy. Quería mantener viva la Pasión de Cristo en las palabras y acciones de todos los Pasionistas.

Considere hacer una donación única o recurrente a nuestra misión. Un obsequio recurrente

contribuye en gran medida al apoyo continuo de nuestro trabajo.

Puede encontrar la oportunidad de donar mediante tarjeta de crédito en nuestro formulario seguro a través del sitio web de nuestra Congregación:

thepassionists.org/give/donate

La generosidad de nuestros pocos pero fieles benefactores nos ha permitido apoyar a nuestra amiga Marthine. Marthine es una joven de 30 años, enfermera y madre de 3 hijos que lucha contra el cáncer

desde febrero de 2020. Agradecemos a todos nuestros benefactores por su apoyo que le ha dado a Marthine una oportunidad de luchar.



Marthine y su familia.