

Heart Trouble: In the gospel reading from John we are told Jesus had a "troubled heart" and most find that understandable. He was certainly unpopular with many powerful people. If he understood he had little time to finish the work he had begun he was probably aware his presence had affected little change in the "empire" that held God's faithful to a marginal life-style. Seen as a "prophet" the outlook was grim from his point of view.

The island of La Gonave is divided into two districts: Ansagale District includes the mountains on the east end, much of the north shore and inland to Ti Palmiste, or little Palma. The Pwentaraket District includes the south shore (sud lagonav) around the west end and mountains and inland including (I think) Ti Palmiste. There is a number one and number two mayor for each district. The number one mayor is responsible for administering any funds received for development of infrastructure in their district. Many have said the island is forgotten and money never reaches across the water.

In our two years there has been some roadwork done for payment of food, mostly in the AAG District. The storms sort of washed out the work as it was being done, and in both districts, the food did not appear until the workers stopped working after 3 months. Food was then one bag of a green lentil and one bag of some sort of grain that looked suspiciously like what we used to feed our chickens. The lentils caused severe gas pain and diarrhea even mixed with other food.

Sud La Gonave gloated when number one mayor for AAG was rumored of a disappearing act with several hundred thousand Haitian dollars! Little money had made it to the south, the work was hard and the food was awful compared to the UMCOR/GBGM distribution. Still, storm damage was promise of high food costs, no money or harvest and a very lean year with increased death rate.

Now the La Gonave Police Force of 12 who occasionally patrolled the island has grown by 16 in Pwentaraket. There was a mini riot or demonstration a couple weeks ago. The story is, the PaR number one mayor was discovered to have disappeared with 3,282,000 gouds, or \$82,000.00 US dollars. Money intended to feed the people in the coming hard times with food for work.

The discouraging word from World Vision this week is food only for pregnant women and none for the old this time. Fr. Roosevelt had suggested Pastor Abner and I contact Food for the Poor. We were told we just needed to come in and fill our "performas." Fr. Roosevelt and Pastor Abner went in this week to be told the only food left will go to homes for orphans. There is no rice left for school children, old or communities.

There is hope the rain will come early this year so gardens can be planted by the few who have money for seed. There is hope food prices will go down with the wind and fishing will improve. There is hope families in the US will find jobs again so they can send help through Western Union. It is good to know money was sent to help us out, but what can you expect from mayors, with offices without equipment or transportation. Oh, yeah, another boat-load only made it to Turk island before it began to sink. If Jesus reads the World News, he probably still has "heart trouble."

Shirley, sudlagonave, March 26, 2009. <http://gbgmlagonave.blogspot.com>