

The Giving Waters/Las Aguas Generosas Reservoir Project
At La Sagrada Familia Parish in the Dominican Republic
Sister parish to the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist

When most people think of the Dominican Republic, they think of a tropical vacation destination. But the reality is that the area where La Sagrada Familia parish, the sister church of the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, is located is very arid. Many of the people living in the area are farmers, but many of them are subsistence farmers and cannot produce enough to market their products due to the arid climate.

One of the municipal districts of the area is called Barrera. Since the government prohibited them from cutting down trees to make charcoal in order to protect the environment two years ago, 40% of the population has been left without any means to earn money. Barrera is one of the poorest towns in the province of Azua where our sister church is located. Without the option to make charcoal as a source of income, the only other productive sources of income are farming and fishing. The condition of the housing in the area is very poor, the education level is very low, and the inhabitants have health issues due to their poverty. Due to these conditions and lack of sources for jobs, many of the youth of the area have encountered desperation as their goals cannot be met due to the lack of any means to find success. Some in the area have resorted to making alcohol illegally, which has resulted in alcoholism as well as contamination of the stream in the area due to chemical byproducts of the alcohol production.

In order to discourage the illegal charcoal and alcohol trades, we have been asked to help with a project to improve the agricultural prospects of the farmers in the lowlands of Barrera by giving them the means of irrigating their fields. The project involves digging a 57x65x4 meter reservoir (which has already been done by the farmers themselves) that will have a geomembrane and geotextile lining to prevent the water from leaking out of the reservoir and to protect it from chemicals leaching into it. The reservoir will be filled by constructing a pipeline leading from a natural spring to the reservoir. Other pipelines to be constructed will lead from the reservoir to the farmer's fields for use in irrigating them. There are currently drainage ditches in the area that lead from the spring, however they are not constructed correctly and much of the water is lost in the process.

Some 40 farmer families that are part of the Felix Ortiz agricultural association will benefit from the reservoir project. They have and will continue to assist in providing the labor for the project. They will also be trained in the use and management of the irrigation water as well as in improved cultivation practices. This will greatly assist in their production of traditional crops such as plantain and banana. The total project fundraising goal is \$50,000, half of which has been raised by Holy Apostles Parish in New Berlin and the other half (\$25,000) is the goal to be raised by the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist.

While the 40 farmers and their families will be impacted directly by the project, truly all of the families in the area will benefit as the local economy improves due to the greater economic success of the farmer families. It will also encourage those who are practicing the illegal charcoal and alcohol trade to become farmers, and thus will help not only the local economy but the local ecology as well.

Please consider making a donation of any amount that you can to assist us with this project. If you wish to donate by debit or credit card, you can do so by going to the Cathedral's website: www.stjohnncathedral.org

Thank you in advance for your support.

