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MISSION MESSAGE

Haiti — Always on the Horizon

*By Shannon Kowalski
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Judes Montis, a Haitian mission director, and David and Natalie Lloyd, a missionary couple from the United States, were tragically killed by gang members after leading a youth group activity in a Haitian church. The deaths of Judes, David and Natalie serve as a stark and painful reminder of the risks associated with being a missionary.

Haiti, a nation known for its resilience and vibrant culture, has long been a focal point for missionary activity, especially within the Catholic Church since the 15th Century.

Catholic missionaries, inspired by Jesus' call in Matthew's Gospel to serve the "least of these," have been dedicated to providing essential services and spiritual guidance to the Haitian people. Despite its rich cultural heritage, Haiti remains one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere.

UNICEF estimates that nearly 59 percent of the Haitian population lives below the poverty line. Extreme poverty is particularly prevalent in rural regions, with approximately 2.5 million individuals earning less than \$1.25 per day. Many Haitians struggle to access basic services

such as clean water, sanitation, and healthcare.

Additionally, Haiti faces significant food insecurity, with 4.97 million people experiencing acute food shortages — nearly half of the country's population. These harsh realities underscore the urgent need for continued aid from Catholic missionaries and other international partners.

Catholic social teaching emphasizes the preferential option for the poor, urging us to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable. Through centuries of missionary work, education, healthcare, and emergency relief efforts, Christian missionaries have been instrumental in supporting Haiti through its many challenges.


Catholic missionaries in Haiti provide more than humanitarian aid: They bring the sacraments, evangelize, and instill a sense of hope and dignity among the people. Their work is rooted in the belief that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God and deserves a life of dignity, free from poverty and oppression.

Despite their noble intentions, missionaries often face violence and instability in developing nations. On May 23,

These individuals, often inspired by their faith in Christ, leave behind their homes and all that they know to serve in areas fraught with danger. Their sacrifice is a testament to their deep faith and commitment to the Gospel's call to serve. The loss of these lives is a profound tragedy, not only for their families and communities but also for the broader mission of the Church in Haiti.

The recent deaths of these missionaries highlight the dangers and the urgent need for continued support from the Catholic Church and the global community. By standing in solidarity with Haiti, providing necessary aid, and ensuring the safety of those who serve, we honor the memory of the fallen missionaries and uphold the mission of the Church. Their legacy of hope and healing must continue, driven by the Catholic principles of human dignity, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor.

Through steadfast support and compassion, we can help Haiti move toward a future where all its people can thrive.



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