

Jamaican Outreach Mission (JOM) Trip Report-2018

Summary of our trip to provide mission support to the Diocese of Mandeville (DOM) in Jamaica – 18 thru 24 October 2018. 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: **John White, Dianne White, Tom Dushel, Joyce Cornett, R. Gary Dinsick, Tim Abell, Joe Golden, Judy Tacyn, Bonnie Kloche, Ned Wall, Victor Perez, Barbara Perez, Jeanette Cohn and Bob Cohn.**



Goal: To undertake our annual mission trip to Jamaica, where St. John has supported the Diocese of Mandeville for 11 years.

Mission Statement: To establish an evangelization program, to resource and assist with capital projects that can lead to certification of the basic school in St. Philomena, and to construct a house for Chrissie Anderson and her two children.

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 proved to be rewarding and productive.

Ministry Background

Over the past 11 years, 60-plus volunteers have accompanied the St. John the Evangelist Outreach Team to visit our sister Diocese of Mandeville in Jamaica. Our mission has been to resource, support and assist in the operation of the schools and churches at St. Philomena and St. Margaret Mary, to construct housing for needy parishioners and to evangelize to the local population. Thanks to these visits and to generous St. John parishioners who donate time, financial resources and material goods to the project, the lives of many Jamaicans have been enriched.

As the second poorest country in the Caribbean, Jamaica is a study in contrasts. On its northern shores, you find all-inclusive beach resorts. Yet scattered throughout the island are communities in need, many of which fall within the boundaries of the Diocese of Mandeville in the less affluent, south-central portion of the island.

On the 18th of October, volunteer missionaries from the Jamaica Outreach Team flew from BWI to Jamaica, determined to improve the lives of Jamaicans in need and to cultivate the growth of the Catholic faith. After our return to Maryland on October 24th, all 14 members of the Outreach team raved about the experience. This year, as on every trip to Mandeville, the team did maintenance and construction projects such as building homes, adding classrooms and bathroom facilities to the primary school, and adding to the school's collection of books. Using funds raised within our parish, the team continues to support the St. Philomena School and provides healthy noon meals for its students. This year the team built a family home, painted and spruced up St. Philomena Church and doubled their efforts to help its school attain full certification.

Needless to say, the Jamaican families appreciate these efforts. Many local families struggle at basic subsistence level. Our school lunches may be some children's only meal. Likewise, the basic education our parish provides may be the only formal schooling some of the children receive.

"The gratitude of these families would put us to shame," says Sister Maureen Kelly of St. John, a past team member who has gone four times 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."

This year as always, the team made an emotional visit to the Gift of Hope-Mustard Seed, a care community for disabled children within the village of Manchester. Later on, they

visited St. John Bosco's Career Advancement Institute, a Catholic-run institution for neglected, abused and abandoned boys.

Travelogue

Jamaica Outreach – Thursday, Oct 18, 2018: Travel Day

As our flight to Montego Bay, Jamaica, was scheduled for Thursday, October 18, at 11:50 a.m., the team rallied at the outbound terminal of BWI at 9:00 a.m. Each of our 14 group members checked in and had all luggage tagged. Twenty-eight bags were checked at no extra cost. While awaiting our flight, we ate breakfast at Silver Diner. There we had the privilege of saluting some Honor Flight WW2 and Korean War veterans who had recently arrived from the west coast.

Southwest flight 906 departed BWI on schedule and arrived at Montego Bay at 14:30 (Jamaican time being one hour ahead of Annapolis time). Because we carried proper documentation and a letter from the Diocese of Mandeville, we passed through immigration and customs at the Mo Bay Airport without incident. We watched carefully to ensure all that the Immigration documents reflected the items and values of the bags we planned to leave in Jamaica with the Diocese.

Our dedicated support person, Michael "Rannie" Simpson, (876) 352-2513, rannysimpson@yahoo.com) of Mandeville met us at the airport in the 20-plus passenger bus we rented for the week. Thus we were able to transport 28 bags of donated school supplies, sports equipment, clothing and shoes along with our own luggage. We set out for Mandeville and our lodging at Our Lady of Dunsinane Retreat Facility. Due to the poor road conditions and to the flat tire our bus had halfway along the route (which local laborers quickly repaired for \$20), the entire drive took over 3 ½ hours.

Once at Mandeville, we stopped at the Mega Mart to purchase food, alcohol, soft drinks and other incidentals. We reached Our Lady of Dunsinane at roughly 19:30. Sister Maureen (mak827@charter.net) and Heather (an intern) of the Diocese of Mandeville greeted us warmly, after which we enjoyed a dinner of roasted pork, rice and beans, salad, veggies and cake, all prepared by Peggy, our house staff person. After receiving our room assignments and an orientation to the retreat house, we relaxed and settled in for the evening.

It was clear that the intense Jamaican heat would require acclimation on our part. The projected high temperature for the upcoming 6 days was around 92 degrees Fahrenheit — hot by late October standards in Maryland. An afternoon rain shower was predicted in the afternoon on each of those days.

Jamaica Outreach - Friday, Oct 19, 2018:

We were up by 06:00 and soon headed for 07:00 Mass. Although Archbishop Dufour wasn't available, our celebrant was Father Lucian Clark, a Passionist priest from Pittsburgh, Pa., founder of the Passionist Volunteer Program for the Diocese of Mandeville.

Following Mass and breakfast, we met again with the Diocesan Sister, Sister Maureen, who explained their mission and some of the issues they face when working with the locals.

At 09:00, we departed for our annual visit to the Mustard Seed Communities Gift of Hope, a care community for up to 40 disabled children in Spur Tree, P.O. Manchester, Jamaica, WI ([www. Mustardseed.com](http://www.Mustardseed.com)). There its administrator, Ann Marie Parker-Dale (Tel. 876 573 9551), addressed us and 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 showed us around and introduced us to their 15 current residents. To the delight of the staff, we provided a financial donation of \$500.00 to Mustard Seed, and then journeyed to Portland Cottage to meet Father Maurice and plan how we could address the needs of the St. Philomena Parish.

Around 15:00, we departed Dunsinane and left for Mandeville, stopping en route at Juicy Patties for lunch, at Mega Mart for water and essentials, and again at the hardware store for work supplies. After dinner at our residence, we went to the Falls Bar and Restaurant for snacks and drinks. Falls is an initiative started by Sister Mimi Krusling of St. John Bosco. At 23:00, we returned to our lodging.

Jamaica Outreach - Saturday, Oct 20, 2018:

Most of us were up at about 06:00 hours. We departed around 08:00 for St. Philomena. After our 9:30 arrival, Suzette Anderson and other locals showed us around the school. We focused our efforts on the needs that Father Maurice expressed: cleaning, painting, organizing and improving upon the Church, and taking care of any lingering school projects. We also scoped out the foundation and building site for the house building project we had scheduled for the coming Monday.

Note: 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 55 students enrolled. While at the school, we gave Suzette the bags of donated clothing we'd brought (including blue St. John the Evangelist T-shirts) and asked that she distribute them to the children. Pictures

will be taken of all the kids wearing the shirts on Monday and posted on our Outreach Jamaica web site.



At 1500, we completed our work projects and had holy Mass in the church, celebrated by Father Maurice. We were joined by a large group of parishioners that included over 20 children. After attending Mass with celebrant Father Michael, we shared fellowship, dancing, and music.

After replenishing our supplies at Mega Mart, we traveled to Our Lady of Dunsinane. Gary and Tim met with Theresa Givens and Pauline Russell of the Diocese, where they paid for our house, our room and board and handed in the school subsidy check. After cleanup, we ate the dinner Peggy and her assistant prepared. Afterward, we engaged in a reflection led by Bob and Jeanette Cohn and the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

Jamaica Outreach - Sunday, Oct 21, 2018:

Most of us were up at about 06:00 and breakfasted on eggs and fruit. Since we had plans to attend 11:30 Mass that day at St. Margaret Mary, no Holy Mass was held at our local Chapel. We left Our Lady of Dunsinane at 09:00 and arrived at St. Margaret Mary for Mass at about 10:30. There we received a warm welcome by the congregation and some of our Jamaican family from prior years, and attended a mass celebrated by Father Maurice and assisted by Doreen Brown. Total church attendance was about 30 people.

At about 14:00, we departed for Frenchman's Reef on the southern coast of Jamaica. After our 16:00 arrival, we took a refreshing dip in the Caribbean Sea and ate at the Treasure Beach Restaurant. There we enjoyed a 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 cleaning up, the group met with the Cohns to reflect upon our first three days in Jamaica.

Jamaica Outreach - Monday, Oct 22, 2018:

On Monday, our team began building the annual building of a home, this year for Ms. Christy Anderson and her two children. The cost to our ministry was \$6,000 plus the

sweat equity of our team. Our tasks included the erection of walls, installation of doors, windows and roofing, and then the painting. This year, before our arrival, Diocesan workers prefabricated the house panels at the Hands of Christ (the old Distribution Center) and then transported them to the Lionel Town site. Meanwhile, Suzette's mother and her friends prepared us a hearty lunch of jerk pork, salad and rice/peas.

At 14:30, we left Portland Cottage for a meeting with Ms. Coates, the acting principal of St. Margaret/Mary School (located roughly 1/3 hour's drive from St. Philomena). This school currently has approximately 215 to 220 children in grades K to 6. At present, they have 10 teachers.

We departed St. Margaret/Mary School around 16:30 and headed for the St. John Bosco's Career Advancement Institute, a Catholic-run institution for neglected, abused and abandoned boys. We toured the home, bought crafts from students at a nearby training center and shared a pizza dinner with center director Sister Mimi Krusling.

Jamaica Outreach - Tuesday, Oct 23, 2018:

After Holy Mass and breakfast, we departed around 08:00 for St. Philomena. There we continued with our Housing Ministry, finishing the home of Ms. Christy Anderson and dedicating it for her and her children.

At 14:00, we left Portland Cottage and headed for our lodging at Mandeville. We arrived at about 16:20 and enjoyed dinner, after which the Cohns again led us in period of focused reflection.

In preparation for our morning departure, we put together three tip envelopes: For Michael "Ronnie" Simpson, we left \$300. For the kitchen staff, we left \$141 to be divided equally among them. For diocesan laborers, we left \$100 and to "Rosie," we left \$100 to cover our medical supplies.

Jamaica Outreach - Wednesday, Oct 24, 2018:

After a quick breakfast of eggs, toast and cereal, we departed for Montego Bay around 09:00. We arrived at Montego 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. Our departure was on SW Flight 907 @3:25 p.m.

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 2018 Jamaican Mission Trip was complete.

Attachment 1

Recommendations/Actions for 2019

1. In support of our mission statement of ... “support of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica,” we must ensure that St. Philomena Basic School continues to operate thanks to the support of the Diocese of Mandeville and that the school (which since our trip has been accredited by the government) remains so.
2. Provide annual financial and material support to “Gift of Hope, Mustard Seed Ministries” in Spur Tree, near Mandeville. Amount TBD.
3. Fund raising: Have 2 fund raising events each year. A pancake breakfast in the spring (date TBD) and 5 flea markets throughout the year.
4. Support and improve communication between Father Maurice, the Diocese and his flock at our sister parishes. Encourage male leadership at St. Philomena and St. Margaret Mary communities.
5. Plan for one trip this year: Our Global Solidarity Mission with 14 missionaries, to evangelize and build a house.
6. Recruit and plan for the next Global Solidarity trip, now scheduled for October 17-23, 2019. Focus on recruitment of 7 new members.
7. Produce a 15-minute promotional video for recruitment and public relations.
8. Support the 2019 travel team organization:
 - a. Team Leader — Joe Golden
 - b. Travel/Logistics Coordinator — Dianne White
 - c. House Building/Maintenance Coordinator — Tim Abell
 - d. Religious and Music Coordinator — Vic Perez
9. For the children at St Philomena: provide coloring books, puzzles, blocks...all for 3 to 5-year-olds.
10. Improve communications with the Diocese and receive quarterly progress reports on issues, such as on e.g. the accreditation of St Philomena Basic School.

Attachment 2

Background information on Jamaica

History

During his second trip to the Americas in 1494, Christopher Columbus set foot on the island of Jamaica, perhaps as the first European to do so. He found the island inhabited by an indigenous Arawakan-speaking Taino tribe that referred to their home island as "Xaymaca," meaning "Land of wood and water." In the year 1509 came the first Spanish settlement on the island. The Spaniards enslaved the Tainos and began importing West African slaves. By 1600, slavery, oppression and foreign diseases had rendered the Taino population nearly extinct.

In 1655, British forces invaded the island and drove out the Spaniards. During the resulting turmoil, many enslaved Africans fled to the island interior to exist independently as "Maroons." Meanwhile, Great Britain continued the slave trade in Jamaica and in 1670, through the Treaty of Madrid, gained formal possession of the island. British rule and influence over Jamaica was destined to continue for over 300 years.

In the early days of British rule, the seaside town of Port Royal sprang up as base of operations for privateers and pirates such as Henry Morgan. In 1692, after a violent earthquake destroyed much of Port Royal, the colonial government moved to Spanish Town.

During the 18th century, the sugar industry supplanted piracy to make Jamaica one of the most valuable possessions in the world. Sugarcane remained the backbone of the Jamaica economy until the late 1800s, although by 1890 bananas had replaced sugar as the country's chief export. Meanwhile, the British continued importing African slaves to work the cane fields. By 1800, black Jamaicans vastly outnumbered the white population.

In 1808, British Parliament abolished the slave trade. On August 1, 1834, slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire. Former Jamaican slaves became indentured to their former owners for specified periods of time. Still, the end of slavery caused the sugar and slave-based economy to falter. Low crop prices, disease, drought and a severe earthquake in Kingston exacted heavy tolls on an island already beset with social unrest and rampant poverty.

In 1872, government offices were transferred from Spanish Town to Kingston. With the 20th century came increased attention to improving the living conditions for indigenous peoples throughout the Caribbean. Following World War II, Jamaica began a long transition to full political independence, which it finally achieved on August 6, 1962.

Today Jamaica is a commonwealth realm with a prime featuring a prime minister and operating under a two-party political system first instituted by the British. (People Party and Labor Party)

The Jamaica of Today

Modern Jamaicans are a reflection of their vast ethnic and cultural diversity. Although English is the official language of government, education and the media, most Jamaicans have a firm linguistic handle on their basic daily language, their native Patois — a blend of simplified English, Creole and African tongues. The origin of native Patois, or Jamaican “Creole” dates back to the days of slavery, when West and Central African captives were brought to the island and learned English^[SEP] from their British, Scottish or Irish slave masters. Patois is primarily a spoken language, so most Jamaicans communicate in writing using English. When it comes to schooling, however, critics of the Jamaican system of public education claim that schools are promoting and graduating students who are functionally illiterate — unable to read and write.

Modern Jamaicans tend to be very religious, with almost one church per square mile (Seventh Day Adventist, Methodist, Jewish, Moravian, Presbyterian and Jehovah’s Witnesses being the most prevalent). It is not uncommon to find three different churches located very close to one another. Ninety percent of the religious Jamaicans are Protestants and only 2-3% are Catholic. Still, the Catholic Church represents a highly respected religious group in Jamaica, largely because of the solid education their schools provide.

Slave masters on sugar cane plantations did not promote or encourage family life. Perhaps as a result, modern Jamaican women tend to support their families and raise their children without assistance from the fathers. Currently, 40% of all children are born out of wedlock, which some claim is a cultural consequence of three centuries of slavery. It is believed that the desire to demonstrate their virility in males and fertility of females helps perpetuate this behavior in Jamaican youth.

Manchester and Mandeville are free of slums, and seem relatively prosperous when compared to other parts of the country. There has been a recent increase in crime, much of which relates to an inability of Jamaicans to settle personal disputes and disagreements. There is no welfare system in Jamaica for the poor. There is a National Insurance Service for the benefit of retirees. Medicine is free for all. Although there are private hospitals, payment must be made in advance or upon admission.

Additional Research: "Jamaica- A Poor Land but Rich in Culture"

Jamaica which is a poor land, but whose people are 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. Its indigenous Arawakan-speaking Taíno inhabitants named the island Xaymaca, meaning the "Land of wood and water."

General information:

Geographic 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.

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%.

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.

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?

Socio-economic Issues:

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 in 1961 after Jamaican voters rejected membership. Jamaica gained its independence in 1962, remaining a member of the ^[17]_{SEP}Commonwealth.

Human Rights — The Government of Jamaica has a long history of democratic traditions and freedom of expression. Overall, the Jamaican Government demonstrates respect for the human rights of its citizens. There are some areas ^[17]_{SEP}of concern, including extra-judicial killings committed by members of the security forces; poor prison and jail conditions; inadequate levels of prosecution of police ^[17]_{SEP}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.

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. ^[17]_{SEP}

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, so the mothers and grandmothers bear the burden of raising the children.