

**Clear As Mud!**: Mark 8 seems a very simple directive for Lent and life. To follow Jesus "all" one must do is deny oneself and take up "their own" cross, and go for it! For some that means no chocolate until the Bunnies are found in the basket Easter Sunday and "their cross" means the migraines, family issues and trials of stretching the budget to include a tithe or mission donation. Honestly, that is all some of us can handle!

Ash Wednesday, Pastor Abner's church held a morning fast and prayer service that was well attended. I'm impressed when people who eat only every other day or less, give up a meal to pray for their community, country, us, and God to send rain on a very thirsty land. Last night, it poured buckets "out of season!"

Our adventure this week was to take Pastor Fequiere our translator and Villien, our chauffeur to PaP and "pick up the pick up" and one motorcycle we received when UMCOR closed in December. We drove from Petion-ville to Achyiese where Villien "wheeled and dealed" to get through the gate for \$7.00US then paid tax of \$187.50US to the port authority so we could load onto a boat we paid \$375.00US.

We then waited as they loaded over 100 tons of rice, beans, corn meal and flour; hundreds of large bags of produce; many cases of soda pop and beer; and then over 200 retailers and passengers for the trip across the bay to Anse A Galets.

Conversation around us was focused on the economic ills of Haiti and lack of resources in the country. We were transporting goods to an island that cannot grow enough produce, in a good year, to provide food at market. Food costs are astronomical!

Father Roosevelt was sitting with us and we agreed, sud la gonave will suffer greatly this year and many will die for lack of water and food. Cisterns are broken from the storms of September, gardens and livestock died and washed into the sea, and animals forage for food that does not exist, due to the dryer than usual dry season.

We shared plans and projects and he gave us suggestions of places to seek food. NGO's are providing on the north shore as access and industry is less challenging. Yet, many suffer there also as water is limited and flooding is frequent with high tides and when rain does fall. We have been blessed to have a cooperative relationship with the Catholic Church in PaR and other denominations and NGO's on La Gonave.

As we pulled out to sea "fully loaded" one thing I noted was that "Haiti may lack natural resources of water, food, oil, metal and trees" but with the Haitian ingenuity we had witnessed loading the truck and the boat, I believe Haiti should rule the world!

To "live" on La Gonave, is a constant challenge; a cross that is carried by nearly 100,000 people with help from many who "share the boat ride" with them. Sud La Gonave, adds challenge to challenge in lack of resources, inaccessibility and the fickleness of Mother Nature! YET, there is warmth and camaraderie that includes old blans with few skills accepted a "neighbors". Self denial? Cross to bare?

Shirley, Sud La Gonave, Haiti, March 2, 2009, is trying to define "cross" this Lenten season.

After hours of attempts see blog @ <http://gbgmlagonave.blogspot.com>