

Letter to the Church - After Hurricane Melissa

My Sisters & Brothers in Christ!

Our nation and the Diocese continue to come to grips with the magnitude of the destruction wrought by Hurricane Melissa, especially in central and western Jamaica. We offer our prayers and full support to the thousands of people affected by this disaster.

Reports to date indicate that four Churches in our Diocese – St. John's, Black River; St. Thomas, Lacovia; St. Luke's, Balaclava, all in St. Elizabeth, and St. Thomas, in Bluefields, Westmoreland, have been destroyed. Other Churches and Diocesan property, including some schools, in St. Elizabeth, Trelawny, Westmoreland, Manchester, St. James, St. Ann, and Portland, have lost roofs or suffered varying degrees of damage.

These are difficult times for all of us. However, I commend to you the words of Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Do not be discouraged. Despite the present challenges, let us thank God for spared life, and the many offers of assistance from kind donors in Jamaica, the diaspora, the Province of the West Indies, and the Anglican Communion. We also acknowledge the words of encouragement and prayers received from our local and overseas partners.

We are a resilient people, and with faith in God, we will overcome this challenge and work together, with compassion, to bring hope to our brothers and sisters who are now in grief and despair. Let us remember: "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Psalm 46:7, 11)

Yours in Christ,

Rt. Rev. Leon Golding

Bishop of Jamaica & The Cayman Islands