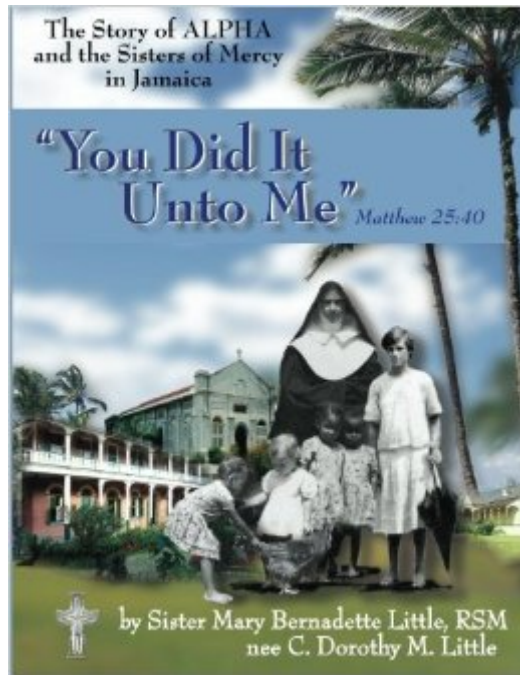


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# You Did It Unto Me: The Story Of Alpha And The Sisters Of Mercy In Jamaica



## Synopsis

For Jamaica, W.I., the nineteenth Century had lurched slowly...painfully...to its last quarter of the Century. It was a time of trial and tribulation never before seen...sugar in decline...squalour in the yards...rampant disease...and yes...the darkness of life bereft of hope. Jessie Ripoll saw the suffering of her people...their cries pierced her soul...what could she do at this point in her life's journey? She dreamed of freedom for the oppressed...and true equality of opportunity and social justice. And at the appointed time...a vision so clear and luminous came to her. She came to know the great work God had chosen for her. So it was that on May 1, 1880, holding a little orphan girl by the hand, she made her pilgrimage through the gate of Alpha to the cottage that sat on forty-three acres of virgin land...waiting for the sound of her footsteps. There began the socio-educational experiment that would receive the respect and admiration of Jamaica. Within a decade, word of her success and an invitation reached the Sisters of Mercy in Bermondsey....It spoke to their hearts in a language that only those who have received the Call can understand...like Abraham, they heard...Leave your country...for a land which I shall show you. They arrived on Dec.12, 1890 to join Jessie. How could the four little girls who enrolled as the first students of Alpha Academy in 1894 have imagined that, a century later, fourteen hundred girls would be retracing their footsteps through the gates of Alpha? In his Proclamation of April 20, 2005, declaring the week of April 25 to May 1, 2005 as Alpha Week, the Governor General Sir Howard Cooke paid tribute to the Institution of learning that has produced a parade of graduates, men and women of excellence...who have made significant contributions to the development of our nation. • The Citation granting Alpha the freedom of the City of Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation and the Keys to the historic City speaks of the tremendous contribution of the Boys' School to the musical treasures of Jamaica and lauds the students of Alpha who have served in every sphere of National and International life. Such is the power of that tiny, mustard seed of faith and hope, planted in the fertile soul of Jessie Ripoll over a century ago.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sr. Bernadette enjoys the distinction of having been a role model for literally thousands of women. Her book is as meticulously written as her life has been lived. The photographs bring back waves of nostalgia for Alpha - from the early days of the Sisters' dreams to the sprawling campus of 2013. Sr. Bernadette writes with the same precise, flawless ease with which she taught decades of girls-soon-to-become women. Her inimitable style leaps of the pages and for Alpha "Old Girls", it brings back floods of memories of this woman who was larger than life to all of us. This is a BIG book in every sense of the word - Sr. B could do no less - and it is not a quick read. But for those of us who have only the fondest memories of Alpha, Sr. Bernadette's words will resonate for the rest of our lives.

Sister Mary Bernadette Little's history of the Sisters of Mercy in Jamaica is moving and inspiring. It shows the unspeakable sacrifices made by these nuns - foreign and Jamaican to uplift the less fortunate in the island for nearly 150 years. The Alpha Boys School music programme has produced some of Jamaica's finest artistes, including the majority of the members of the famous Jamaica Military Band. The Sisters have founded and run several schools and homes, graduates of which have gone on to contribute at the highest levels to Jamaica's national development. As a graduate of Alpha Academy, I am eternally grateful to Sister Bernadette for her exemplary leadership, and for leaving us with this exceptional literary work. Our friends in Ireland will be pleased to read this book, which gives account of Jamaica's link with the Mercy Sisters there.

Excellent and concise of the history of the Sisters of Mercy in Jamaica. I recommend it to all interested in the foundations of the community in Jamaica.

I had the privilege of knowing and working for the author of this book. She died in February 2014 a few days after I purchased the book. The Story of Alpha is a very moving one. It is historic and the author has touched the lives of thousands of women who are successful in their own right. Pick up a copy.....it is a book of courage and grace.

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