



A Popular History of SSCC in the Bahamas

(Popular Because We as SSCC Were Popular)

Reflections by Fr. Michael Kelly, ss.cc.

In Ministry in the Bahamas from 1971 to 2010

SSCC Community in Ministry in the Bahamas from 1961-2011

Part Three

The fourth decade (1991-2001) witnessed the following SSCC members active in Church Life in the Bahamas: Mike Kelly, Patrick Killilea, Patrick Fanning, Brian Marggraf, Martin Gomes, Stan Kolasa, and Chris Santangelo. During the years from 1999 to 2010, Mike Kelly was at Our Lady of the Holy Souls, a church in the over the hill area of Nassau. The designation “*Over the Hill*” had nothing to do with age, but indicated an area of need and challenge, a rough and tough area of Nassau, New Providence. The Church was established in 1926. Once again, it was into a friendly and cooperative church family that the Sacred Hearts Community came to minister, and be ministered to as well. It was a place shadowed and scarred by street violence and opposing gangs. The combined church community effort was evident in the planning and participation in the Church’s 75th Anniversary, especially its Thanksgiving Luncheon, which honored over 20 deserving people, as the Parish saluted its honorees on the church anniversary (1926-2001). Celebrations, Dedications, and Anniversaries are always very much a part of the Archdiocese, Parish and Church Life. People love to be prayed for on their Birthdays.



PAT KILLILEA

Archbishop Burke’s 20th anniversary of Episcopal Ordination and his 50th anniversary of entering the Society of Jesus (S.J.), were observed in 2001. The new church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on Long Island, was consecrated on October 19, 2001 during the pastorship of Fr. Patrick Fanning, ss.cc. In 1997, Sacred Heart Church in Nassau observed its 100th Anniversary, and in June 2001 the Parish of St. Thomas More in Nassau celebrated its 50th anniversary. The new addition to St. Martin Monastery (local Bahamian Benedictine Sisters) took place on November 3, 2001. Ordination to the Catholic Diaconate or Catholic Priesthood also deserves attention, like that of Fr. Kendrick Forbes who was ordained a Transitional Deacon on November 1, 2001. “*It’s a great feeling*” was one of his comments. Great for him - great for the Archdiocese. Later, on June 11, 2002, he was ordained to the Catholic Priesthood at St. Joseph’s Church in Nassau.

Congratulations and best wishes were extended to Msgr. Alfred C. Culmer on the occasion of his 25 years of Catholic Priesthood in 2001. The Nazareth Center, which orients toward the care of children ages 1-14, had its beginnings on May 5, 2001, under the care of Sr. Joan Anderson, S.C., and later by Sr. Annie Thompson, OSB, and is a joint project between the Government and the Catholic Church. On the Board as a member was Fr. Chris Santangelo, ss.cc.

On July 15, 2001, the groundbreaking for the new St. Anselm's Church took place. The original church was built in 1935. The new church was dedicated on March 23, 2001. Then on May 20, 2001, groundbreaking for St. Cecilia's new Church took place, the original having been erected in 1953. On November 22, 2002 the new church was dedicated. The signing of the contract for the new St. Francis Xavier Cathedral was completed on November 12, 2001. The Cathedral was originally dedicated by Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York on February 13, 1887.

The 2002 Archdiocesan Assembly under the theme "*Put out into the deep*" (Luke 05:04-06), opened at Loyola Hall, in Nassau. Among the delegates were our SSCC members Martin Gomes, Chris Santangelo, Stan Kolasa, Patrick Joseph Fanning and Mike Kelly. Pages and pages of presentations and discussion led to Ten Resolutions to be implemented over the years ahead. On November 1, 2002, twenty-nine priests then working in the Archdiocese, were honored with a Gala Banquet. Also among the group were our SSCC priests. The "*Bahama Catholic*" newspaper had individual photographs of most of the twenty-nine in its November issue, as they received their plaque with the wording: "*The Archdiocese of Nassau ... We, Catholics and our friends in The Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Lovingly Extend Congratulations To Our Priest*". Each name was included on an individual plaque. Various groups including the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Legion of Mary, Parish Outreach like the "Care of the Needy", witnessed to the concerned people, Religious, Clergy and Parishioners, who helped distribute food, grits, sardines, groceries and clothing, to the poor and needy, as did our SSCC with our "*Option for the Poor*", and the lived example of Fr. Chris Grannell, Stan Kolasa, Martin Gomes, Chris Santangelo, Patrick Fanning, and Mike Kelly, building on the example of people from our past.

During the time of Archbishop Lawrence A. Burke, SJ, there were many "firsts" including the introduction of the Knights of Columbus, and of the "*Bahama Catholic*", in 1990 ... "*at long last we are producing the first issue of our Catholic Newspaper*". In time, many articles, photographs, and information by our SSCC members would grace the pages of the "*Bahama Catholic*". The building of The Emmaus Center for retreats and for people from the Islands to come to for educational opportunities, was also an accomplished dream of Bishop Burke.

Another “first” was the introduction of The Samaritan Ministry, coordinated by Fr. Jim Lotze, SJ (USA) Sr. Mary Mulligan, G.S.I.C., (Canadian) and Sr. Clare Rolle, OSB (Bahamian). It was started in 1987 with the inspiration and encouragement of Bishop Burke and his Vicar General, Msgr. Preston A. Moss. Their ministry was to people infected with HIV in Nassau and the Islands. The focus was on “one-on-one visits”, to bring care, comfort and support to patients with the AID’s virus. The Ministry/ Program became a model for other counties in the Caribbean, but in Nassau visits to the AIDs Ward at Princess Margaret Hospital, or to All Saints Camp on Carmichael Road, coordinated by Rev. Nottage, was a special ministry indeed, along with Home Visits to Persons with Aids who often lived in simple surroundings. Caring for babies with the virus and showing compassion brought tears to many, including all of the above. From the beginning, Dr. Perry Gomez, a Bahamian, was a courageous medical leader in this field in the Bahamas. He is admired for his faith, determination and courage. Great success in this area has come through the cooperation of the government and the churches. Perhaps it is the stigma attached in the past to the group called “modern day lepers” which attracted our SSCC members, like Chris Grannell, Stan Kolasa, Ignatius McGraw, Martin Gomes, Patrick Fanning, Mike Kelly, and Chris Santangelo to be part of, and supportive of, this group of compassionate and caring people connected with the Samaritan Ministry. It was not limited to clergy, but overflowing with generous and loving lay men and women, reflecting the love of the Heart of Christ. St. Damien, ss.cc., who died on April 15, 1889, would indeed be proud, as would be Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta , who died September 15, 1997.



THE SAMARITAN MINISTRY

Earlier, people like Dr. Marie Bachem (Golden Heart Award recipient), and Dr. Julie Wershing served the needs of adults and children at their Medical Clinics, one connected with St. Francis Xavier Parish, and another associated with Our Lady of the Holy Souls Parish, where the Hardecker Children’s Clinic was located. The year 1993 was special, as the Parish Centre at Our Lady of the Holy Souls was opened. Many, including Chris Grannell, had dreamed of such a space to welcome the community, “the people next door” as Social Services Minister Janet Bostwick stated. Our SSCC Provincial, Fr. Columban Crotty, was present for this “dream fulfilled” event. In time, in 1997, the YEAST program (Youth Empowerment And Skills Training) would use the same location to help “pre-empt the onset of crime, unemployment and social tension”. In January 1997, Mr. Jeffrey Lloyd, who later became a Deacon, was appointed Executive Director of YEAST.

The year 2003 was notable for Our Lady of the Holy Souls Parish as the Church Renovation Project was completed. Just months before, “The Bahama Catholic” of March 2003, gave coverage to the “roofless church” as the renovation was underway.





FR. KELLY, DEACON MAXWELL JOHNSON AND RCIA CANDIDATE

The interior seating was rearranged into circular fashion. The decision for this passed “*by just one vote*” at a previous Parish Pastoral Council meeting. The entire roof was removed and replaced with a new roof, insulated, and prepared for air conditioning, turning a “*hot box*” into one cool church. New altar space was prepared with the mahogany altar and platform being made by a parishioner, Mr. William Daniels. The new Baptism Pool, into which people could be fully immersed, was prepared, and

completed, another “*first*”. An extension included washrooms, a Reconciliation Chapel and a Blessed Sacrament Chapel, and a day chapel now (2010) honoring Saint Damien de Veuster, ss.cc. was added. The floor was newly tiled. The sound room was most valuable. With great joy the “*Celebration New Beginnings*” Mass was held on May 21st, 2003, which included the Dedication of the Renovated Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church. Much thanks went to many. Special thanks to Michael Jones, who supervised the project, and to Henrietta T. Miller, parish secretary who assisted greatly with financial records and many details connected with the project. As secretary she did much more than her “*job description*” as she was involved in caring for the needy, handing out food items to regular callers at the Rectory door, helping with all the parish projects, the RCIA, a long serving Eucharistic Minister, etc. In 2010, on July 4th, she would join 53 others to receive the “*Cordis et Mentis Award*” medal, from Archbishop Pinder as part of the observance of the 50th Anniversary of the Archdiocese. The Archdiocesan Financial Officer, Renee Knowles, gave great support as well, as the Church Renovations continued, as did Mr. Frank Smith, Mr. Rollen Goffe, and many others, including Mr. Major, the builder.



ARCHBISHOP PINDER, HENRIETTA MILLER & FR. KELLY



MARTIN GOMES, ARCHBISHOP PATRICK PINDER, MIKE KELLY

History was made in the Archdiocese of Nassau on August 15th, 2003, when a “*native son*”, the Most Reverend Patrick C. Pinder, was ordained to the Episcopacy. The Church and the Nation overflowed with joy. Following the death of Pope John Paul II in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI assumed the position as Holy Father, being inaugurated on April 24th, 2005. Fourteen Permanent Deacons were honored in a Gala Banquet on April 29th, 2005. Among them were the first two Permanent Deacons ordained in 1973, Deacon Peter Rahming and Deacon Lawrence Bethel. Back in 1971 these two were connected with St. Joseph’s, their home parish location, when Fr. John F. Sullivan was pastor. During the final Decade of SSCC service at Our Lady of the Holy Souls, another Deacon, Maxwell Johnson, offered much assistance as did Deacon Peter Rahming.



ARCHBISHOP PINDER VISITS ANNA NELSON

By way of interest, two women from Our Lady of the Holy Souls parish celebrated their 100th Birthday – Anna Nelson, who was born July 27, 1908 in the Dominican Republic, celebrated with the church community on Sunday, July 27th, 2008. At the Mass she received the Papal Blessing, from Pope Benedict XVI, a Blessing and Home visit by Archbishop Pinder, a Plaque, an engraved plate from the Parish presented by the Parish Pastoral Council President, Ms. Vernita Johnson, and a Message from Queen

Elizabeth II, while surrounded by her immediate family, her parish family and many, many friends. Her daughter, Sr. Andrea, SC came from New York to join in the celebrations. Letitia “Auntie” Davis celebrated with Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church Community on March 8th, 2009, as her Birthday was March 9th, 2009 . She was born March 9th, 1909 at Kemp’s Bay, Andros, Bahamas. A letter of congratulations from Archbishop Patrick Pinder was given, along with a Papal Blessing from Pope Benedict XV1, and a Message from Queen Elizabeth II. Her daughter, Olga Deveaux, was present with her. At this writing in 2011, both of these senior ladies have gone to the Heavenly Kingdom.

Helen Veronica Humes was a woman of great strength, determination and faith, always supportive of her parish, its clergy, its people and its projects. Born in Panama where her father, Andrew, worked on the Panama Canal, she was fluent in Spanish, French and English and was never at a loss for words in any language. Helen would proudly tell her family the history of how she and her mother, Leticia, “cracked rocks for the construction of Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church” and they were one of the founding families when it was built in 1926. Her life span covered over 94 years (1912-2008).



HELEN VERONICA HUMES



DUDLEY GILBERT & FR. KELLY

She was a real original connected with varied groups such as St. Vincent de Paul Society, (assisted by special people like Mr. Dudley Gilbert, also very devoted to the poor and needy), the Senior Choir, the Legion of Mary, the original Parish Pastoral Council, Women's Auxiliary, St. Helena's Club, and the Catholic Benevolent Society. Helen was active in so many ways in church life and participating in daily Mass until her final illness. Year after year she was the leader in sales of raffle books for the Annual Parish Fair, Bazaar and raffle. In 2003 she was the recipient of the Benemerenti Papal Medal from Pope John Paul II for her long and dedicated service. Whatever her accomplishments, this humble woman always gave thanks to God for her many blessings. She loved her Catholic Faith and she kept the Faith. To her God be the Glory.

In 2005 there was much newness to be celebrated. Archbishop Pinder, the new Archbishop, ordained the new Priest, Elvardo Turnquest, in a ceremony in the new St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. In 1965 the current Msgr. Preston A. Moss was ordained, and now, in 2005, welcomed the newest ordained. An era of ministry and service came to an end in 2005 when the Benedictine Monks from St. John's Abbey, Colledgeville, Minnesota, said farewell after 114 years, having arrived back in 1891, with the arrival of Fr. Chrysostom Schreiner, OSB. At the Thanksgiving Mass on June 29th, Archbishop Pinder blessed and unveiled a plaque bearing the names of the legendary monks, 121 in all. It was indeed the end of an era. A similar ceremony and plaque unveiling, honored the Sisters of Charity from New York, who arrived in the Bahamas on October 28th, 1889, but in 2007 were planning to withdraw. Their plaque listed 208 who had served. They made a remarkable contribution to the Church, to Education, and to the Nation of the Bahamas. In August 2007 it was the turn of the Sisters of St. Joseph, from Sault Ste. Marie, Canada, who had served for 49 years, since December 30th, 1959. Two of their members, Sr. Pauline and Sr. Noreen served in ministry at St. Joseph's with Fr. Michael Kelly, ss.cc. and Fr. Martin Gomes, ss.cc. Others included Sr. Jean Mongeau, and Sr. Leah Gauthier. Another era came to an end when Sr. David Mary Duncan, Sisters of Mercy, after serving for 40 years (1968-2008) said farewell to Andros her lengthy place of ministry. In our SSCC ministries, our paths crisscrossed along the highway of service.