

Bánica Scholarship

The Arlington Diocese supports the Diocese of San Juan de La Maguana in the Dominican Republic by providing two priests there (one priest in Bánica and one priest in the neighboring town of Pedro Santana). Fr. Rooney, our past chaplain, served there. Currently Rev Keith O'Hare serves there. Keith grew up at St Leo's parish and is a member of our council. In April 2009 Father O'Hare addressed the St Leo's parish about the needs of his parish. At that time, the council donated \$200 to him. The funds were to help increase enrollment in the school from 160 students to 200 students. Public education in the Dominican Republic is in a pitiful state. The education system is run by politicians who often hand out teaching jobs as prizes and not based on merit. The result is that many children are not even learning to read.

Therefore in 2004, Father Dan Gee (priest of the Diocese of Arlington) established a parochial school in the parish of Bánica. It currently has 207 students in pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. Families pay 100 pesos per month for tuition (\$3 US) The real cost to run the school and all related expenses is approximately \$30 US per month (10 months). The average daily wage for a farmer there is \$9/day.

Therefore, the Grand Knight has approved establishing a Bánica scholarship in the amount of \$300 to support one child. The Project Officer is Tim Tilson.

This will not be a line item in the council budget. Rather than having our normal fund raisers, we are looking for 10 Knights to each donate \$30. Three Knights have committed thus far. We are hoping to raise the money by 15 October. Those interested in helping should send a check to Al Botticelli who will consolidate them. This will be an annual program.

