

'100 Years Later'

After quake, a lesson in persistence

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CROIX-DES-BOUQUETS, Haiti—Patrick Moynihan has been running a private Catholic boarding school for Haiti's disadvantaged since his older brother Brian, Bank of America Corp.'s new chief executive, pointed him to the academy in 1996.

The younger Mr. Moynihan, a deacon and a former commodities trader, has built Louverture Cleary School into a respected institution that teaches more than 350 students in four languages. His goal, he says, is to educate a new generation of leaders to help reverse centuries of poverty and violence.

That task grew considerably more difficult—and even more urgent—after this month's 7.0-magnitude earthquake. LCS, about 10 miles northeast of downtown Port-au-Prince, remains standing, but Mr. Moynihan is having to apply the skills of a hard-nosed Wall Street trader to rustle up staples like eggs and peanut butter for his students. Haiti's economy—not easy to navigate under normal circumstances—was paralyzed by the earthquake, and is likely to remain hobbled for months to come.

Mr. Moynihan is also leaning heavily on his preaching talents to coax traumatized students, many of whom lost parents or other relatives, back on their feet. "You are the ones who are going to rebuild Haiti," he told the boys and girls, 11 to 19 years old, from an improvised pulpit atop a picnic table after another powerful aftershock rumbled through the campus last week.

BofA CEO Brian Moynihan contributes as much as \$30,000 a year to the project, and last year gave Patrick \$150,000 of his Bank of America shares to shore up LCS's finances. Through a spokesman, Brian Moynihan said he's "amazed" at the work his brother has done in Haiti.

Brian and Patrick have been in regular contact by email since the quake, but Patrick hasn't requested any specific help, Patrick and a Bank of America spokesman confirmed. BofA has donated \$1 million to the American Red Cross and other charities for Haiti relief, but none of that has gone to the Haitian Project, as the charity supporting the school is called.

Patrick Moynihan, who normally splits his time between Haiti and the U.S., said he and his wife and four children, who are set to rejoin him here this week, now plan to stay in the earthquake-ravaged country "ad infinitum."

The youngest of eight children from Ohio (Brian was the sixth),

Patrick Moynihan built a successful career as a commodities trader in the early 1990s. But the wealthier he became, the more he was drawn to the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi, the 13th-century Catholic saint who devoted himself to a life of poverty and helping the underprivileged.

Brian, then an executive at Massachusetts bank Fleet Financial, told his brother that a charity he had been supporting needed a director for a school it had built in Croix-des-Bouquets in Haiti. Patrick quit his trading job, and he and his family moved into their part-time home, which lacks a flush toilet here.

The day before the earthquake hit on Jan. 12, Patrick Moynihan had returned to the U.S. He jumped on a flight to Santo Domingo in the neighboring Dominican Republic and then boarded a chartered plane to Haiti with the help of a local businessman. "I left Monday and came back Friday, 100 years later," he recalled.

Last week, on Monday, Mr. Moynihan and some local staff set out for Port-au-Prince in a pickup truck to hunt down working cellphones and a structural engineer, and metal pipes to replace those in the school's damaged kitchen stoves. They drove to a heavily armed compound to meet with Brad Horwitz, a partner at U.S.-based Trilogy International Partners, which owns Voilà, a Haitian wireless provider and the school's biggest local donor. Mr. Moynihan pressed Mr. Horwitz to lend him a structural engineer to certify the school's buildings as safe. "I'll go to the airport and pick him up. We'll be done in an hour," he pleaded.

Mr. Horwitz demurred, noting that he had "300 people in the same situation." But he offered to send the engineer soon, and sent Mr. Moynihan off with a donation of two large tents and 10 prepaid cellphones.

Next, Mr. Moynihan headed to the U.S. Embassy, where he asked a soldier stationed outside to relay his request for an engineer. A U.S. Agency for International Development official in Birkenstocks emerged and asked if he was related to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the late New York senator. Mr. Moynihan replied that he was the brother of Bank of America's CEO.

The official, Michael Henning, said the government had "a pretty high level of priorities in engineering needs," including orphanages. "You're jumping the line," said Mr. Henning, adding that he could be fired for giving priority to "some VIP American."

The next day, Mr. Moynihan went to a supermarket. It was still shuttered, but belonged to a friend of a friend. Three armed guards allowed him to enter and buy 50 jars of mamba, a local peanut butter.

On Wednesday, at 6 a.m., Mr. Moynihan was addressing the students while standing on a concrete picnic table when the ground started shaking and some of them began to scatter. "Don't run," he said. The aftershock receded, and he continued his speech from atop the table, telling the students that "discipline, intelligence and courage" were needed more than ever.

At a daily prayer meeting with Haitian and U.S. staff, Mr. Moynihan said "I know this is a chapel, but if you can't keep your crap together then you need to stay away from the students." Fear is contagious, he said, and if it spreads unchecked, locals "will kill us for food and water in two weeks."

Theony Deshommes, a 25-year-old LCS graduate who was one of Mr. Moynihan's first students, is now a medical-school extern working marathon hours at a local hospital helping the injured. "Haitians are trying to leave the country now," said Mr. Deshommes. Mr. Moynihan, he added, "was not in the country and he came back. This is something more than strong."

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