

The New Lowe Sound



If you were to drive through Lowe Sound these days you'd be surprised at the new look it is sporting. Knowles Construction is completing a contract to construct a sea-wall along the coast. A lot of the old bush has been pushed down, a decent sidewalk has been poured and the whole area just looks brighter. For many years now, millionaires and probably even billionaires have come to this little sea side settlement to set their bone fish boats in the water to go hunting for their prey on the world famous bone fishing flats. A product is only as good as its packaging. The guides do their job, the fish do their part but the surroundings need to be attractive. Guides come from as far as Behring Point with their visitors and they spend the whole day out on the flats. I remember when Prince Meyer, his son Quentin, Colin Hilliman and I went out bone-fishing (See January 2009 Newsletter) coming in to Lowe Sound from the flats with its tall coconut trees and these little cottages all lined up in a row it was a pretty sight from a distance. If I could I'd brighten up some of the houses with a new paint job, cut the grass, maybe plant a few flowers for a little bit of colour. For the most part, the history of tourism in Andros has been centered around fishing. Bimini is the 'big game fishing capital of the world' and Andros is the 'bone fishing capital of the world.' Fishermen are a die hard bunch. Coming home from Toronto this summer there was a gentleman on the line to check-in at Westjet decked out in his fishing gear (tennis shoes, long sleeved shirt and long pants just like the guides) carrying one little carry-on bag. That was all! When he was getting on the flight I overheard him saying to the ticket agent, he's visiting the Bahamas for 18 days just to go fishing. Go figure!

St. Margaret's Building Project

History tells us that the original St. Margaret's Church in Nicholl's Town was destroyed by the devastating hurricane of 1866. The first church was a little wooden one. The current church, minus the porch and sacristy, is the replacement built and consecrated sometime in the 1870's. Since then very little has changed in its appearance. For a long time now, some of the senior members of the church have expressed a desire to see the church renovated and extended. This is a project that, I feel, is long overdue. In 1987 a plan was drawn to modify the existing building to not only change the orientation from West facing to East facing, including a lectern and pulpit, a proper sacristy and bathrooms. In my searching I happened to come across this plan, and with a little modification we are getting ready to plan our way forward.

The Missionary Priest

Many responses have been coming in from readers offering their feedback on the wonderful and in my opinion, very honest article written by Candice, my webmaster and spouse, who means everything else in the world to me. Her reflections (her thoughts, the way she sees it) are valid for her and her alone. Other spouses might have similar experiences but for them the contexts are different. Their priest spouse is different, their background is different, their context is different and their ministries will be different. Isolation is not really a function of city versus island. I think you can be in a big New Providence parish and still be isolated; it more or less boils down to the nature of the job.

For us priests, we get lonely and bored and overworked and frustrated and experience every possible emotion all at once while serving our cure, whether it is on an island or in the big city but the plus for us is that we have a network to lean on. I sometimes call my priest friends just for a chat, to 'talk shop', to get advice, to offer support and assistance or just for a laugh. Our gatherings like Synod, Clergy Conference, Retreat and other functions (i.e. Patronals etc.) give us an opportunity to reinforce our bonds of affection. Wives too, (and my personal friend Lee) need that network as well.

History tells us, that from the time of Bishop Wilfred Bird Hornby (1904-1918), the clergy (and their families) faced tremendous challenges in the family islands. In a SPG writing outlining the potential of Missionary work in the West Indies around the early 1900's FB Matthews, stationed in Andros for 18 years, is recorded as being married with two children. The two room house that he and his family lived in on Mangrove Cay, was described as 'a little bigger than an English study.' So for that family to leave all of the comforts of England to come and live on, as one missionary in the late 1890's said to the Bishop at that time 'these uninhabitable rocks' is a true testament to their missionary zeal and commitment. Additionally, Matthews would leave his family for weeks at a time to go and visit the stations in the parish by boat.

While the Bahamian clergy of the 21st Century are blessed with basic modern amenities and all the creature comforts, sociological challenges which would have faced Matthews' family back then still face us today. These issues are delicate in nature, easy to dismiss, virtually impossible to solve and a tragedy to ignore. In Luke 10, the Mission of the 70, Jesus sends them out two by two. For those of us who have been sent out as a pair, we need to stay mindful of the wellbeing of our spouse.

How Does My Garden Grow?

In my effort to get into Backyard Farming, I along with a lot of help from a young friend of mine have planted a sea of pumpkin vines in the back of the rectory. If you look closely, there are four Persian lime trees as well so if all goes well, there should be some produce ready by the Thanksgiving holidays. Farming is hard work! It is rewarding though. I'll be honest, if the rain doesn't water those pumpkin, they won't get watered. Imagine if we had planted a crop that required more attention, I'd be busted. My friend, Mr. E.R Hanna promised me some watermelon seeds to plant in the rectory yard so after we finish with this crop of pumpkin, watch out, the watermelon margaritas are next!

