May 10, 2013

General : Addressee - Formal

General : Address Block

Dear General : Salutation - Informal,

It's raining now as it does often in this rainy season here in Haiti - but I find the rain comforting.

There was someone pounding loudly at the gate just a few minutes ago, but the rain must have driven the person away. Since early this morning a stream of people has pounded at our gate, begging. Some were angry. One man lost both his wife and young daughter this past week in separate incidents. He was terribly angry at me because I could not help him as much as he wanted. It hurts me deeply, but there is only so much that we can do! There was also a very poor woman who works for Hands Together - she came to me in hysterics because someone stole her small salary as she left our compound yesterday. She was begging me to give her another salary as she has 5 young children. I gave her another salary.

As I write to you now, I'm thinking back 20 years to the time I sat on this same spot, listening to the dreams of young college students experiencing the sights, the smells, and the poverty of Haiti for the first time. I was energized by their passion to help the poor people of Haiti. These young Americans on their Spring Break had a vision - a vision and a hope that became Hands Together. Thinking of them now, all these years later, continues to excite me, refresh my energy, and gives me new hope!

But sadly, the squalor and poverty here is probably worse now than it was back then. There are heart-rending sights and sounds of human misery and suffering. But I can also see what Hands Together has been doing, and continues to do. We feed thousands of people each day. We've drilled over 350 water wells, providing clean water for drinking and crop irrigation, saving and feeding many people. We now operate 14 schools throughout Haiti, including the only totally free high school in all of Haiti. Our expanding farm and agricultural projects provide much of the daily food we serve to our school children.

The dream of those college students of 20 years ago is very much a reality, as I consider all the good work Hands Together has accomplished, and is doing every day. I thank God for all of you who have helped us in the past. Doug Campbell our Executive Director and I thank you so very much! And I thank our loving Lord who never abandons us!

I beg you to continue to help us. I beg you to consider the cry of the poor - the cry that is sadly all around us: certainly in Haiti, and in every city and town around the world. This cry may even come from within your own home - a cry of loneliness, the poverty of rejection, the despair of no self-worth and no hope. This is the mission we all share: to know that God loves us, and to bring that knowledge both to ourselves and to everyone we meet. In doing this, we truly discover our loving God.

Please - we only ask for your help like this once a year. If you have already helped us, or help us on a continuing basis throughout the year, we ask for your prayers. Without these, our work in Haiti cannot survive or continue, and everything we have accomplished by working and praying together would quickly fall apart.

God bless you,

Fr. Tom Hagan

P.S. As promised, this is the only major mailing and appeal we make during our fiscal year. If you would like more copies of the enclosed flyer please email or write us. You can find the latest news on our work and a copy of our audited financial statements by visiting our website at www.handstogether.org.