



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MONTEGO BAY

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My Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

If you have hope, this will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying. If any of the saints are in need you must share with them; and you should make hospitality your special care.

(Romans 12:12-13)

This beautiful quotation from St. Paul reminds us of who we are as Church, **the Body of Christ**. We are disciples of Jesus Christ and therefore we are HOPE. We live our lives in total trust in the God who is with us and who will never abandon us.

Hurricane Melissa, a category 5 storm with nearly 180 miles per hour winds devastated many of our communities across the Island. A song by Janine Gordon, composed to speak to this situation says it powerfully:

Yeah, man. Jamaica my people. We cry today, but tomorrow we rise. Through the storm, through the pain, we still survive. Melissa mash up the land, but it can't mash up we spirit. Listen, we see the roof tops gone. We see the tears pon de neighbour face. The river take the road. But love can't erase. So mi lift mi eyes to the hills. Mi know that God pon dey case. Jamaica strong, we still a run de race. Hold FAITH, the people don't let go. We plant again and the love will grow. JAMAICA WILL RISE AGAIN from the rubble and pain...We build back and rebuild. We plan with God above and each other hand in hand...No crime, no hate. This is time to unite...If one man fall, the next man lift. That's the Jamaican spirit...We will love, we will rise.

In their Pastoral Letter entitled "In the Eye of the Hurricane" the Bishops of our Region wrote: "Some people view these disasters as divine punishment. We reject this notion. When questioned about a tragic occurrence (Luke 13:1-5), Jesus clarified that suffering does not equate to God's

punishment. Instead, suffering invites us to engage in conversion, compassion, and communion. We proclaim a God who journeys alongside us rather than above us...Christ is present in the shelter during hurricanes, in the neighbour who offers food, and in the hands that assist in rebuilding.” Things are bad, and there are days and nights when we will lose heart and want to give up. But we are HOPE, we are LIGHT. Let us face despair and darkness as children of HOPE AND LIGHT. Remember what Granny taught us: “Small acts make a big difference.” Let us be those small acts that will make a big difference.

You, your families, and your communities are in my prayers.

God bless and keep you always in his love.

Given at Montego Bay, on this 14th day of November, 2025.



Most Rev. John D. Persaud
Apostolic Administrator
DIOCESE OF MONTEGO BAY