



### Retreat to welcome new members to the Reconnect Community



Last week, at a day long retreat to welcome new members to the Reconnect community, we focused on ‘seeing’ clearly our great dignity as human persons and acting out of that. One of the young men, reflecting on his own struggles, said that sometimes ‘our vision gets a little blurry, and it’s hard see what’s good about us’.

Powerful words but words that get to the core mission of Reconnect – a community that works together to build social enterprise – but more importantly to build ourselves into the people we are meant to be.

Day	Passionists
2	DOUGLAS, John
9	CLEARY, Christopher
	DAVIN, Neil
10	GEINZER, Patrick

Thank you for all your support for the Reconnect Special Campaign. We have raised over \$55,000 in our end of year \$100,000 match challenge. This campaign supports our goal of finding a permanent home for Reconnect. We are actively looking at properties and we are committed to a long-term future for this critical work.

We all need a place to help us to see clearly who we really are! If you can join this campaign before years end – please do. We are all grateful! May we all build a more peaceful world this new year!

Fr. Jim O’Shea, CP



## *Latest Happenings In the Diocese: Passionist Volunteers International - 15th Anniversary*

Passionist Volunteers International was first conceived in the heart and mind of its founder, Fr. Lucian Clark, C.P. over 15 years ago. The Passionists had already established a Mission here in Jamaica, and were deeply involved in their work of evangelization. Father Lucian knew that there were "willing and enthusiastic young people" who could contribute to and benefit from a volunteer experience in Jamaica. Fr. Lucian felt strongly that the Passionists had something to offer, and that they would be effective at guiding this programme. "We already had a history in Jamaica, and networking. We could ensure that they would work in a safe environment."

Although the Passionists also had a Mission in Honduras, the decision was made to start the programme under the Immaculate Conception Parish in Stony Hill, Jamaica in 2003 in acceptance of an invitation from Archbishop Edgerton Clark. Fr. Bertram Chin was the Superior, who guided the programme in the parish. Recent College and University graduates with a desire to combine Catholic social teaching in a faith-rooted and community based experience, were invited to apply to become Passionist Volunteers, and to commit to spending a year living in Jamaica, working with the surrounding communities.

In 2010, the PVI focus moved to the Diocese of Mandeville, which is a Passionist Diocese that was being led by Bishop, Neil Tiedemann, C.P., a

Passionist Bishop. Sister Maureen Kervick, S.J. accepted the role of site supervisor, and contributed greatly to further developing the structure and professionalism of the programme.

The life of a Passionist volunteer is deeply rooted in the Passionist charism of accompaniment. Rather than attempt to improve the lives of those they encounter with monetary

contributions or donations, the volunteers are encouraged to seek first to enter into the lives of the individuals and communities that they work with. In working alongside them to experience their joys, struggles, stress and triumphs, volunteers are then better able to ascertain how their unique gifts and talents might service a need.



*Fr. Lucian Clark, (left) Founder of Passionist Volunteers International, accepts an Award from the government of Jamaica on National Heroes Day on October 2018, for his contribution to Jamaica. Also in the photo are Mayor of Mandeville, Donovan Mitchell and Hon Sally Porteous, C.M.G., Custos Rotulorum of Manchester.*



*Casey Schell, PVI 2012-13 shares a cuddle with a student in Lionel Town.*



*Michelle Asher, PVI 2010-11 is embraced by an elderly resident of the Mandeville Infirmary.*



A unique aspect of work as a PVI is entrenchment within the communities that are served. While some volunteers find their focus in clinics or schools, others serve a multitude of capacities in local communities. The volunteers become a part of these communities, visiting on a regular basis and participating in the everyday lives of the families there. From starting income-generating projects, to tutoring, to visiting the sick and elderly, to planning youth group meetings, the work of the PVI is wide and varied.



*Max Linnville, PVI 2016-17 is surrounded by children from Morgan's Forest.*

Over the years, examples of volunteers utilizing their unique gifts and talents to service a need include working with Sr. Hellen Kisolo to establish an HIV support group, establishing a support group for mothers of children with disabilities, homework help programs, various youth groups, communications for the Diocese of Mandeville, implementing community gardens, chicken coop projects, therapy through theater and acting classes, life-skills classes for teenagers and many more.

The volunteers work in close collaboration with the local Passionist Community. In each of their missions, they work alongside a 'mentor' or leader within that particular community or locale who provides support and guidance to the volunteer throughout their service.

Recently, Fr. Lucian Clark, C.P. stepped down as PVI Director and the role was filled by Ross Boyle, who is a former volunteer in the programme. When asked about his own experience Ross said "PVI taught me so much about myself and allowed me to grow in a challenging and unique

environment. Coming to Jamaica as a volunteer was something that was extremely new and different for me, and I learned that I can handle a lot more than I ever imagined I could. I left as a confident, caring, and holistic person of faith after my year as a PVI."

When he returned to the USA, Ross decided to become involved with the PVI organization. "I fell in love with Jamaica, the people, the Jamaican church, and PVI during my time as one. When I saw an opportunity to come work for the Passionists and for the Passionist Volunteers program, I knew it was something I could not pass up. I had intended on following a different path upon



*Victoria Josue (right) PVI 2017-18, and a resident of Albion Gully.*



*Back Row: L-R: Alicia Christie, PVI Site Administrator, Archbishop Charles H. Dufour,, Sr. Maureen Kervick, S.J., Former Site Administrator, Fr. Michael Rowe, C.P. Rector of St. Paul of the Cross Cathedral, Carleen Cato, Catechetics Director, Fr. Lucian Clarke, C.P., PVI Founder. Front Row (centre) Sally Porteous, Custos Rotulorum of Manchester with the current PVI volunteers L-R: Kathleen English, Erin Curtin, Magdalen Sceski and Jessica Villatoro. Inset: Marissa Radziwiecki.*





*Past PVI Volunteers have a blast at their 15th Anniversary Dinner & Jazz Concert at St. John Bosco Hall in September 2018. L-R: PVIs 2015 Victoria Ryan, Timothy Manning, Cortney Freshwater, Emma Hagenauer, Ross Boyle, Marisa Coene.*

my return to the United States, but I'm so blessed and thankful that I was given this opportunity. Bringing young people to Jamaica and teaching them the love that I encountered myself while a PVI, is more fulfilling than any other job I've ever had. I want to continue to bring PVI's to Jamaica to allow them to have the same experience I had for a long time to come."

As PVI Director, Ross has taken over the day to day activities from Fr. Lucian Clark, C.P., who is now residing in Jamaica as assistant rector of St. Paul of the Cross Cathedral, and who continues to provide Ross with his support and mentorship. Fr. Lucian Clark, meanwhile, expressed his satisfaction and gratitude that the programme "has become all that I had hoped for and more."

On Heroes Day, Oct 2018, Fr. Lucian Clark, C.P. received national recognition for his contribution to Jamaica at an Awards Ceremony in the Cecil Charlton Park, Mandeville.

Sr. Maureen Kervick, S.J. who has seen over 100 volunteers pass through the programme, retired at the end of July as PVI Site Supervisor, passing on that mantle to Miss Alicia Christie.

In September of this year, the PVIs joyfully celebrate their 15th Anniversary with a Dinner and Jazz Concert at St. John Bosco Hall on September 1, and Mass at St. Paul's Cathedral on September 2.



*Past PVI Volunteers join those currently serving in Jamaica, to celebrate their 15th Anniversary at a Mass at St. Paul of the Cross Cathedral, Mandeville. The Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Edgerton Clarke, Archbishop Emeritus of Kingston, (front row, second left) along with Archbishop Charles H. Dufour, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Mandeville (left), Archbishop Kenneth Richards, Archbishop of Kingston, and Fr. Lucian Clarke, C.P., PVI Founder. Current PVI Director, Ross Boyle stands in the back row, far left.*

# PVI 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## Letter from a former PVI

On the weekend of September 1, 2018, the Passionist Volunteers International celebrated 15 years of service to the people of Jamaica and Honduras with a weekend full of events. There were over 25 former volunteers and guests from the United States in attendance. Just like the PVI program, the weekend started off in Stony Hill. There was a reception at the house of former support team member, Rosie Mahfood. It was a wonderful way to remember the beginnings of the program. Three volunteers from the inaugural year were in attendance for the weekend. On Saturday, everyone was given the opportunity to visit their former mission sites during the day and in the evening was the main event, a jazz concert and dinner at St. John Bosco in Mandeville. This was followed by Mass on Sunday at St. Paul of the Cross Cathedral celebrated by Archbishop Emeritus Edgerton Clarke and a coffee reception after Mass. The weekend wrapped up with a cookout at the current volunteers' house on Sunday evening. The 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration was made possible by months of planning by the Mandeville, Kingston, and United States committees.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend made me so proud to be a former PVI. I had the chance to spend time with my own community, meet volunteers from other years as well as get to know the current volunteers. We were all there not only for the program, but also to celebrate Fr. Lucian Clark, C.P., founder of PVI, and Sr. Maureen Kervick, SSJ, site supervisor 2010-2018, who both retired this year. They both had a tremendous impact on my year in Jamaica and in my life so it was especially meaningful to me to honor them. Their hard work and devotion has made PVI into what it is today.

I was lucky because I went back for a week and had time to visit my old sites, spend a day at the beach, and have time to relax. In this week, I had another unsuccessful trip to Burger King for a milkshake, enjoyed enough fried chicken for the next year, and ate my weight in rice and peas. The only thing missing that was different from my year in Jamaica was this time I didn't have any car problems. On Saturday before the jazz concert, Emma and I took the group of mothers we worked with out for lunch. When Emma and I were PVIs, we worked together and attended monthly support group meetings with these mothers. At the meetings, they talked about the difficulties of having children with disabilities in Jamaica where there is so much stigma around people with disabilities. It is gratifying to know that the bond we made with these moms has gone on years after we left PVI and will continue for many more years.

PVI has succeeded for the past 15 years because volunteers have built meaningful relationships by "accompanying the crucified of today." It has also left a lasting impact on the volunteers. It is an experience I think about daily and I am unbelievably grateful for because it still influences my life. Here's to another 15 years!



**Passionist Associates Reconvenant each year—these are 2 of the groups**



**“Riverdale”  
Associates**



**“Shrewsbury”  
Associates**