

HAVIS and the ROSEAU CATHEDRAL

A time of sadness in Dominica part I

This afternoon, I met Havis standing in the doorway of the Cathedral, crying !

“What have they done to my cathedral ? ” she cried.

“the church of my youth, my mother and father.”



We stood together looking in silence at the pieces of arches and round columns strewn out all over the floor of the Cathedral, like an ancient temple ruin in Rome.

A piece of round pillar here, a piece there. The V piece, connecting two arches.

“This is very distressful for me to see this” she said :

“It gives me a great feeling of sadness to see what is happening to our cathedral”.



These round pillars had no strength, I said quietly to her. They just looked strong. The pillars were standing loose on the cathedral floor. The round columns itself were made out of 4 cut stones, like a cake cut in 4 slices. Very soft stone.



A little layer of mortar was liming it all together.

No connection stone, pin or keystone, nothing holding it together except weight.

No steel rods to clamp it together.

As long it stood straight up, its weight was its strength.



But suppose a Sampson, before Delilah cut his hair, had been let loose in this cathedral. The whole would have come tumbling down as in Scripture. So suppose we had a 6.3 earthquake close to Roseau, as the one that destroyed Portsmouth church in 2004.

The same would have happened as in Portsmouth and Vieille Case in 2004, but with 1000 people inside.

The decision to retrofit and strengthen has proven to be the right decision.

She said : “ *This is like building a whole new cathedral* ”.

I explained that it is actually more than that, as first we have to spend money to demolish and remove and only then can we start rebuilding stronger and better.



Havis said: *“It gives me a feeling of sadness to see what is happening to our cathedral. But I am happy to know that one day soon it will be something to behold.”*

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