

Remembering St. Vincent

By Archdeacon Noel Wygiera

Almighty God, we pray for the people of St. Vincent as they contend with an ongoing humanitarian crisis. Bless them in their brokenness and increase their compassion as they continue to care for each other. Help us to be compassionate as well, and generous as we reach out in love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

In one of our early posts on St. Vincent, we were introduced to Limiske Berkley in a video interview with the Rev. Howard Thornton. Limiske is a young man who lives on the west side of St. Vincent. He actively volunteers in shelters where evacuees are being housed as they await a time to return to their homes on the north end of the island. I asked Limiske for an update on the overall situation on St. Vincent and specifically in the shelters. This was his reply:

"... it is said by the professionals here monitoring the volcano that is yet to have gone back to sleep so it's still very active as it is seen throwing a large amount of steam. The shelters are still full with people however, the government is trying to vacate the shelters as they are ready to get back to some sort of normalcy and the recommencement of normal schooling. The remaining persons in the shelters as well as those who would have gone back home or who are in homes are still in need of help but they are managing with what they have. Although things are getting back to some sort of normalcy the people are still in need of help as some of them would have lost their homes, farms and livelihoods."

Financial Donations can be made through the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund:
<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-accepting-donations-for-people-displaced-by-st-vincent-volcano-eruption/>

Personal Experiences of St. Vincent

Several people in the Diocese of Calgary have personal connections with St. Vincent. This week, The Rev. David Holmes shares memories from the time that he spent several months ministering there.

As some of you know I lived in St. Vincent for 6 months after I retired from the parish of St. Giles in Estevan, where I had been for 17 years. I was part of the Ventures in Mission which the Anglican Church of Canada was involved with. I spent 2 weeks in Toronto preparing to go, along with 8 other Canadians who were going to work and minister in various parts of the world.

When I was in conversation with Bishop Selon, the former Bishop of the Windwards, he told me I would be working alongside another Anglican priest from Trinidad and the two of us would look after the parish of St. Patrick, Barrouille, which included 5 churches on the Leeward (West) side of the island, including St. David's located 14 miles south of the volcano.

When I arrived in St. Vincent in the summer of 2004, I was met by a priest from the Diocese and driven to the parish. He informed me that the priest from Trinidad decided not to take the job, so I was it. Wow, after retiring from 45 years of ministry in Canada suddenly I was going to be responsible for 5 churches with about a thousand households. After much prayer and conversation, I met with the Wardens and told them what I felt I could do. Several things were really difficult for me such as getting used to the language (they all spoke English but with a

very Caribbean accent), and the extreme heat, 35 plus most days. Services on Sunday started at 7 a.m. and I did 2 each week. They were all Eucharists. I did have a very capable group of 6 servers at St. Patrick's and had 5 lay leaders who would lead do Morning Prayer at services when I wasn't there. I looked after the sick and shut ins with a visit and Eucharist once a month, had several Baptisms and Funerals and had many folks coming to the Rectory to bless various items or look up Baptism records to prove their age.

I have many wonderful stories but one that stands out to me is the day I received a phone call from a woman asking me to baptise her husband's and her baby. Of course, I said yes, and we picked a Sunday and then asked when they could meet with me and go over the baptism service and she asked me if I wanted the God Parents to come as well. I asked her how many God Parents they picked for their child, and she told me 19. Wow, I said, why so many and she replied, "In my community when people knew I was pregnant they asked if they could be a God Parent for the child and I couldn't say no." I informed her there was only room for 4 names on the baptismal certificate and I suggested she pick Anglicans for that. She said alright and 4 of them came with the parents for my evening of instruction and going through the service. The day of the baptism came and when I asked the parents and God Parents to come forward to the font, all 19 folks came along with the couple and the baby. Wow, what a baptism that was. I have several more stories, but that is one I will never forget.