

FEDERATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST JOSEPH OF CANADA

RESOURCES FOR

THE GLOBAL COORDINATING GROUP CALENDAR

During the **FIFTH** week of **JULY**, we *listen to the heart of the world* and hold in our prayer the Sisters of St. Joseph and the people of **JAMAICA**.



Jamaica is an island country situated in the Caribbean Sea. Spanning 10,990 square kilometres (4,240 sq mi) in area, it is the third-largest island of the Greater Antilles and the fourth-largest island country in the Caribbean. Jamaica lies about 145 kilometres (90 mi) south of Cuba, and 191 kilometres (119 mi) west of Hispaniola (the island containing the countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic).



Previously inhabited by the indigenous Arawak and Taino peoples, the island came under Spanish rule following the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1494. Many of the indigenous people died of disease, and the Spanish transplanted African slaves to Jamaica as labourers. The island remained a possession of Spain until 1655, when England conquered it and renamed it Jamaica. Under British colonial rule Jamaica became a leading sugar exporter, with its plantation economy highly dependent on African slaves. The British fully emancipated all slaves in 1838, and many freedmen chose to have subsistence farms rather than to work on plantations. Beginning in the 1840s, the British utilized Chinese and Indian indentured labour to work on plantations. The island achieved independence from the United Kingdom on 6 August 1962.

With 2.9 million people, Jamaica is the third-most populous Anglophone country in the Americas (after the United States and Canada), and the fourth-most populous country in the Caribbean. Kingston is the country's capital and largest city, with a population of 937,700. Jamaicans are mainly of African ancestry, with significant European, Chinese, Indian, Lebanese, and mixed-race minorities. Due to a high rate of emigration for work since the 1960s, Jamaica has a large diaspora around the world, particularly in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Jamaica is part of the Commonwealth, with Queen Elizabeth II as monarch and head of state. Her appointed representative in the country is the Governor-General, an office held by Sir Patrick Allen since 2009. Andrew Holness has served as the head of government and Prime Minister from March 2016. Jamaica is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy with legislative power vested in the bicameral Parliament, consisting of an appointed Senate and a directly elected House of Representatives.

Sisters of St. Joseph in Jamaica

Presently there is one Sister of St. Joseph from **Springfield**, serving in a doctor volunteer program.

Canadian Sisters of St. Joseph who have served in Jamaica

The Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada - **Hamilton** supported a mission in Jamaica for a number of years. In 1987, General Superior Sister **Ann Marshall** went to Jamaica to meet with Jim Webb of CRC-O to discuss the Sisters' involvement in a three week Third World Immersion program in Kingston, Jamaica as a possible experience for religious leadership. In 1989, Sister Ann returned to Jamaica, but this time in the company of Sister **Katrina Rooney** to attend this three week program. After the program finished, the Sisters decided to set up a mission in Jamaica. This time they went to the more remote location of Annotto Bay. They arrived at their new destination on March 22, 1990. Sister **Nancy Sullivan** joined the mission in 1993.



(Photo: Sr. Nancy Sullivan and Sr. Ann Marshall)

During their time at Annotto Bay, the Sisters provided healthcare and education to Jamaican citizens. They tended to residents staying at the Annotto Bay General Hospital and the Infirmary. In 1992, Brian Guest and Dr. Danny Kraftcheck from St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton and Paula Carere of St. Joseph's Hospital in Guelph, visited Annotto Bay Hospital to provide assistance and support. The hospital was described as having 127 beds, with each ward having approximately 20 beds. There were only eight full-time nurses to tend to those needing care. During this visit by hospital staff, it was determined that there were critical water needs at the Infirmary in Port Maria. The following year, the Congregation provided funds for the reconstruction of a water holding tank, as well as other structural repairs. Five containers containing surplus medical supplies and equipment were sent to the Annotto Bay Hospital. The Sisters also found that there was a need for health education, namely teaching Jamaicans about diabetes, hypertension, and AIDS.

In 1990, the principal of the Annotto Bay All Age School, Mr. Smikle, requested that Sister Ann and Sister Katrina teach a Family Life Program to Grade 7, 8, and 9 students. The Sisters did this until September of 1992. In February of 1992, General Superior Sister Teresita McNally visited Annotto Bay and agreed to have the Congregation sponsor a wood working program at the school. Library books were also collected through the efforts of the Hamilton Wentworth Separate School System. The donation of

these books resulted in the school's first library being established. The Sisters also helped children learn to read. A church-sponsored Basic School program was also established. This program was similar to a Kindergarten class. Through donations, these children were able to eat a hot meal each day.

After many years of providing care to the people of Jamaica, Sister Katrina Rooney returned to Canada in 2001. The Jamaica mission lasted until 2007, when Sisters Ann Marshall and Nancy Sullivan moved to have it closed.

Source: The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Archives. HF01-S002 Jamaica Annals.



Sr. Ann Marshall



Sr. Ann and Sr. Nancy Sullivan

Here is some additional information from *Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada, Meet a Sister* (Archived)

Sister Ann was involved with a literacy program for 'street boys': young men who have left school, have neither work nor useful occupation to employ them. The program used Peace Corps volunteers, local volunteers and persons paid through the agency *Jamaica Self Help* to teach reading and writing skills. The response of one man: "Sis, I feel so proud of myself, I can read a newspaper." The building for the street boys program is located at the local public school and was constructed as a result of efforts by the Rotary Club of Hamilton and the Hamilton Wentworth Separate School Board.

The Sisters worked with the teachers at the schools to improve their teaching skills; helped the aged and infirm, sponsored children and youth to continue their schooling, sponsored an occasional children's party, built up the church communities and made efforts to inform Canadians on their trips back to Hamilton about the great needs of Jamaica's poor in their part of the island and also about Jamaicans' great gifts of faith, simplicity and sharing.

Sister Nancy served as administrator of 5 churches, after the murder of Canadian Jesuit priest Fr. Martin Royackers in 2001. Two deacons conducted church services and funerals, and the people were trained for pastoral functions.

United in prayer the Global Joseph Family, 11,000 sisters in 54 countries, listening to the heart of the world.

