

Latest Happenings in the Diocese of Mandeville:

Fr. Marek Bzinkowski Celebrates 25 Years of Priesthood



On June 2nd at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Maggoty our own Fr. Marek Bzinkowski celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving to God for 25 years of priesthood.

Fr. Marek was ordained a priest in 1989 in his home country of Poland. "For the first two years I worked in Poland, after that I spent six years working in Ukraine and after that, I wanted to go to Siberia but due to political problems that was not possible. I then thought I might go to Cuba but when I was passed information that Bishop Boyle was looking for some priests for his diocese in Jamaica, I signed up," said Fr. Marek.

When Fr. Marek arrived in Maggoty just over 15 years ago, he arrived to an undeveloped plot of land owned by the Diocese of Mandeville. He arrived to rural Jamaica and witnessed the plight of a community in need.



Pictured above are Fr. Marek and some of his brother priests in the Diocese present at the Mass of Thanksgiving celebrating his 25 years as a priest.

Now 15 years later, that plot of land is virtually unrecognizable from its roots. "Maggoty is like other rural places in Jamaica, we've had problems mainly in the areas of education, health and employment. In the beginning we had four Catholics and our main focus was to build a community and build trust in the Church. Once our church was established we turned our focus to the children and education. By finding some friends who were willing to lend a hand we were able to start supporting our community children to attend school regularly, in turn we try to keep them connected with the Church and with each other. Their families become invested by participating in community works and farming projects," said Fr. Marek.

Fr. Marek reflectively added, "I think these 25 years have been a beautiful time and I practically don't regret anything. There is always a new lesson, Poland was one lesson, Ukraine was another lesson and now Jamaica is a new lesson. The most important thing in all of that is that I discovered goodwill. The little experience that we have, the little strength that we have, it can be useful and world changing. If you have friends, you allow others to participate in some plans and ideas and you allow the Spirit to guide you then miracles will happen."



Fr. Marek sharing words of thanks at a reception after the Mass.

Fr. Marek and the Maggoty Sisters did not stop at building a church community and establishing an education program. Guided by the Spirit and the robust energy and commitment of leaders such as Fr. Marek, Holy Spirit has grown to include a fully functioning health clinic and sausage factory. "Our other program is the clinic where our sisters and volunteers work, last year we received about 14,000 people there. It's another ministry which brings some knowledge about Jesus but most of all some help to the people," added Fr. Marek. The sausage factory is the Church's way of providing employment and sustainability to community members and projects.

When asked what one of his greatest joys since entering the priesthood has been, his response was both humble and profound, "It is difficult to say because there are a million little joys each day, when you see the victory of a friend accomplish something, when you see the group of people who are smiling because they have bread, they were at school or they were baptized. That's everyday joy... I think it's these little joys of every day that build the joy that I have experienced these 25 years."