

Sankofa Youth and Family Summit 2008

By Dorothy Porter

April 25-27, 2008 over two hundred youth, chaperones, and young adults gathered to fellowship, worship, and lift up the name of Jesus in praise at the annual Ambassadors of the Word, Sankofa Youth and Family Summit held in Orlando, FL. The conference leaders encouraged all participants to strive to reach, teach, and engage ourselves, youth, and our family members to examine our determination, opportunities, and approach to live out God's word in our daily lives. *"Believing in P.O.W.E.R."* was the theme of the conference. With P.O.W.E.R. all things are possible.



P-Perseverance
O-Obedience
W-Wisdom
E-Endurance
R-Reliability

Participants came from many parishes from across the U.S.. Featured above are members of Ambassadors of the Word program from St. Rita Catholic Church in Indianapolis, IN. The workshops exposed the participants to the importance of growing their faith through being an active participant in church. Workshops in liturgical dance, music, heritage, education and vocation, health and wellness, spirituality, stewardship, Bakijana — The Covenant with Black America, and Evangelization were offered.



Youth were encouraged to be the soloists during the mass. Featured to the left is young Jordan Johnson, member of St. Martin de Porres in Toledo, OH singing solo with the Sankofa choir made up of youth and adult conference vocal participants. While in Orlando, a holy pilgrimage was taken to the Holy Land theme park. Sister Jannette Pruitt and Father Charles Smith attended the park with the youth. Behind them is the replica of Calvary and Jesus's tomb.



----- CUT ON THE DOTTED LINE -----

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING



HAPPY KWANZAA

The Bowman Francis Ministry Project

"If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the most high your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your dwelling. For he orders his angels to protect you wherever you go." Psalm 91:9-11

Dear Friends,

You can affect the lives of people in need throughout the world. Whether you realize it or not, your support of the mission of the Bowman Francis Ministry Project will help children in urban America receive an education on African American history, the seven principles of Kwanzaa (Nguzo Saba), and a Catholic value system which will help them live a better life. Your support of the mission of the Bowman Francis Project can teach young men and women in America about respecting and loving themselves better each day to become positive and successful people in society. Your support of the mission of the Bowman Francis Ministry will lead Frs. Charles, Ken and myself to celebrate masses and lead mission teams to Kingston, Jamaica, Haiti, Belize and other countries in our world.

How can your support affect the lives of the people to which we minister? Your financial gift to the Bowman Francis Ministry is an investment in the education of future leaders in the Catholic Church. As we celebrate President elect Barack Obama's historic victory, the advent season, and holiday season I would encourage you to read A New Earth by Eckhart Tolle. A New Earth had a profound impact on me as I dealt with the passing of my father, Charles A. Smith. I think you might be struck by the idea of putting your ego in check and becoming more aware of being than doing. I know deep in my heart there is no real meaning to life without God. On the Mission Jamaica trip I sensed a new people emerging - a global community of seekers learning from and teaching each other how to be with our humanity. I now know the present moment is what matters most. It's transformative! It redefines what it means to be **ALIVE!** I ask your consideration to invest in the education and formation of emerging leaders of our church and community who yearn to make the world a better place. Your generous gift to the annual appeal will support our programs and ministry.....Your belief in the mission of the Bowman Francis Project will affect people throughout the world. Thank you for believing in the Bowman Francis Ministry.

Toward a Higher Vision!

Fr. Chester Smith, SVD Fr. Charles Smith, SVD Fr. Ken Hamilton, SVD
 Fr. Chester Smith, SVD Fr. Charles Smith, SVD Fr. Ken Hamilton, SVD

Mission Jamaica 08'



Stewardship - Living life as God intended.

I had the pleasure and opportunity to participate in Mission Jamaica 08' November 13 – 17, 2008 in Kingston, Jamaica along with Fr. Chester Smith, Executive Director of the Bowman Francis Ministry Project located in Indianapolis, IN, and Christ Our King Parish Youth Group from Lithonia, GA.

The purpose of Mission Jamaica is to show our love and give service to those in need. It was one of the most spiritually uplifting and motivational weekends I have ever experienced. This mission was sponsored by the Bowman Francis Ministry Project.

As I arrived in Kingston I did not know what to expect. I met Fr. Burchell McPherson, Pastor of St. Peter and Paul Parish, and Joann Perou, Coordinator for Mission Jamaica 08'. As we traveled through the streets of Kingston, I observed dilapidated conditions which were heart wrenching to me. It was very difficult to get to our destination due to the lack of adequate roadways. I have traveled to foreign countries in the past but as tourists you don't get to see the inner parts of these areas.

On Friday, I had the pleasure of having the unique traditional breakfast of Ackee and Salt Fish with bread fruit. We visited St. Peter and Paul Church and also the Elementary school which had 941 students enrolled as we waited for the arrival of the youth group. Upon the arrival of 17 youth, chaperones, and Fr. Guyma Noel, Pastor of Christ Our Hope Parish, we were taken back to St. Peter and Paul Church for lunch where another traditional food called "patties" was served.

Later that day we were taken to Immaculate Conception Convent. We got settled in and had Mass that evening with retired Archbishop Clark. This location included an Elementary and High School where they taught extra curricular activities such as swimming and golf.

The next morning was our big service day. We attended Mass at 7:30 a.m. with Fr. Guyma. His homily was very moving. He spoke on how we were here to give love and to give back. He stated what an important role we were playing to help those who are in need. He challenged each one of us to continue to love and to give back



and we are called to serve even after we leave from this mission. As we traveled through the inner areas of Kingston it was hard to believe the poor living conditions of the people who lived there. When we arrived at St. Peter Claver Parish, we met Sister Lupe Vea, originally from Tonga. She was the Pastoral Administrator and a sister of the Marist Missionary Order. She was so pleased to have us there to assist her. The Parish was preparing for their annual Deanery. We spent the

whole day cleaning, painting in and outside of the church also setting up for dinner the following day. On one of the outside walls youth painted "Hope is Here" and left their hand prints and the date. The touching gesture of leaving their mark on something that will be remembered for a long time touched me as well. My heart was filled with joy knowing the stewardship we were doing for this parish community.



After the long day we went back to our living quarters, rested and prepared for dinner. I reflected on the number of young children that were hanging around us. We received such warm hospitality upon our arrival. Several of the children stayed close to us and even assisted in sprucing up the grounds by cleaning and painting.

The next morning we attended Mass at St. Peter and Paul Church where Fr. Chester Smith was the guest Celebrant. Fr. Chester's homily made us think and reflect on getting the "stress and mess" out of our lives. An interpretive dance was performed by Joann Perou following the homily. At that time, I felt relaxed and stress free of all the stressors that I encountered previously. Fr. Chester then advised us to read Proverbs 1:23, "Listen when I reprimand you; I will give you good advice and share my knowledge with you." Also stated the biblical message of Thessalonians 5, we need to be ready for the Lord's coming.

We then traveled to St. Peter Claver Parish for the Deanery Celebration where we had dinner and the parish youth performed several songs for us. As we departed in the bus from St. Peter Claver Parish, several of us became filled with the Holy Spirit and our eyes filled with tears of spiritual joy, peace, and fulfillment as we reflected on what we had experienced over the weekend.

Often God has to shut a door in our face so that He can subsequently open the door through which He wants us to go. This was a door that the Lord Jesus Christ opened and provided for me. It opened my mind, heart, and soul to the goodness that the Lord has to offer.

I wish to thank the parishioners of St. Joseph Parish, Saginaw, MI, for their generosity, many donations collected, and shipped to Kingston. Also, the Diocese of Saginaw for their support during this spiritual journey.

Yours In Christ,

Patricia Snow
St. Joseph Parish, Saginaw, MI



UPCOMING EVENTS

Khrist Kwanzaa

December 26, 2008- January 01, 2009 in St. Louis, MO

Youth JAM for Jesus IX

January 17, 2009 in Chicago, IL

January 24, 2009 in Bronx, NY

Sankofa Summit XII

June 25-28, 2009 in Jamaica, NY

To Be Announced

Men's Conference

Mission Jamaica

Harambee Bakijana, Board of Benefactors, and the Cultural Exchange

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