

The Haitian Project, Inc.
Community Update: Words on words and the Word
November 20, 2013



Top: Philo (senior +1) student, Shedler Guerrier, of the LCS Language Committee, posts translations of favorite English idioms in Kreyòl; Twazyèm (U.S. 10th grade) student, Raphaël Cooper teaches English enrichment to LCS students who are new to the school this year; Professor Ernst Cultaire teaches Philosophy to Philo students in French. Bottom: Second-year Volunteer Tara Kingsley teaches Spanish to Senkyèm (U.S. 8th grade) students; Deacon Moynihan with Fr. Gabriel Gillen, host of The Catholic Channel's *Word to Life* on Sirius XM.

Idioms have become less common in daily parlance in the U.S.; however, they continue to be a significant part of Haitian culture. The directness of Kreyòl lends itself to using pre-packaged nuggets of communication. Subsequently, the students love learning English idioms.

In Haiti, the Bible being the most ubiquitously known text, scripture provides many of the conventional statements used in daily conversations; others are recognizable as "localized" forms of well-known idioms. There are many colorful local concoctions as well. My favorite is, "Kout manchèt nan dlo pa gen mak." In English, "a machete that falls in water leaves no mark."

We may shy away from using formal idioms in daily conversation, but we do have "frozen moments" or "reference points" that continue to convey meaning long beyond their original purpose. Try this one: Marsha being hit by a football on prom day.

The students' desire for real fluency in the four languages of LCS (French, Kreyòl, English and Spanish), makes the Language Committee one of our more popular student organizations. This year, they've taken to using the blackboard off the basketball court to teach prayers, vocabulary and idioms in all four languages.

Last Friday, I was a guest on Fr. Gabriel Gillen's *Word to Life*, which airs on Sirius XM's Catholic Channel. The hour-long program provides an opportunity to prepare for the coming Sunday's readings and Gospel.

Serendipitously, the second reading for this past Sunday was taken from Second Thessalonians 3:7-12. This passage includes a very important maxim for the THP/LCS community, "If anyone is unwilling to work, neither should that one eat." This reading, as well as the Gospel, allowed us to speak about the individual's responsibility to fully and energetically participate in his or her advancement. You can listen to a recording of the broadcast by clicking [this link](#).

Peace, Patrick

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"What you receive as gift, you must give as gift."
"Se gratis nou resevwa, Se gratis tou pou nou bay."
---Matthew 10:8