

October 2025 Montego Bay mission trip report: Jeanne Pittman with Fr Tom Zalewski

Arrived MoBay Tuesday Oct 21 and were met at the airport by Deacon Baldwin Powell who drove us to our hotel.

Wednesday Oct 22:

We helped at the Love in Action Soup Kitchen to package hot meals for 100 "street people", and helped distribute those to the homeless and poor in the city. This is run by the Korean Sisters who are joyful and hard-working; Sr John and Sr James are the key leaders. The poor we met included a severely disabled lady who had been attacked with acid and lives in an abandoned YMCA building. Another man lived by the side of the road and slept in an abandoned car trunk (he asked for a small tarp to cover himself during the rains). A small group lived by the sea in the dunes and their enclave's entry was a corrugated metal panel which served as a door in a break in the grass; it was laundry day and their wet clothes were strung on the branches of bushes and trees. We also distributed over 100 "Care packages" which consist of canned goods, flour, rice, sugar, oil, honey and basic toiletries in a large brown bag.

Upon our return, Jeff Meyerson texted me to watch for the tropical storm headed for Jamaica. Fr Tom and I watched the forecast and that evening decided to cut the mission short and return to Naples. I contacted Paul Connor who was in Seaford town with the eye mission team to let him know our plan and that his team should also watch and be prepared to leave. Both the Eye Team and I were scheduled to move on to Kingston over the weekend and Fr Tom had planned to stay in MoBay for a little R&R.

Thursday Oct 23:

Change of plans for Fr Tom and I: We cancelled the Thursday itinerary and substituted the Friday plan with Fr Tom going to Seaford Town and I did the audit at the Chancery. We re-booked our return flights to depart early Friday morning and cancelled the rest of the hotel stay. Fr Tom's driver brought him and Susan back to our hotel as she would be travelling with us on Friday.

Oct 24-25. Both the Eye team and we all made it home safely before ferocious Category 5 Hurricane Melissa struck western Jamaica on October 28th inflicting massive damage to our beloved Seaford Town and all the MoBay diocese buildings and schools.

The rest is heartbreaking history.....

