



# **St. Joseph Elderly Care Food**

— Jacmel, Haiti —



You shall rise before the aged, and defer to the old; and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.

LEVITICUS 19:32



## **We are a Catholic ministry**

that mobilizes the global Catholic Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Rather than create new institutions to distribute aid, we support existing ministries and churches already serving the poor. In addition to being the most cost-effective way of helping the poor, empowering these ministries allows us to support the Church's spiritual mission and its important position of leadership in poor communities.

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach.

We invite you to join with us as we seek to transform the lives of the poor materially and spiritually — ways that please the Father and glorify him in Heaven and on earth.



## Project Synopsis

### Description

This project will support a day center where 30 poor elderly men and women can go for meals, medicine, socialization, enriching activities and spiritual edification.

### Purpose

To give the elderly a positive alternative to spending their days alone at home without adequate support or attention.

### Location

Jacmel, a city on Haiti's southeastern coast.

### Cost

\$36,000 will help provide food, medicine, other operating costs and salaries for employees at St. Joseph Elderly Care Food.

### Highlights

- Concerned by the impact of poverty and disintegrating family ties in her local community, a Haitian woman named Nirva Desdunes founded the St. Joseph Elderly Care Food.
- At St. Joseph's, elderly men and women who would otherwise spend their day alone can enjoy companionship and receive much-needed assistance.
- The program provides breakfast and lunch, offers basic medical support and hosts a variety of stimulating activities.
- Visits to participants' homes and meetings with their families help ensure that they are living in a good environment.
- For spiritual enrichment, the program includes daily Bible meditations, a catechesis course and monthly Mass.
- Your generous gift to Cross Catholic Outreach will help cover the general operating costs to keep St. Joseph's doors open and provide a truly uplifting experience.



*Literacy training at St. Joseph Elderly Care Food breathes new life into Haiti's seniors, but it cannot happen without your support!*



## The Need

Nirva Desdunes was horrified at what she saw — an elderly woman tied to a table with a rope. Like a dog.

“She had no one to watch or care for her. I suppose her family tied her to the table so they wouldn’t lose her,” Nirva said. “At that moment, I realized it was important to create an outreach for our elderly.”

Cross Catholic Outreach had worked with Nirva for years. The Catholic woman was well known in the city of Jacmel for serving at-risk children there. Now, another vulnerable group was drawing her attention and evoking her compassion. Being Haitian, Nirva was also very aware of her country’s shifting culture and the ways those changes might put the elderly poor at even greater risk in the years ahead.

In the past, it was common for Haitian families to live in multigenerational households, with the grandparents, parents and children all living under one roof. But in recent decades, the structure of the typical family has changed significantly. Now, even in best-case scenarios, elderly family members living with their children and grandchildren are often being left alone during the day because the adults are at work and the grandchildren are in school. In more extreme cases, elderly men or women are entirely on their own because their spouses have passed away or their children have abandoned them for lack of money to feed or shelter them.

Left to fend for themselves, seniors in these tragic situations are typically undernourished, suffer from poor hygiene and fail to get proper medical treatment. They also become intensely lonely, unable to simply get up and go visit friends or family. Instead of experiencing the honor the Scriptures tell us to show to our elders, they endure terrible indignities and feel trapped and discarded.

Nirva has been horrified by the needs she has seen, but she is also determined to do something about it. She insists the grandmothers, grandfathers and widows living in the area of Jacmel she serves have suffered enough and must be provided with loving care. Your support will make that compassionate care a reality. It will rejuvenate these lonely souls with the power of God’s love!





## Ministry Description



*Mealtime at St. Joseph's.*

St. Joseph Elderly Care Food is Nirva's answer to the problems plaguing Jacmel's indigent elderly.

St. Joseph's is a place for seniors to enjoy active, social lives and even to learn new things together as their basic needs are met and their dignity is restored. Five days a week, 30 elderly men and women are brought to the center, where they receive a warm welcome from Nirva and her enthusiastic staff. The day opens with prayer and breakfast and includes a program of activities and services that your generous gift to Cross Catholic Outreach will help make possible, from teaching literacy to doing women's hair and nails.

Due to its location at Bethesda Mission along with the St. Joseph's Training Institute for at-risk youth, the center is also well-positioned to create opportunities for intergenerational connection. The elderly eat lunch with the students daily, and take a field trip once a month as a large group to celebrate birthdays. At these monthly celebrations, the young and old bond as a group and learn from one another. This is part of Nirva's goal to encourage and renew relationships between generations. There is

also an intergenerational summer camp, and visits are conducted at the homes of the elderly to meet their families and make sure they are treated well.

It is too easy for Haiti's elderly to fall through the cracks, but with your generous support through Cross Catholic Outreach, Nirva can reach these vulnerable men and women with the love and support they desperately need!

St. Joseph Elderly Care Food offers a holistic experience that compassionately meets the many needs of the elderly.

**NUTRITION:** Breakfast and lunch are served each day, and food is also distributed for the elderly to eat at home.

**MEDICAL:** The elderly receive some basic medical care and are given the medications they need.

**SOCIAL:** From board games to special outings and holiday celebrations, the program offers many fun social opportunities.

**INTELLECTUAL:** Literacy classes, memory workshops and opportunities for creative self-expression help keep elderly participants' minds sharp.

**SPIRITUAL:** To foster a personal encounter with God, spiritual life is cultivated through prayer, catechesis, Bible reflection and monthly Mass.



## Help Now!

God says in Leviticus 19:32, “You shall rise before the aged, and defer to the old; and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.”

One way we can fulfill God’s call to honor the elderly is by meeting the needs of those who lack the resources to cope with the challenges of old age. Care for the elderly is an act of Christian worship that is close to God’s heart. That truth should spur us to action, especially when we encounter aging men and women who have lost their family connections and have no social support system to fall back on.

Today, you can participate in this sacred work by joining with Cross Catholic Outreach in support of St. Joseph Elderly Care Food in Jacmel, Haiti. This program is truly transformative and is a tangible expression of our Lord’s concern for those in the twilight of life. Your generous gift will help ensure that Haiti’s elderly live out their later years, not in loneliness and despair, but with renewed joy and vigor and a sense of purpose and belonging. Help us show them they are loved!

**“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least  
of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”**

MATTHEW 25:40

---

### Our Promise to You!

Donations from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2022, the close of our ministry’s fiscal year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.

2700 N. Military Trail • Suite 300 • PO Box 273908 • Boca Raton, Florida 33427-3908

**800-914-2420 • CrossCatholic.org**

 @CrossCatholic  @CrossCatholic  @CrossCatholic  /CrossCatholic  Blog.CrossCatholic.org

Copyright Cross Catholic Outreach. Cost-effectively written, designed and printed in-house. [tm2001][Udv2005][Udv2103][Ikg2105]