

## Jamaican Outreach Mission (JOM) Trip Report-2017

Summary of our trip to provide mission support to the Diocese of Mandeville (DOM) in Jamaica – 19 thru 25 October 2017. Prepared by R. Gary Dinsick with input by the group.

*"Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." Luke 6:38*

Below is the list of parishioners making the trip: Sister Maureen Kelly, Kathy McBee, Linda Wilk, R. Gary Dinsick, Tim Abell, Joe Golden, Tony Caruso, Tony McConkey, Tony Dalida, and Bob Cohn.



**Goal:** To undertake our annual mission trip to Jamaica, where St. John has supported the Diocese of Mandeville for 10 years.

**Mission:** To establish an evangelization program, to resource and assist in St. Philomena with capital projects that can lead to certification of the basic school, and to construct a house for a Joy Cammock and family.

**Bottom Line:** The Team was grateful for this chance to do God's work as volunteer missionaries. We left for our annual weeklong visit, determined to both improve the lives of Jamaicans in need and cultivate the growth of the Catholic faith. The week was a rewarding and productive one.

### **2017 Team Reflections:**

**Bob Cohn**, "I know I can't change the world," said Bob before the trip, "but I can try to make a difference here, in this small part of Jamaica."

**Suzette Anderson**, Principal and head teacher of St Philomena Primary School said: "St. John's provides the school with spiritual support, food, uniforms, salaries and supplies. It also maintains the school facilities and subsidizes the tuition for its near 50 students." According to Anderson, support from St. John is critical. "Many local families can neither afford to educate — and in some cases feed — their children," she says. "Our school lunches may be the only food these children eat in a day."

**Sister Maureen Kelly**, "The gratitude of these families would put us to shame," says Sister Maureen, who has just completed her fourth visit to Jamaica as a Spiritual Advisor. "The look in the eyes of these children when you give them a sandwich or a cookie makes your heart ache. Meeting a child who hasn't had much to eat in several days calls me to examine myself and all that I have in life." For some of the less fortunate within the Diocese, electricity is unaffordable, while drinking water is at a premium. "Clean water — a luxury we take for granted — is worth a million dollars here," says Sister Maureen. Note that some of local populace pipe water into their homes; others must buy water and carry it home on their bicycles.

**Tony Caruso**, "When meeting a Jamaican," says Tony, "Shake hands and look into his or her eyes. You now have a friend for life."

**Tony McConkey**, Tony claims that the joy and optimism of the people increased his own faith. "Helping people who have so little, yet who are so happy is more joy than effort," he says.

**Linda Wilk**, Linda says working closely with local residents and visiting care facilities allowed her to observe the Jamaican people without any filters. "I saw differences," she says, "yet vast similarities."

**Tony Dalida**, "What an amazing blessing it was to serve our Jamaican brothers and sisters!" says 2-year team member. "This trip has inspired me to give witness to God's love in my own life."

### **Jamaica Outreach – Thursday, Oct 19, 2017: *Travel Day***

We were up by 06:00 a.m. Thursday, 19 October, and rallied at the outbound terminal of BWI at 09:00. Our flight to Montego Bay, Jamaica, was scheduled for 11:10. Our group of 10 individuals checked in and had their luggage tagged. A total of 20 bags were checked at no extra cost. Southwest flight 906 departed BWI at 11:50 and arrived at Montego Bay at 14:30 (Jamaica time is 1 hour ahead of Annapolis time). Because we all had proper documentation and a letter from the Diocese of Mandeville, we passed through immigration and customs at the Mo Bay Airport without incident.

Michael “Ronnie” Simpson (876 352 2513, [rannysimpson@yahoo.com](mailto:rannysimpson@yahoo.com)) of Mandeville, our dedicated support person, met us at the airport in the 20-plus passenger bus that we rented for the week. Having a larger bus enabled us to transport 20 additional bags of donated school supplies, sports equipment, clothing and shoes.

We made our way to Mandeville and to our lodging at Our Lady of Dunsinane Retreat Facility. We stopped en route at the Mega Mart in Mandeville to purchase food, alcohol, soft drinks, snacks, etc. The weather was quite warm and would require some acclimation by the group. The projected high temperature for the upcoming 6 days was around 88 degrees F — hot by Maryland’s late October standards. An afternoon rain shower was predicted on each of those days.

We arrived at Our Lady of Dunsinane at around 19:30. The total driving time was over 3 hours, as the road was rough in spots due to poor maintenance. After being greeted by Sister Faith of the Diocese, we enjoyed a wonderful dinner of chicken, rice and beans, salad, veggies and cake, all prepared by Peggy our house staff person. DOM staff member Ms. Pauline Russell then briefed us on our itinerary for the week. After receiving our room assignments and a brief orientation to the retreat house, we relaxed and settled in for the evening.

### **Jamaica Outreach - Fri, Oct 20, 2017: *Mass with Archbishop Dufour & blessing of the chapel and meet with Ms. Marcia Tai Chun***

We were up by 06:00. Following breakfast we met with two Diocesan Sisters, Sisters Maureen and Faith, who explained their mission and some of the issues working with the locals.

At 08:00, we went to the chapel on the grounds of Our Lady of Dunsinane and were greeted by Archbishop Dufour, who blessed the newly renovated chapel, celebrated Holy Mass and then dedicated the renovated retreat facility.

After a brief reception we received an orientation briefing from Ms. Marcia Tai Chun, the DOM Project Coordinator, and discussed our future support to the Diocese of Mandeville (DOM) and the Global Solidarity Program.

This year the JOM will focus on assisting and funding 5 capital construction projects (Attachment 1). We hope that completion of these funded projects will help St. Philomena Basic School attain full certification from the Jamaican government.

We adjourned the meeting at 10:00 and departed for Portland Cottage. There we worked on the setting and backfilled the foundations for both the classroom extension and the boys' bathroom at St. Philomena Basic School.

Around 16:30, we departed for the Saint John Bosco Home for Boys for a tour of the home, where we shared a pizza dinner with center director Sister Mimi. At 19:00, we returned to our lodging, prayed and meditated on the day's activities.

**Jamaica Outreach - Sat, Oct 21, 2017: *Leave to continue work in Portland Cottage Supper @ Dunsinane***

Most of us were up at about 06:00. After breakfast we attended Mass at Saint Paul's cathedral in Mandeville, where we met Father Martin, Vicar General. After Holy Mass, we departed around 09:00 for St. Philomena and arrived at 10:30. Suzette Anderson and other locals gave us a school tour, after which we continued working on the classroom extension and boy's bathroom projects. St. Philomena remains our main focus; our present goal is to get the school certified by the state. Suzette and her staff have received high marks from the Diocese for their work at the school. Currently, there are over 45 students enrolled. While at the school, we gave Suzette the bags of donated clothing we'd brought and asked that she distribute them to the children.

At 14:30, we left for a quick visit at St. Margaret/Mary (it is only about 1/3 hour's drive from St. Philomena to Margaret/Mary School). This school currently has approximately 215 to 220 children in grades K to 6. At present, they have 10 teachers.

After stopping at Mega Mart for some supplies, we traveled to Our Lady of Dunsinane. After cleanup, we had Peggy and her assistant prepare dinner followed by reflection led by Sister Maureen Kelly.

**Jamaica Outreach - Sun, Oct 22, 2017: *Leave for church in Lionel Town & Portland Cottage. Leave for supper @ Frenchman's Reef.***

Most of us were up at about 06:00 and breakfasted on cereal and fruit. Since we had plans to attend two Holy Masses that day, (09:00 at St. Margaret Mary and 11:00 at St. Philomena), no mass was held at the local Chapel. We left our

lodgings at 07:45 and arrived at St. Margaret Mary for Mass at about 08:55. There we received a warm welcome by the congregation and some of our Jamaican family from prior years, then attended a mass celebrated by Father Michael. Total church attendance was about 40 people.

At roughly 10:45, we left St. Margaret Mary and headed to St. Philomena. Upon our 11:15 arrival, we were received by a large group of parishioners that included over 60 children. After attending Mass with celebrant Father Michael, we shared fellowship, dancing, music, and a lunch of curried chicken w/rice and peas (beans). As we neared the conclusion of our visit, Tony Dalida and Bob Cohn met with Suzette and Doreen to discuss our support of their evangelization efforts.

At about 14:00, we departed for Frenchman's Reef on the southern coast of Jamaica. After our arrival 16:00, we took a refreshing dip in the Caribbean Sea and then headed for the Treasure Beach Restaurant. There we enjoyed a fantastic dinner featuring local fare such as jerk chicken, fish, shrimp, deep fried bread (festival) and cassava (a root-based vegetable). We left Frenchman's Reef at about 18:30 and arrived back at our lodging at about 20:00. After taking a few minutes to clean up, we met as a group with Sister Maureen to reflect upon our first three days in Jamaica.

***Jamaica Outreach - Mon, Oct 23, 2017: Leave Dunsinane for Mustard Seed – a home for children with disabilities. Leave for house building in Lionel Town. Leave for building project for Joy Cammock's home. Enroute home, stop to tour St. John Bosco Career Advancement Institute and to purchase crafts made by the boys at Alpha & Laws Street Trade Training Centre (a project of the Sisters of Mercy).***

Most of us were up for breakfast by about 06:00 and 2 hours later departed for the Mustard Seed Communities Gift of Hope in Spur Tree, P.O. Manchester, Jamaica, WI ([www. Mustardseed.com](http://www.Mustardseed.com)). This year as always we made an emotional visit to this care community for up to 40 disabled children.

There its administrator Ann Marie Parker-Dale (Tel. 876 573 9551) explained their mission statement: "Inspired by the healing and caring Ministry of Jesus Christ, we aim through the positive interaction of caring, sharing and training, to uplift the most vulnerable members of society, especially handicapped and abandoned children, and marginalized communities." Parker-Dale underlined their commitment to the fostering of homes and communities, and stressed how involvement with Mustard Seed leads us all to loving service and brings joy, hope and dignity to its residents. She then showed us around and introduced us to their 11 current residents. Finishing up at Mustard Seed, we journeyed on to Lionel Town to initiate our house-building mission. This year, before our arrival, Diocesan workers prefabbed the house panels at the Hands of Christ (old

Distribution Center) and then transported them to the Lionel Town site. Our team began building the home for Ms. Mitzi (Joy) Cammock, sister of Ms. Doreen Brown, Principal at Annunciation Basic School of Hayes. Our tasks included the erection of walls and installation of doors, windows and roofing, followed by painting.

We departed around 16:30 for the St. John Bosco's Career Advancement Institute, a Catholic-run institution for neglected, abused and abandoned boys. There we toured the home, bought crafts from students at a nearby training center and shared a pizza dinner with center director Sister Mimi. We traveled on to our lodging and attended 07:30 Holy Mass, celebrated by Fr. Michael. Following a great dinner, we shared a discussion on the evangelization efforts in DOM.

***Jamaica Outreach - Tuesday, Oct 29, 2013: Leave to complete house in Lionel Town Supper @ Dunsinane***

After Holy Mass and breakfast, we departed around 08:00 for St. Philomena to continue with our Housing Ministry. There we finished the home of Ms. Joy Cammock and dedicated it for her and her children.

At 14:00 we departed from Portland Cottage, headed for Mandeville and arrived back at our lodging at about 16:20. Following dinner, Sister Maureen Kelly led us in a brief but focused period of reflection.

***Jamaica Outreach - Wed, Oct 24, 2017: Leave for the airport for departure on SW 907 @ 3:25 p.m.***

We put together 3 tip envelopes: For Michael "Ronnie" Simpson, we left \$300. To the kitchen staff, we left \$150 to be divided equally among them. To "Rosie," we gave \$150 for needed medical supplies.

After a quick breakfast of eggs, toast and cereal, we departed for Montego Bay around 09:00. We arrived at Mo Bay at 12:05 and stopped at the Open Air Jamaican Craft Market to purchase souvenirs. At 13:00, we left for the airport and flew out of Montego Bay at the scheduled time of 15:00.

At 19:40, we arrived at BWI. Everyone's luggage arrived intact and all team members cleared customs and immigration without incident.

By 12:00, the 2017 Mission Trip was complete.

## Attachment 1

### Recommendations/Actions:

1. Expand our mission statement to read... “support of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica.”
2. Provide financial and material support to Mustard Seed Ministries near Mandeville.
3. Father Paschal is now pastor of St Philomena. Suzette has asked him to conduct devotions and attend the PTA meetings and be involved with St. Philomena School. Father Paschal agreed.
4. The Acting Bishop wanted to close the church but he opted to keep it open at our request. Father Paschal will be having mass Saturday afternoon. Our Team will develop a relationship with Father Paschal and always ensure he has a copy of the final agenda for our 2018 travel group. Support and improve communication between Father Paschal, Diocese and his flock at our sister parishes.
5. Plan for two trips per year: one Global Solidarity and one shorter work trip (stay w/ Father Paschal).
6. Set up our next container shipment (Diocese of Altoona/Johnstown of direct from Food for the Poor.
7. Future Travel Team Organization:
  - a. Team Leader
  - b. Travel/Logistics Coordinator
  - c. House Building/Maintenance Coordinator
  - d. Religious Coordinator
8. For the children at St Philomena: provide coloring books, puzzles, blocks...all for 3 to 5 year olds.
9. Recruit and plan for the next Global Solidarity scheduled for October 18-24 2018.

## Attachment 2

### St Philomena Basic School

St Philomena Basic School was established in 2000 to cater to families in this small rural community of Portland Cottage, Clarendon, in Jamaica. Most of the parents are dependent on fishing and farming, and many of them lost their jobs as labourers when a nearby sugar factory ceased operations in 2016.

As a result of this situation, St. Philomena has been unable to fund itself through fees, and we are grateful for the assistance that you have provided towards the annual subsidy of US\$13,200.

There are presently 44 students, 3 teachers and a cook at the facility.

Description	Monthly	Annual
Twin Parish subsidy assist in paying Teachers	1,100.00	13,200.00
<b>Total US\$</b>		<b>13,200.00</b>

The Jamaican Government has recently established standards for Early Childhood Education Institutions, and the Diocese has been working diligently to make the necessary infrastructural improvements to all its schools. St. Philomena is still to complete a number of projects in order to meet Certification. These projects are listed below.

Capital Projects for Certification 2017-2018	sq ft	per sq ft	Cost
Additional Toilet facility of Girls and Boys (1-20)	100	47.00	4,700.00
Class rooms	400	47.00	18,800.00
Storage	100	47.00	4,700.00
Playground Equipment			3,000.00
Installation of Playground Equipment			470.00
Guttering for storm drain			930.00
2 fans			80.00
Extractor fan for Kitchen			40.00
<b>Total US \$</b>			<b>32,720.00</b>

We are encouraged and buoyed by your support and commitment, and look forward to continuing to work together for the development of St. Philomena School, recognizing the many lives that are improved and touched by this effort.

June 14, 2017



**A BIG THANK YOU**  
*to St. John the Evangelist Parish  
from St. Philomena Basic School  
and the Diocese of Mandeville*





Above: During construction of additional classrooms.  
Right: Completed classrooms.



Left: During construction of washroom addition.  
Below: Inside the completed washrooms.



### **Attachment 3**

#### **Background information on Jamaica:**

Christopher Columbus basically first founded Jamaica on his 2nd trip to the Americas in 1494. 1st settlement by Spaniards was in 1509. The British in 1655, Oliver Cromwell commissioned Admiral Penn came to Jamaica and settled colonies. From 1655 to 1962 the British ruled and influenced Jamaica. Sugar Cane was primary product until the late 1900's. British brought in slaves from Africa to work cane fields.

Jamaica is a very religious country. There is almost one church for every mile. Mostly, they are 7th Day Adventist, Jehovah Witness, and Jewish, Baptist and Protestant churches throughout the country. It is not uncommon to find 3 different churches located very close to one another. 90% of the Jamaicans are Protestants and only 2-3% are Catholic. However small in number, the Catholics are the most respected religious group in Jamaica because they provide the best education and the majority of Jamaicans prefer to send their children to Catholic Schools.

Jamaica has a 2 party system and was brought about by the British. (People Party and Labor Party). Jamaica has celebrated 50 years of political freedom

Patois is the common language of the native Jamaican, but it is not a written language. Slave masters on sugar cane plantations did not promote or encourage family life. Jamaican women are the ones who raise the families. Fathers do not support their children for the most part. Currently, 40% of children are born out of wedlock. A cultural consequence of the centuries of slavery. Note: The desire to demonstrate their virility in males and fertility of females helps to promote and foster this behavior in the youth of the country. Recent concerns are that the public education system is graduating individuals who cannot read or write, which is not uncommon to find many adults who have graduated from the public education system that cannot read or write. Manchester and Mandeville is free of slums as compared to other parts of the country. There has been a recent increase in crime. Most of the crime is due to the lack of ability of Jamaicans to settle disputes and disagreements. Crimes are mostly personal in nature.

Sugar cane is no longer king. Jamaica now imports sugar from Costa Rica. Chinese have purchased 3 to 4 large-scale sugar cane plantations. The Aluminum/Bauxite Factory is not doing well and has seen its best days! Tourism is the #1 industry. Spaniards and other foreigners own most of the tourist hotels. Russians have purchased most of the Aluminum factory. Cost of electricity in Jamaica is very high as compared to other Caribbean countries. Coffee is very important to the economy and has a niche market. Bananas as important also

but not moneymakers. Chinese have recently migrated to Jamaica and now own and operate most of the grocery stores.

There is no welfare system in Jamaica for the poor. There is a National Insurance Service which benefits the retired people. Medicine is free for all. There are private hospitals; however, payment must be made in advance or upon your entry. Payment must be made upfront.

Additional Research: "Jamaica- A Poor Land but Rich in Culture": Jamaica which is a poor land, but whose people are disproportionately rich in heritage and culture. The focus of this research is Jamaica, the second poorest country in the Caribbean, their history, politics, reggae music, language, culture and people. Jamaica is an island nation of the Greater Antilles, 234 kilometers (145 mi) in length and as much as 80 kilometers (50 mi) in width, and amounts to 10,990 square kilometers (4,243 sq. mi). It is situated in the Caribbean Sea, about 145 kilometers (90 mi) south of Cuba, and 191 kilometers (119 mi) west of Hispaniola, the island harboring the nation-states Haiti and the Dominican Republic. It's indigenous Arawakan-speaking Taíno inhabitants named the island Xaymaca, meaning the "Land of Wood and Water", or the "Land of Springs". Discussion: a. Geography Area: 10,991 sq. km. (4,244 sq. mi.). Cities: Capital--Kingston metro area and St. Andrew (pop. 650,000). Other cities--Montego Bay (96,000), Spanish Town (131,515). Terrain: Mountainous, coastal plains. Climate: Tropical.

b. People Nationality: Jamaican. Population: 2,825,928. Annual population growth rate: 0.755%. Ethnic groups: African 90.9%, East Indian 1.3%, Chinese 0.2%, White 0.2%, mixed 7.3%, other 0.1%. Religious affiliation: Anglican, Baptist and other Protestant, Roman Catholic, Rastafarian, Muslim, Jewish. Languages: English, Patois. Education: Years compulsory--to age 18. Literacy (age 15 and over)--87.9%. Health: Infant mortality rate--15.22/1,000. Life expectancy--female 75.3 yrs., male 71.83-yrs. Work force 1.3 million: Industry--17.1%; agriculture--17.9%; and Services -64.9%.

c. Government Type: Constitutional parliamentary democracy. Independence: August 6, 1962. Constitution: August 6, 1962. Branches: Executive--Governor General (representing Queen Elizabeth II chief of state), prime minister, cabinet. Legislative--bicameral Parliament (21 appointed senators, 60 elected representatives). Judicial--Court of Appeal and courts of original jurisdiction. Subdivisions: 14 parishes, 60 electoral constituencies. Political parties: People's National Party (PNP), Jamaica Labor Party (JLP), National Democratic Movement (NDM), New Nation Coalition (NNC), Suffrage: Universal at 18.

d. Economy GDP \$13 billion Per capita GDP: \$4,500. Natural resources: Bauxite, gypsum, limestone, marble, sand. Agriculture: Products--sugar cane, bananas, coffee, citrus fruits, condiments and spices.

Industry: Types--tourism, bauxite and alumina, processed foods, sugar, rum, cement, metal, chemical products, ethanol.

Who are its people and what is their history and culture? a. History-Arawaks from South America had settled in Jamaica prior to Christopher Columbus' first arrival at the island in 1494. During Spain's occupation of the island, starting in 1510, the Arawaks were exterminated by disease, slavery, and war. Spain brought the first African slaves to Jamaica in 1517. In 1655, British forces seized the island, and in 1670, Great Britain gained formal possession. Sugar made Jamaica one of the most valuable possessions in the world for more than 150 years. The British Parliament abolished slavery as of August 1, 1834. After a long period of direct British colonial rule, Jamaica gained a degree of local political control in the late 1930s, and held its first election under full universal adult suffrage in 1944. Jamaica joined nine other U.K. territories in the West Indies Federation in 1958 but withdrew after Jamaican voters rejected membership in 1961. Jamaica gained independence in 1962, remaining a member of the Commonwealth.

What are their socio-economic problems? a. Human Rights-The Government of Jamaica has a long history of democratic traditions and freedom of expression. Overall the Jamaican Government has respect for the human rights of its citizens. There are some areas of concern, including extra-judicial killings committed by members of the security forces, poor prison and jail conditions, inadequate levels of prosecution of police suspected of involvement in crimes, an overburdened judicial system and frequent lengthy delays in trials, trafficking in persons, and violence against suspected or known homosexuals. b. Religious Freedom -The Jamaican constitution provides for freedom of religion, and other laws and policies contribute to the generally free practice of religion. The Government of Jamaica generally respects religious freedom in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the Government of Jamaica during the last religious freedom-reporting period. There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

c. Matriarchal Society - Women run the family life. They are responsible caregivers and the "bread winners". There is an inordinately large part of the population that is born out of wedlock. Men are extremely irresponsible when it comes to family matters.

"Patois", the native Jamaican language. a. Basic "Patois", the native Jamaican language. Jamaican Patois is the islander's daily language. The origin dates back to the days of slavery when East and Central African captives who were brought to the island and learned English from their British, Scottish or Irish slave masters. It is a blend of simplified English, Creole, and African tongues