

THE DIOCESE OF THE WINDWARD ISLANDS

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The Rt. Rev'd C. Leopold Friday, B.A., M.A.

Bishop's Easter Message 2018

I greet you this Easter as I celebrate my twelfth anniversary of ordination and consecration as a bishop in the Church of God and enthronement as Bishop of the Diocese of the Windward Islands. Let us give thanks to God for the ministry of clergy and people in each parish of our Diocese, for their dedication, devotion and commitment to the ministry to which we have been called. May we continue by the grace of God to be faithful stewards. Nevertheless let us not close our eyes to the several challenges, trials, concerns and issues which confront us as a people and a Diocese.

The Easter Message is one of newness of life and hope. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

The present situation in the world and in the Diocese requires a plan to help us to meet the challenge that has presented itself. We need to bring hope and enthusiasm to our members and the wider society so that they can meet the challenge and make the necessary sacrifices for alleviating, overcoming and transforming our present circumstances. This calls for renewal, reformation, and reconstruction for these will help to rebuild credibility, integrity and influence. May history record us as people who came forward during this time of crisis to lead our membership and people in general to a more meaningful way of life and to a deeper level of faith and discipleship.

I say crisis because I believe that we are at a point where a decision has to be taken either to continue on the path we are treading or to change course. It is my view that we need to embark on a different road map for to continue on the present will lead us into the ditch.

Our present circumstances demand a different type and level of social, political and moral discourse. We cannot allow radio call-in talk shows, nor politicians to be the only voices that are heard. The type of leadership we provide will be key to

resolving this crisis. We don't have the luxury of ignoring moral and ethical values, decency, civility, dignity, integrity, righteousness, compassion and empathy. Crisis provides opportunities for ministry. We must seize every opportunity to make disciples, not simply to increase church membership, but to make disciples. May we represent our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ in our daily lives where-ever we may be, on the streets, offices, homes, business places or playing field.

Let us seek after God and encourage people to return to the true worship of God. It is important to note that this would occur through a process and not a proclamation. Let us take the necessary steps to renew and reaffirm our faith, commitment and devotion and worship of God in our several congregations. Let us pray earnestly for vocations to the ordained ministry and for a cadre of mature, informed, faithful and dedicated lay leadership.

May we seek to identify where we are in each parish: through the Parish Self-Assessment Initiative; Focus on intentional discipleship; work together to restore our churches; "Renew, Transform, Sustain and Proclaim Our Discipleship" and identity as Christians who follow the Anglican Tradition. Promote Christian Stewardship and the five marks of mission; and seek to impact spiritually, socially and holistically the communities in which we are located.

We go forth in faith for as the hymn writer states:

"Because he lives I can face tomorrow;
because he lives all fear is gone;
because I know he holds the future,
and life is worth the living just because he lives." (Hymn 170 CPWI Hymn Book)

May the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight. Amen.

I take this opportunity on behalf of my wife Lois and three daughters, Marcella, Malaika and Mikayla to wish you a Blessed Easter.

Your friend and Bishop



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