

Family

Continued from page 1

U.S. as communication lines continued to be down in the wake of the disaster.

"It's been good talking to people in the same situation," Malherbe said.

The Haitian population in the Treasure Valley is "very, very small," he added, with about seven families in Boise and one in Nampa. The Deserts have five children, including a daughter attending the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn.; and two children each at Bishop Kelly High School and at St. Mark Catholic School, both in Boise. All have been affected by the news of the disaster, the parents said.

The conversation turns to the response of Haitian President Rene Preval, who was seen in early reports helping his countrymen desperately try to save as many Haitians as possible. Preval had served as prime minister during former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's first term in 1991.

Aristide, a former priest, was forced to leave Haiti during his second term as president because of violent rebellion and chaos in the country in 2004.

When Aristide assumed power, the people had high hopes, because he had been a priest, Malherbe said. "However, he did not respond to the



Deacon Malherbe Desert

nation's expectations."

Since Aristide left the country, United Nations security forces have been providing national security and are expected to remain in the country for an undetermined

period.

Preval, with middle class roots, carved out his own reputation as honest, humble and hardworking. He is, however, nearing the end of his second term, and the Deserts said they were not impressed by any of the candidates vying to succeed him.

"He's honest and he's always among the people," Malherbe said.

While Preval may be a capable leader, he does not have resources to manage the disaster before him, Malherbe

said. The country, the poorest in the Western Hemisphere, has no heavy moving equipment to aid in the search for survivors beneath tons of fallen concrete, nor the military to maintain order and organize search and rescues. In news clips and photos of the aftermath, few pictures showed U.N. forces active anywhere.

Martine said that concern about widespread looting, especially with reports that structural damages to state prisons had effectively freed the nation's criminal population, isn't accurate, especially in face of the devastation.

"At times of difficulty, we stick together," she said. "Within this tragedy, everyone has a person who was lost."

"Besides," she added. "What can be taken from people who have nothing?"

Haiti had begun to develop a middle class, building a bridge between the "bourgeois" and the large numbers living in abject poverty. Martine's brother is an architect, and her sister, a secretary.

Malherbe was a physician in Haiti before entering the U.S. in 2005. He came to join his children and wife who, during a visit with family in Florida a year earlier, decided that the

opportunities available for her children in the U.S. were far too great to be passed up. Shortly after his arrival, the family moved to Idaho, with the help of the St. Alphonsus Project Haiti, through the St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center. In Haiti, Malherbe had worked at a facility affiliated with St. Alphonsus.

Malherbe also wanted a safer place to raise his family, and in Florida, Martine and the children were caught in a store as it was being robbed, leaving the children traumatized.

Despite natural threats - such as hurricanes, tsunamis and earthquakes - and manmade ones - unstable or corrupt governments and civil unrest, the Deserts said they understood why their loved ones had hope and remained in Haiti. Malherbe said that his mother had just returned home from a holiday visit with family in New York, and Martine noted that her brother had tickets to fly to Florida to reunite with old friends beginning Jan. 18.

"At a certain age, 40-50, as a middle class professional with a family," you come to the conclusion that staying there would be better than uprooting your family, Malherbe said.

Father Frechette travels from mother's deathbed to 18 funerals

By Catholic News Service

Passionist Father Rick Frechette, the Haiti-based director of medical services for Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos International, was at home in New Jersey with his dying mother when the magnitude 7 earthquake hit Port-au-Prince Jan. 12.

"I was determined to stay with her to the end, especially since my whole adult life I have been far from home in the foreign missions," he wrote in a letter posted on the Web site of the Passionists' St. Paul of the Cross province.

However, when news of the devastating quake arrived, Gerri Frechette told her son: "You have to go. The problems there are worse than mine."

After a plane ride from New York to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and a lift in a helicopter belonging to the president of the Dominican Republic, Father Frechette arrived in Port-au-Prince Jan. 14 to a series of what he called "sadnesses" - including 18 funerals that first day.

"One for John who works at our St. Luke program," he wrote in a Jan. 15 e-mail. "We miss John very much. He often stopped at my door to tell me the milestone of his developing baby, which delighted him no end.... Another was for Johanne's mother. Johanne is one of the directors of the St. Luke program. All the others were of unknown people who were sadly rotting by the wayside...."

"Other stories of deaths of people who are dear to us keep coming in," he said.

The St. Luke program operates street schools in the poor-

est slums of Port-au-Prince.

In an interview with NBC News late Jan. 14, Father Frechette said one of the worst things about celebrating funerals after the earthquake is knowing that the survivors "have to go to the cemetery with their picks and shovels to bury their own dead."

Father Frechette, a doctor of osteopathic medicine, oversees St. Damien Chateau-blond pediatric hospital; the Father Wasson Center, where educational and rehabilitative services are provided at the site of the former pediatric hospital; and St. Helene Orphanage, which housed more than 350 children.

Although the orphanage was not significantly damaged, the seven-story Father Wasson Center collapsed and "about half the outer perimeter walls (of St. Damien's) have fallen," the priest said.

Molly Hightower, a graduate of Bellarmine Prep in Tacoma, Wash., and the University of Portland in Oregon, was found dead under the rubble of the Father Wasson Center Jan. 15. She was the niece of Jesuit Father Craig Hightower, the head of campus ministry at Gonzaga University in Seattle, and had been volunteering in Haiti for a year.

Editor's note: St. Damien Hospital and other ministries in Haiti receive the support of St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise. St. Alphonsus has established a Project Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund. To donate, see their Web site www.saintalphonsus.org/Foundation_gifts_projecthaiti.html.

Offering the largest selection of natural food in Idaho! Fresh and healthy...for you, your family and your planet! We support local farmers, local agriculture! JUST ONE BLOCK FROM ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL!



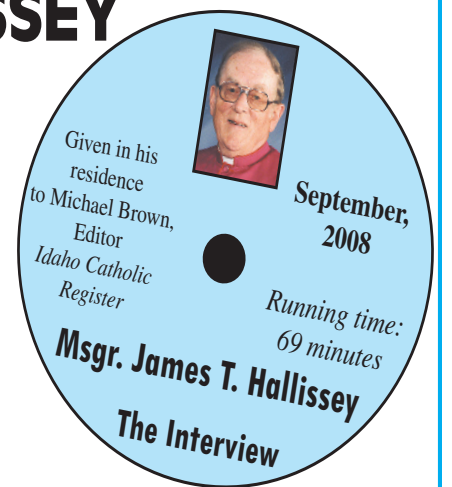
MSGR. JAMES HALLISSEY THE INTERVIEW DVD

ON SALE NOW!

\$6 each (includes postage)

Please fill out order form below and enclose check, money order or credit card information (Visa, Mastercard or Discover).

Make checks payable to: The Idaho Catholic Register



HALLISSEY DVD ORDER FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE ORDER FORM BELOW AND MAIL WITH CHECK/MONEY ORDER MADE OUT TO: 'IDAHO CATHOLIC REGISTER' OR COMPLETE CREDIT INFORMATION.

AMOUNT _____ HALLISSEY INTERVIEW DVD @\$6.00 EACH = _____ TOTAL

CHECK/MONEY ORDER ENCLOSED _____ BILL MY CREDIT CARD _____ VISA _____ MASTERCARD _____ DISCOVER

Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ CCS Number: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____

Mail this form with payment to:

Idaho Catholic Register, 1501 Federal Way, Suite 400, Boise, ID 83705
CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION: (208)342-1311 • EMAIL: LGossi@RCDB.org