

THE 40TH MEETING OF PROVINCIAL SYNOD OF
THE CHURCH IN THE PROVINCE OF THE WEST INDIES
THE COMMUNIQUE

WE, the members of the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity of the Church in the Province of the West Indies at the fortieth Triennial Meeting in Trinidad held at the Cascadia Hotel and Conference Centre, Cascade, St. Anns from 25th to 30th May, 2019, GREET you in the name of our Risen and Ascended Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Synod gathered under the theme "Being and Making Disciples in our Caribbean Context" #Called!Empowered!Sent!" On the 25th May, the delegates were welcomed by Senior Bishop of the Province, The Rt. Rev'd Errol Brooks, the Bishop of North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba (NECA). The Bishop of the host Diocese, the Rt. Rev'd Claude Berkley, joined the Senior Bishop in extending welcome to the Diocese and the Synod. The Synod extended a warm welcome to Observers Mr. Kevin Ryan of Anglican Men of the West Indies, Mrs Valerie West of the Mothers' Union and Mr. Cliffton Nedd of the Anglican Alliance.

The three houses of the Synod, the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity met separately in a pre-synod session to peruse the Synod Journal and other synod documentation. The business session continued with a presentation by Judy Joseph McSween, Board Member, Centre for Emotional Intelligence and Human Relations, on the topic of Emotional Intelligence for Leaders of Faith-Based Organisations. This presentation enabled members of Synod to reflect on the fact that theological training alone was not enough to prepare them for the rigours of religious leadership. A training programme was outlined to provide leaders of faith-based organisations with the requisite skills for decision making, managing intra/interpersonal relationships and stress.

On Sunday morning May 26th, 2019, members of Synod participated in worship at various churches. At 4:00 p.m. the fortieth session of the Provincial Synod was formally opened with the Celebration of Holy Eucharist at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Port of Spain, under the Presidency of the Senior Bishop, the Rt Rev'd Errol Brooks who also delivered the sermon.

The sermon addressed the nature and cost of the discipleship that God offers in Jesus. "God always takes the initiative and we are challenged to make the appropriate response. God comes to us, calls us, empowers us and sends us...our response to God's call includes listening, learning, living and loving relationships with Christ and others through the faithful witness of ourselves...discipleship is a lifelong enterprise."

The Senior Bishop recommended that as we are looking for practical ways of responding to discipleship in our region we should pay careful attention to the need for "an abundance of caution" in the current debate in the region on the use of marijuana. He also emphasized the scourge of crime and violence throughout the region while asserting that God is still in control. He concluded that God calls, empowers and enables us to be courageous disciples, open to leading others to Christ.

On Monday May 27th, 2019 the Synod met in Elective Assembly and elected the Rt. Rev'd Dr. Howard K.A. Gregory, the Bishop of Jamaica and Cayman Islands as the thirteenth Archbishop, Primate and Metropolitan of the Church in the Province of the West Indies. The Synod then resumed in normal business session to receive reports of the Provincial Standing Committee, various commissions, and the 2019–2021 budget.

Pursuant to the decision of the thirty ninth session of Synod held in the Diocese of Barbados in 2015, to authorize the consecration of females at bishops in the Province of the West Indies. Synod voting in Houses, unanimously approved the consequential amendments to the Constitution and Canons of the Church in the Province of the West Indies. The adoption of these amendments enables the Province to proceed to consecration of females to the episcopate.

Keynote speaker at the Synod was Dr. Gwendoline Williams, Retired Head of Department of Management Studies, St. Augustine Campus, The University of the West Indies. The presentation was entitled "Being Disciples in our Caribbean Context. Called! Empowered! Sent.", and focused on the mandate, vision and mission of discipleship in a Caribbean context and readying ourselves for discipleship.

Dr. Williams applauded the Province for initiating the work of creating a discipleship ministry and issued a tripartite call to strengthen faith in action; firstly for the Church to support the United Nations 17 sustainable development goals; secondly for building social, economic, environmental and technological resilience in CARICOM member states and thirdly, putting people first, nurturing our greatest asset through liturgy, social dialoguing, community and stewardship.

Dr. Williams concluded by highlighting the six spiritual/temporal values of discipleship that are incorporated into the strategic plan of the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago. The values of love, faithfulness, integrity, worship, communication and reconciliation should be the pillars of a discipleship ministry.

The Synod received reports from five clusters, each looking at discipleship under the following headings;

1. Equipping our youth for Discipleship
2. Discipleship within the family
3. Discipleship within the Multicultural society
4. Discipleship in an era of moral indifference
5. Church's role in developing models for Christian discipleship

A number of resolutions were tabled and discussed, and recommendations made for specific action in the Dioceses of the Province. Of particular note are the following:

- Resolution #1 – this initiates the process of making baptism the gateway to communion. However, the proposed change in the present practice will only occur after a transition resolution by the House of Bishops and subsequently passed by the Provincial Synod. During the interim an extensive process of teaching and communication at parish levels

focusing on formation in faith, formation in worship and formation in Spiritual Disciplines, before the practice can be enforced.

- Resolution #2 - request the dioceses of the Province to explore ways and means of providing temporary finances within the next sixty days to enable Codrington College to continue its contribution to mission and ministry in the Province.
- Resolution #3. Synod recognises the present crisis in the nation of Venezuela which has driven many of its citizens to migrate. Synod therefore encourages our sisters and brothers in the Dioceses of Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba to continue to respond to the gospel mandate that urges a positive response to human need. Synod supports the position taken by the CARICOM Secretariat to support diplomatic efforts such as the Montevideo Mechanism to bring a peaceful solution to the crisis.
- Resolution #4 Synod urged the various dioceses to use their resources, human and material, to initiate partnerships where possible with Governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to facilitate initiatives that can contribute to the elimination of poverty, joblessness, crime and violence in our communities.
- Resolution #5 – synod approved the resolution from the Youth for a Provincial Youth Sunday to be celebrated annually in all dioceses. The Provincial Youth Commission will determine the date for such and communicate to all dioceses.
- Resolution #6 – synod encourages all dioceses to fill any unfilled positions of youth director.
- Action Plan: An action plan coming out of the recommendations of the clusters was endorsed by the Synod for implementation within the dioceses.

Insightful and challenging daily reflections based on the theme were led by the Principal of Codrington College, the Rev'd Dr. Michael Clarke.

Congratulations were extended to the Rt. Rev'd Michael Maxwell, Bishop of Barbados. The Synod assured him of the continued prayerful support of the Province in the new ministry to which he has been called and set apart. The Synod also congratulated Mrs. Sheran Harper of the Diocese of Guyana on being elected Worldwide President of the Mothers' Union for the triennium 2019-2021.

Our thanks to His Grace, the Archbishop of the West Indies and Bishop of Jamaica and Cayman Islands; The Senior Bishop, The Rt. Rev'd Errol Brooks, Bishop of North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba; and the Bishop, clergy and people of the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago for the gracious hospitality extended to members of the Synod.

In light of the foregoing, we leave Provincial Synod strengthened in our fellowship in Christ and more determined to be intentional in our discipleship and disciple making.

+Howard Jamaica and The Cayman Islands
Archbishop of the West Indies