



# THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MANDEVILLE

## Overview of the Mission Context :

Jamaica land we love. Four poignant words that ring true in the country's national anthem. Oftentimes when we picture Jamaica we picture the land; the beautiful white sand beaches, the crystal clear blue of the Caribbean Sea, the rolling mountains and the open plains. It all makes for the quintessential honeymoon or vacation.

Removed from the Oceanside, sand beaches and tourist population the picture we see throughout the Diocese of Mandeville is the reality of a country struggling under a deep economic recession. When the unemployment rate is at 14.3%, 16.5% of the population is living below the poverty line, and the literacy rate is at a mere 77%, the reality appears extremely challenging and sometimes grim.

The Diocese of Mandeville is a mission diocese in the sense that we cannot gather the funding from our people necessary to operate on a basic level. But we are also a mission diocese in the sense that we have a mission to serve the people of God and their needs. Despite the agrarian poor that we exist in, despite the lack of basic amenities, despite the education and healthcare institutions that struggle daily to function with the proper resources; the Church remains a beacon of hope to our people of Jamaica.

We have people in our Diocese who want to help, who are trying to help, but simply lack the resources necessary to. Take for instance Monique, a 19-year-old unemployed and undereducated single mother struggling to support her 1-year-old son. She lives in a two-room board house with 9 of her family members. Her home is located in a "bush community" in which residents simply set up house in the middle of the bush wherever there is open land. Oftentimes she and her family members are lucky to receive one meal of rice and beans per day, yet this doesn't stop her from traversing deeper into the bush each day to feed the 94-year-old deaf man who is hungry and lives alone. When asked why she did this, her response was "because there is someone worse off than me who needs my help."

The Diocese of Mandeville does what it can to help its faithful such as Monique to better serve their brothers and sisters in Christ. We currently have five clinics, two children's homes, a home for the elderly and neglected, a high school and a Catholic college. We do our best to identify the needs of the people and find the institutions to serve them, however it is a daily struggle to provide the resources necessary to keep them going. With your help, prayers and support we are able to continue to preach the Gospel message of loving our neighbor and serving one another through Christ. Thank you for considering a Mission Appeal and possibly twinning with a parish or program in our Diocese.



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## Overview of Ministries in the Diocese of Mandeville:

The Diocese of Mandeville has made its priority to serve as the loving hands of Christ to our brothers and sisters. Unfortunately with the deep recession the island as a whole is facing, the unemployment rate being at 14.3%, 16.5% of the population living below the poverty line, and the illiteracy rate being at 23%; it is a continuous challenge for the Diocese to rise to the growing needs that exist in all areas of life. In establishing institutions and facilities in the sectors of health, education and shelter we seek to holistically serve the immediate needs of our people as well as to provide the means and opportunities that will serve them long-term. This includes the critical need to source funding for building and maintaining the infrastructure that is necessary in order for them to exist at a habitable standard. Despite the institutions being in place, the Diocese faces a continual difficulty in keeping them resourced to meet the growing needs of the people that they are in place to serve and financial support is always appreciated to ensure that these ministries may be sustained.

### Clinics:

In accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, the work of the clinics is a sign of evangelization and an instrument of healing to the people of God.

- There are 5 Diocesan clinics: St. Croix Clinic in Santa Cruz, Holy Spirit Clinic in Maggoty, St. Vincent Strambi Clinic in Bull Savannah, St. Paul's Clinic in Mandeville and St. John Bosco.
- A Clinic Committee was recently established to oversee the acquiring and distribution of medicines to the clinics as well as monitor the influx of doctors, nurses, dentists and other volunteers who may visit the diocese.
- Outreach programs include HIV/AIDS support group ministry and Families with Children with Disabilities support group.

### Schools:

The Diocesan schools were established and exist under the Gospel mission to “go forth and teach all nations” with the aim of educating youth under the Catholic tradition of caring, service and a commitment to justice.

- There are 10 Early Childhood Institutions (ages 3-5) across the three civil parishes of the Diocese.
- Six Preparatory Schools (ages 5-10)
- One High School – St. Vincent Strambi High School in Bull Savannah.
- The Catholic College of Mandeville – a college with teacher training and currently expanding to include degrees in other disciplines.
- Three vocational training institutions
- Food Program for Children that ensures that children receive at least one square meal a day at school.
- Scholarship program to subsidize the cost of schooling, transportation and lunch money for families in need.

### Housing:

- A Building and Maintenance Committee was recently established that keeps regular oversight of Diocesan buildings and grounds and streamlines requests for repairs and construction.
- House Building Ministry that assists with construction of local housing in cooperation with mission groups (cost of sponsoring a house is US \$3,000).