

## Rev. Bernard Reiser to hold fund raiser for people of Haiti

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by Peter Bodley Managing editor

Rev. Bernard Reiser, founding pastor of Church of the Epiphany, Coon Rapids, has been helping the people of the Caribbean country of Haiti for 10 years.

And since 2005, a program that Reiser launched has provided fresh water to the “poor people of Cité Soleil,” which Reiser describes as a slum area in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince.

A “keep the waters flowing” fund-raising event is being organized by Reiser, along with a committee headed by Doris Schulte, longtime Epiphany parishioner, to raise money for the project.

The event will take place at Church of the Epiphany, 11001 Hanson Blvd., Tuesday, April 1, 6:45 to 9 p.m.

From 6:45 to 8:15 p.m. in the gymnasium and cafeteria, there will be wine, punch, hors d’oeuvres, musical entertainment by several Epiphany musical groups and a chance to win a deluxe dinner for four with Reiser.

In addition, there will also be Reiser memorabilia available.

From 8:30 to 9 p.m. in the church, Reiser will present a slide show, titled “Keep the Waters Flowing.”

*“I’ve seen it and it is unforgettable,”* Schulte said.

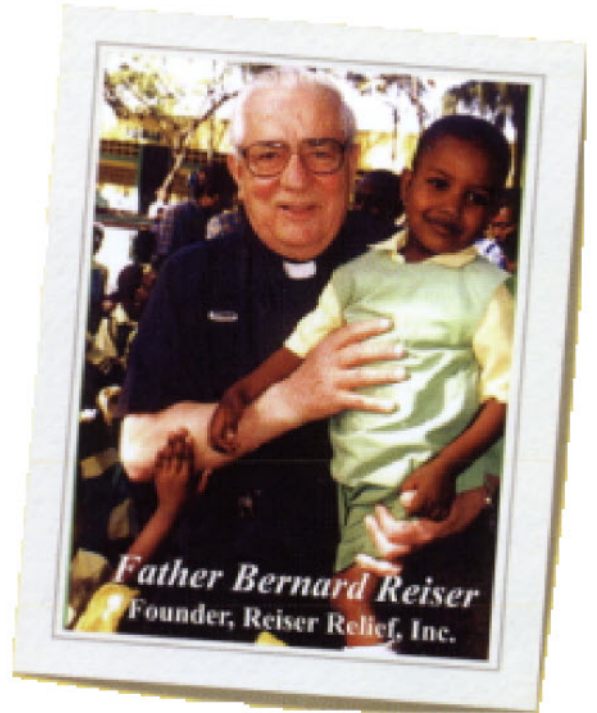
The goal of the event is to raise \$10,000, which is enough to support the fresh water program for five months, Reiser said.

Admission is free and open to the public and donations are 100 percent tax deductible. **Checks should be made payable to Reiser Relief Inc., c/o Father Bernard Reiser, 1800 111th Ave. N.W., Unit 320, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

*“The people there have so little, but with clean water, children of Haiti can stay healthy, attend school and ultimately contribute to the community,”* Reiser said.

The “keep the waters flowing” project began in February 2005 when Reiser, along with the Knights of Columbus in New Market, arranged for a converted milk truck to be shipped to Cité Soleil.

Cité Soleil has a population of 300,000, but there is no running water, no sewer and no electricity, according to Reiser.





For the past three years, the truck has delivered 14,000 gallons of fresh water daily to the people of Cité Soleil. They bring five-gallon buckets from their homes to fill up with water from the truck.

The water is used for drinking, cooking and other necessities, Reiser said.

“The truck runs six days a week, reaching as many as 2,800 impoverished families each day,” he said. “This water touches thousands of lives.”

The water, which is paid for through the program, is trucked in to Cité Soleil from a deep well outside Port-au-Prince. “We can’t afford to drill our own well,” Reiser said.



Twin Cities residents Jeff Gacek and Kevin McClellan coordinate the program, he said.

The drinking water project is only one way that Reiser has helped the people of Haiti since his first visit 10 years ago.

He has been “profoundly touched by the misery” he has seen in Haiti, which shares an island in the Caribbean with the Dominican Republic and is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Reiser said.

their programs Reiser has spearheaded in Haiti include the building of a center for

abandoned women and mothers who have no place to go, he said. It is located in the mountains outside Port-au-Prince and houses 30 women at one time.

Through fund-raising efforts, Reiser has also supported clinics and hospitals in Cité Soleil, as well as build classrooms for schools, a medical and community center and a sanitary block for sewage.

*“As I left Haiti on my first visit, I knew I had to help make a difference in these poor people’s lives,”* Reiser said.

*“I am hopeful that many others will be moved to join me as well. Together we can make wonderful things happen by providing clean water for these most needy people.”*

According to Reiser, a \$1,000 donation will pay for five days’ supply of water for some 28,000 families, while a \$50 contribution will provide a half-day’s supply of water for about 1,400 families.

Reiser is retired as pastor at Epiphany, which he founded in 1964 and which is now one of the largest parishes in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

He is now pastor emeritus at Epiphany, but he is also as busy as ever as a substitute priest for the archdiocese which takes him on the road every weekend and every week, Reiser said.

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