

October 29, 2022

Good News/Bad News

Yesterday I received a detailed audio message from Gabens. He said that on Thursday he and Michel were able to get 20 gallons of diesel fuel and 15 gallons of gasoline. He also mentioned that on Friday Steph and Michel will get 20 jugs of water. I was happy to hear Gabens say the street were calmer but there were still fewer cars on the roads due to the lack of fuel. Most government office and many businesses are only open three days a week because of fuel scarcity. Gabens and Michel needed to go to a store for parts for the generator on Thursday but the store was closed. They will try again today.

On Friday Steph had to take her grandma to the airport for her flight to Florida. Her father, who is a police officer, drove them. They left at six in the morning. Grandma always flies on JetBlue, but for some reason her son in Florida booked the trip on Spirit Air. They were shocked to learn they had to pay \$79 to carry on one small piece of luggage. Grandma did have enough money. Fortunately, Steph had just enough to pay the carry-on luggage fee.



Around 9:30 yesterday morning Baby sent a selfie of herself at Hope Hospital. She was wearing a mask. In a text message Baby said her blood pressure was not stable and she had been coughing for 15 days. She also said her head was turning and she felt like she was going to fall on the floor. She was probably dizzy. I had Gabens investigate. He said he sent Michel to her apartment. He learned that she took herself to the hospital. The hospital is not near us. It is in Delmas, 75 and is

at least a 15-minute drive. I gave her a little money before I left, so perhaps she went by moto-taxi. I am worried about her. Had I been in Haiti, she would have told me and I would have driven her to the Hope Hospital, as I have numerous times in the past. I would also be getting the water with Steph. Instead, after a day of doing Santa Chiara stuff, I am proof-reading the typeset pages of *Reading Thomas Merton and Longing for God in Haiti*. Before all these calls and messages from Haiti I read a passage in the book that confirmed for me that going to the Trappist monastery in South Carolina for a week in March was better for me than two exhausting weeks of nostalgia in Italy. It is easy for me to focus on St. Francis' action on behalf of the poor...and easy also to ignore that the saint spent fully half his time in isolated mountain-top hermitages where he entered deeply into contemplation. For me, a better alternative than spending a week in cave is to enter the stillness and silence of a monastery.

When Steph got home from the airport, she told me that she knew Baby was sick and she ordered tests for her. Steph feared that Baby had either tuberculous or covid. Steph is frustrated over the fact that many of the staff would not get the covid vaccine because of baseless fears and crazy stories about the vaccine. Weeks ago, she and Nurse Rose insisted the staff wear masks. They did but within a few days they became lax in wearing the masks. Yesterday, I told Gabens the mask rule must be enforced.

UPDATE: The doctor at the hospital had ordered five tests. Baby had enough money to pay for three. The doctor gave her prescription for medication and she left the hospital. She was told to return on Saturday for the other two tests. She confirmed she took a motorcycle taxi to and from the hospital. She sounded very sick when I spoke with her. She said she knew she was sick while I was still in Haiti but she did not say anything to me because she knew I was dealing with so many problems. While she was still in the hospital, I left her an audio message to call Gabens and he would come to the hospital to pay for the tests with his credit card. She didn't hear it.

I asked Gabens and Steph to arrange for Michel to drive Baby to the hospital today for the remaining tests. She was to wear her mask and sit in the back seat of the car. I said Baby could not enter SCCC until we learned of the nature of her sickness. Because Gabens leaves the cash I left for him in a safe, I gave Steph an envelope with cash for any emergency that arises when Gabens is not at SCCC. She will use the money to pay for the additional tests if Gabens is unable to accompany Baby to the hospital. I wish I were in Haiti to take care of my daughter.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's foreign ministry said his government was helping the Haitian government buy personal protective equipment such as bullet-proof vests from Taiwanese manufacturers "in order to enhance the ability of the Haitian police to perform duties and respond to the calls of the international community and like-minded countries to improve public security in Haiti."

Sending a special international force to Haiti could provide much-needed relief to a population choked by powerful gangs, but any new stabilization mission has little chance of ending the chaos without a long-term political solution. Of course, international forces could bring immediate relief to Haitians as it could regain control of oil depots, restore access to potable water that is crucial to fight cholera and open the roads that are blocked by gangs and allow passing of humanitarian aid and other basic goods. Many Haitians resist the idea of outside military intervention, because

that has never worked before and no one deals with the underlying problems. Haiti is ungovernable and the Haitians are incapable of delivering a roadmap that leads to free and fair elections.



The car with no doors is a police vehicle. The police need a lot more than bullet-proof vests. I know exactly where this is...and often used to drive past the building on the left.



A Canadian military plane taking off in Haiti.
I saw a similar plane on the ground when I left Haiti on Wednesday.