

THE HOSPICES

In the shadow of death

Nuns bestow tender mercy on the dying

The open markets on the walk to Sanfeil are packed with people selling the daily needs — food, charcoal — and one wood shop where craftsmen display their work: a chair, a table, a coffin.

The coffin is set out on the street so people can see its light, unfinished wood, its simple lines.

Through the crowded streets people pass, hardly noticing.

Women walk with five-gallon containers of water balanced on their heads, stepping up and down steep slopes, around muddy holes and piles of garbage, never a close call, always in perfect rhythm with their lead. Others balance baskets of produce and wash.

A man walks slowly down the edge of the street balancing on his head a child's coffin made of wood. He needs an arm to help him balance his burden.

At the metal door to Sanfeil, a Haitian man sits on a stool and motions people inside.

"You are most welcome here," he says.

Sanfeil means "place without son," as in son of God. It's run by a group of sisters under Mother Teresa.

It's a hospice for the dying. There are many men and

women here. The sisters, dressed in white veils with blue stripes, won't say how many.

Dressed in blue hospital clothes, the patients walk in a courtyard if they can, or lie on beds in long rows inside the white building. Many have AIDS or tuberculosis. Many are young. Most look much older than they are.

The scene is quite different at the front of the building, near the gate, around a 10-foot statue of the Virgin Mary. Here there is life.

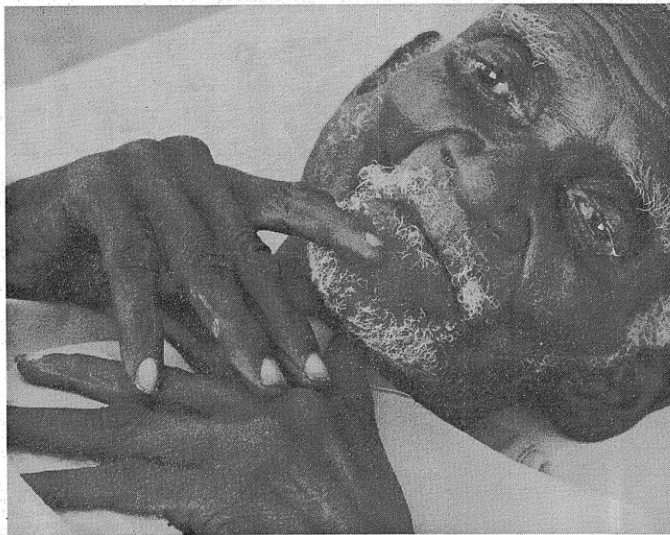
Life and death

Hundreds of people, mostly children, have formed a line leading to a single door of a building at the front of the hospice.

Inside the door sits a sister from India, marking cards that people hand to her. The people then move forward across the room, past walls that are lined with 100-pound bags of powdered milk from the European Economic Community and Belgium. On another wall are bags of bulgur wheat from the United States.

A man scooping powdered milk is wearing a mask, the rest of his black face and hands and arms and hair covered with the powder.

As women in line open plastic bags they've brought with



An old man faces the day in a hospice bed, needing all his energy to reach out a hand before it falls back again. Many patients at the hospice for the dying have AIDS or tuberculosis.

them, he scoops out one, two, three portions of powdered milk. A man next to him pours two scoops of bulgur into a second sack that the women carry. A nun then hands the women a jar of mustard.

"I do not want you to write about what you see here," the sister at the door tells a reporter.

"Go out on the streets and look at what you see there and write about that. What we do here is not important."

They're distributing food to 600 people this morning.

The people receiving food are the lucky ones. They're being fed. Even the people here who are dying are lucky. If they weren't being cared for here, they'd die alone, hungry on the streets.

They'd be without the Son that the sisters of Mother Teresa bring them.

Cries for love, help

This is only one of the hospices these sisters run in Port-au-Prince.

Another is for malnourished children, some of them orphaned. Many will get better and be returned to their families, who are being educated on nutrition.

There are 104 babies in the children's hospital. They share 92 cribs — some babies two to a bed. The hospital is separated into rooms with 20 to 30 cribs in each room — white metal cribs with pastel colored sheets and blue plastic pads. The children wear only loose, cloth diapers.

There aren't enough people here to do the work. Some of the babies stretch their arms up at people who pass, begging to be held by any stranger whose arms are warm. They look in your eyes, reaching as far as

"I'm going back home. But the Mother Teresa hospices will still be here. The nuns will still be overworked. People will still be getting shot in Haiti and people still won't have enough food."



— Josh Bussert, Lafayette

they can, sometimes crying. Josh Bussert of Lafayette was part of the group from St. Thomas Aquinas Church that visited Haiti in March. He went back often to help at the baby hospital.

"I have three kids," he says. "And every time I go to that place I see my kids in the faces of those infants and toddlers. It's so horrible to think that this is the only life these kids will know."

He wonders — what if these were his children? What if his children had been born in a country that didn't have the ability to provide the medical care they needed?

"If it wasn't for this hospice," Bussert says, "these babies,

who are at least fed daily and changed, they'd be in the gutters. They've got it great compared to what the children in the street have."

The eight-day stay has seemed much longer for Bussert.

Sitting in a sleeping room lit by a dim lantern on the night before returning home, he says part of him will be happy to return to the United States. But a big part of him remains sad to leave.

"I'm going back home," he says. "But the Mother Teresa hospices will still be here. The nuns will still be overworked with too many kids. People will still be getting shot in Haiti and people still won't have enough food."



One stretcher still lies empty in a shed used as a morgue in a Port-au-Prince hospice.

THE HEALTH OFFICIAL

Scientist envisions better hygiene

KEN KAVANAGH sits on the balcony of a building overlooking this city and shakes his head.

There's so much to be done here, you hardly know where to start, he says.

But he does have some ideas on where to begin.

Kavanagh of Delphi is an environmental scientist in the Indiana Department of Health.

He visited Haiti last month with a group from St. Thomas Aquinas Church in West Lafayette — partly to look at sanitation problems here and help find solutions.

"This is a huge problem. You can see that," Kavanagh says, waving his hand across the view of Port-Au-Prince's slums in front of him.

He's done a number of

studies, generating ideas to help people here.

Rural areas like Baudin have the same problems as Port-au-Prince.

"But at least in an area like that, the problems are of a manageable size," he says.

An endless cycle

Kavanagh stresses the importance of reconstructing the outhouses that serve the school there. They're in atrocious condition. And for many kids, school is the only place they get to use a privy. At home, they don't have them.



Kavanagh

Simple hygiene also is lacking.

"It has to be emphasized to the point of being exaggerated that nobody, nobody goes to the privy without washing their hands," he says. "They do have a water bucket there for washing but they don't have any soap."

He'd like to see some simple concepts for individual privies serving homes.

"Here in Port-Au-Prince, you almost have to scrap it down and start from scratch," Kavanagh says. "You have all these impoverished areas where people are living on top of each other. You can't solve these without the government being involved."

"You can't have people living in sewage with no source of water. It's creating a cycle that's just endless."



With water scarce in Cité Soleil, people clean their feet in a puddle of rain water.

HAITI'S HISTORY

JULY 1992

Aristide demands a United Nations presence in Haiti.

JUNE 15, 1993

The Haitian legislature agrees to reinstate Aristide as president, but sets no date for his return. The U.N. imposes sanctions against Haiti.

JULY 3, 1993

Agreement is reached to reinstate Aristide in October. Coup participants will be granted amnesty.

AUG. 25, 1993

Businessman Robert Malval wins parliament's OK for transitional rule.

AUG. 27, 1993

U.N. drops sanctions.

AUG. 30, 1993

Malval sworn in as prime minister.

SEPT. 11, 1993

Aristide supporter Antoine Izmerly is dragged from a church and killed.

OCT. 2, 1993

Human rights observers record the 100th assassination of an Aristide backer since July 3.

OCT. 6, 1993

Twenty-six U.S. troops arrive, vanguard of a 1,600-member U.N. mission.

OCT. 10, 1993

Malval warns that if the U.N. plan fails, Haiti will collapse.

OCT. 11, 1993

Armed men stop 200 U.S. troops from landing in Port-au-Prince.

OCT. 14, 1993

Defense Minister Guy Malary is assassinated.

OCT. 19, 1993

The U.N. embargo is reimposed after junta leaders fail to restore democracy.

DEC. 15, 1993

Malval leaves his post as prime minister.

JANUARY 1994

Aristide rejects a U.S. proposal that he make concessions without reassurance that the military government will cede power.

FEB. 15, 1994

Aristide rejects a U.S.-backed plan to name a prime minister as a first step toward his return to power.

MARCH 27, 1994

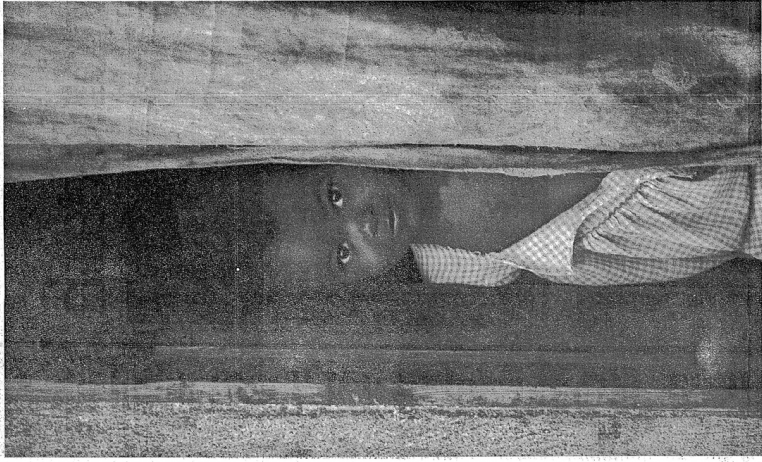
The Clinton administration offers a proposal to grant military leaders amnesty and set a date for Aristide to return.

MARCH 29, 1994

The Clinton administration decides to extend a loophole in the embargo against Haiti, permitting some exports to the U.S. until May 31.

APRIL 6, 1994

Aristide cancels a 1991 U.S.-Haitian refugee agreement, charging the U.S. policy of repatriating all Haitian boat people violates the accord. The U.N. reports 112 executions and suspicious deaths in Haiti since Jan. 31.



THE POVERTY
Each day
has its
trouble

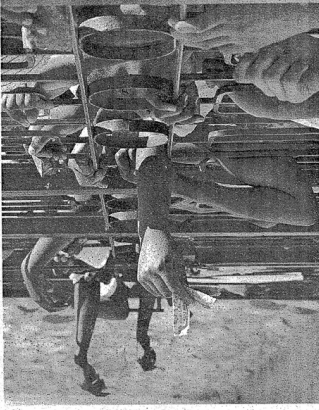
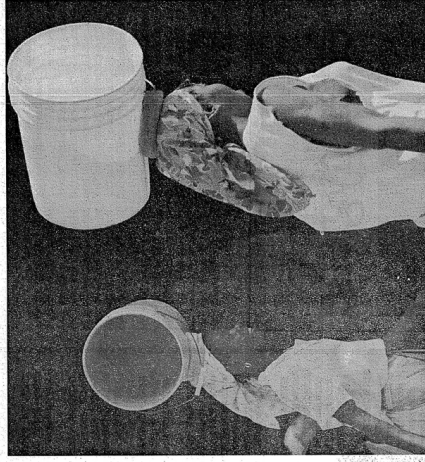
RIGHT: Malnutrition is almost an epidemic in Haiti. Some babies who suffer are fortunate enough to make it to a hospice, but many aren't. Nearly one in four Haitians is malnourished. Popularity is low — \$4 for men and 49 for women.

LEFT: A warm smile peers from behind the cloth doorway of a home in Cité Soleil, a frequent, friendly gaze from people who are small, one room for a family, one room that's maybe 10 to 150 feet square. Eight people — or more —

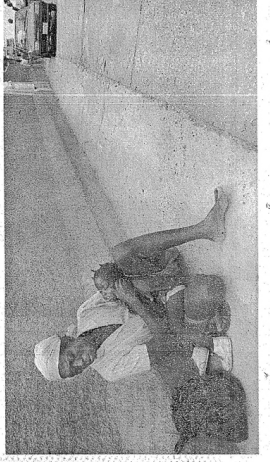
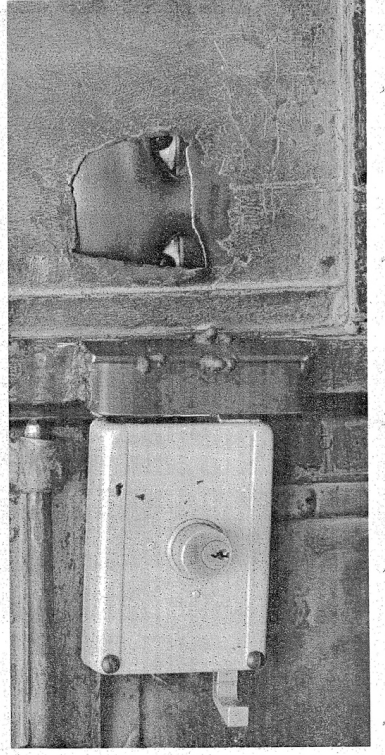
BELOW LEFT: Haitian women balance empty plastic containers on their heads as they go to collect water in Port-au-Prince. The full five-gallon buckets will be perfectly balanced when they return with water. There is no running water. Even parts of Port-au-Prince, there is no running water. Even where running water is set up, it often doesn't work.

BOTTOM LEFT: A mother comforts her exhausted child in the heart of Cité Soleil, molasses and their child. Many Haitians used to work in factories, but almost all of them have lost their jobs since the embargo. There is no work. Some jobless slum dwellers get money to live and work from family members who have managed to get to the United States.

BELOW: In the heart of Cité Soleil, molasses and their child. The clinic offer mothers advice on breast feeding and nutrition for the many who feed it and have no other place to go.



LEFT: Malnourished people wait to buy a card, for a nominal fee, to be able to see a doctor. The card is given to them after they've been diagnosed as having malnutrition. Rice also sell fried bananas, fruit and soup. **BELOW:** On the outside looking in, a young girl peers through a hole in the door of a medical clinic in La Saline, flooded with patients each day it's open, but has limited supplies of medicine and equipment.



THE DOCTOR

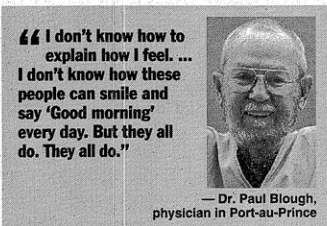
Births defy world of decay

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti Dr. Paul Blough doesn't know how he sees every day. He doesn't know why he feels what he feels about it. He only knows that he feels a little worse every day he's in Haiti.

When he first started volunteering his time here, Dr. Paul — as they call him — was asked how long he would stay. "Three months," he said. "Maybe six."

Dr. Paul is a small man with close-cropped gray hair. He has a stereo in his room so he can listen to the music he loves and a TV set that plays videotapes from home.

But the electricity in this city is off most of the time and Dr. Paul goes to bed early for a day that starts soon after dawn with his trip to Cité Soleil.



— Dr. Paul Blough, physician in Port-au-Prince

"I don't know how to explain how I feel... I don't know how these people can smile and say 'Good morning' every day. But they all do. They all do."

rely on anything. Everything needs to be done here. There isn't any kind of water system; there's no sewage system to speak of. There's no road system. Two or three times, money has been given to Haiti so it can fix its electrical system.

Beyond words As you walk down the street, the people often look at you

with a blankness in their eyes. They hold out their hands and ask for money with a look that says they know they'll get nothing. But they ask anyway. It's the way they live, not expecting much, but trying.

"It's really indescribable. Isn't it?" "I don't know. I don't know. It's just indescribable. When I go to work at 6:30 in the morning and as I'm going down the hill and get along the crest and I look down — the streets are just jammed with people, just jammed. You wonder where they're going and what they're doing all day. What do you say to people who haven't been here? Come and see?"

He's quiet again for a several moments. "I don't know how to explain how I feel," he says. "And the longer I'm here, the worse I feel. I don't know how these people can smile and say 'Good morning' every day. But they all do. They all do."

er doctor in Peoria talked of going to Haiti after hearing medical help was needed there. But that doctor left for the East Coast and Dr. Paul never went to the Pacific island.

Why does a doctor who could retire in great comfort come to live in a small, dark room in Haiti? Maybe he feels needed. When he first came here 10 years ago, his wife had died, he had retired, he was looking for something to do.

He tells this story: Years earlier, he and another doctor in Peoria talked of going to Haiti after hearing medical help was needed there. But that doctor left for the East Coast and Dr. Paul never went to the Pacific island.

He feels accepted here. He isn't afraid walking on the streets of the slums. "The worst the people will do is ask for money, and sometimes try to pick your pocket," he says.

THE SISTERS

Love battles oppression

Sister Ann Weller has a fine, clear voice that speaks with self-confidence, no nonsense. When she's talking about Haiti, she talks about the people. She loves them.

rights victims, and the police and military have at times monitored the comings and goings here. "They've watched us," Sister Ann says. "But they haven't done anything yet. When we talk about hearing gunshots, we're talking about right here on the street in front of us and behind us."

There are places such as Hospice St. Joseph, run by Sister Ann of Tipton, Ind., and Sister Ellen Flynn of Connecticut. The hospice receives financial help from the Lafayette Catholic Diocese, the Sisters of St. Joseph in Tipton and donations sent from all around the United States.

While the sisters talk, sitting on their balcony on a Saturday night, people in the neighborhood are milling about in the street below. They're mostly young people. "They have nothing to do. It cannot go on forever like this," Sister Ann says. "It's totally self-defeating and it's the military regime which is responsible for this."

THE MASS

In spirit and in truth

Sunday focuses minds on God

he is about 18 years old and at the bloom of her beauty. Her head is tilted back, her face warmed and glistening in the heat of the sun as she sings at the outdoor church service, her eyes closed lightly so she sees only God.

Some of the people who gather here for Sunday Mass have political leanings away from the military junta that rules the country with shootings and beatings and thefts in the night.

They make money through drugs and armaments that are coming through. This is a drop-off point. "Power and money is what the military is interested in," Sister Ellen says. "They know how to get it and they don't want to share."

Police agents, called attaché, or some other armed political group opposed to Aristide, planned to come to the service one Sunday to interrupt it, the street talk said. What that meant was anyone's guess, says Sister Ellen Flynn of Connecticut, who works in the city and attends these services. They might just come and shout and make noise and send the people running. Or they might kill them, they might kill them all.



The eyes of Haiti focus on a Sunday morning Mass where children in spotless, colorful dresses pray for a better future.

Violence and prayer The people, sometimes three to a chair, sit quietly as the priest talks. The music excites them — the sounds from the long, slender tambour drums. The choir that sits at the front moves their heads and souls. A gentle breeze blows dried lemons on the food bag canopy, and roosters crow in the distance in unseen places at the moment when the congregation jumps with the pop of a gun outside the walls.

It wasn't long ago — just October, near the time when exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was supposed to return here — that rumors filled this neighborhood. Police agents, called attaché, or some other armed political group opposed to Aristide, planned to come to the service one Sunday to interrupt it, the street talk said.

Influenced from the inside Sister Ellen is sitting near the front when the gunshot goes off and her eyes close, holding the moment, waiting to hear a second and a third and see armed men pouring over the gates and walls. But nothing more comes — just the gentle voice of the priest and the sweet sound of Mass and the kiss of the gentle breeze that rattles the leaves.