



Latest Happenings In the Diocese: Fr. Marek Honoured at King's House on Heroes Day

On October 16, 2017, Fr. Marek Bzinkowski, Pastor of Holy Spirit Church in Maggotty, was honoured at King's House with the Badge of Honour for Meritorious Service, joining the ranks of persons recognized this year by the Governor General of Jamaica for outstanding contribution to Jamaica.

Ordained in 1989 in his home country of Poland, Fr. Marek came to Jamaica in 1998 to join the then newly established Diocese of Mandeville at the request of Bishop Paul Boyle C.P.



When Fr. Marek arrived in Maggotty, St. Elizabeth, he discovered that only 4 in 100 children were attending school regularly. Believing that education is the path out of poverty, Fr. Marek made it his priority to help children to stay in school. With the support of the Pontifical Missions Societies, he built the Holy Spirit Homework Centre, including a library and computer lab, to serve the children of the community.

Back Row: L-R: Sr. Claire Marie Carriger, SSCJ, Archbishop Emeritus Donald Reece, D.D., Fr. Marek Bzinkowski, Archbishop Emeritus Charles H. Dufour, Sr. Rita Kurdziel, SSCJ. Front Row: Sr. Emilia Malczak, SSCJ, Sr. Scholastyka Hajduk, SSCJ.

Along with Polish volunteer, Marta Socha, he also developed an agricultural/educational programme whereby parents donate time and effort to a community farm, and in exchange, are provided with lunch money, transportation and school supplies for their children, who must attend school regularly. Today, there are over 200 children in the programme, which is supported by the earnings of the farm, as well as a number of donors and friends, through the Holy Spirit Foundation. Fr. Marek is pleased to note that 96 out of 100 children in the community now attend school regularly.

In addition to the education programme, Fr. Marek also started the Holy Spirit Health Clinic, which is run by the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The clinic serves 80 patients per day, three days per week. Meanwhile, Holy Spirit Church continues to grow in numbers, with 23 baptisms taking place earlier this year.

The Diocese warmly congratulates Fr. Marek on these well-deserved awards and thanks him for his continued service to the community of Maggotty and the Diocese of Mandeville.