

# THE DIOCESE OF THE WINDWARD ISLANDS

Diocesan Office:  
Tel: 784-456-1895  
Fax: 784-456-2591  
Email: diocesewi@vincysurf.com



P. O. Box 502,  
St. Vincent &  
the Grenadines  
West Indies

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

## **Bishop's Charge Synod 2019**

My brothers and sisters in Christ I bid you welcome to this thirty seventh session of the triennial Synod of the Church in the Diocese of the Windward Islands.

We are assembled here in the St. George's Cathedral, Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist to mark the opening of the 37<sup>th</sup> triennial Synod of the Church in the Diocese of the Windward Islands. On 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 an enforcement order was served on the owners and occupiers of the St. George's Cathedral. We responded asking that the order be withdrawn for there was no legal basis for it. We were informed that the matter had been forwarded to the Attorney General's Office for his advice. Today 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 we are still waiting. Nevertheless, the restoration work continues. Although the restoration is not complete and there is still a lot to be done we give thanks to God that we are here. We give to God for the ministry of The Very Rev'd O Samuel Nichols, members of the Parochial Church Council, The Building Committee, and the general membership of the Cathedral parish of St. George and St. Andrew, and Anglicans in general. We also give thanks for all the consultants, other professionals, contractors and their staff. We cannot forget those who have worked assiduously to raise funds and those who have made financial contributions towards this project, locally and in the diaspora. I remind you it is not complete so we look forward to receiving further contributions, I also invite you to support the various fund raising events. We hope to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the dedication of this magnificent Cathedral Church of St. George on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2020. The Theme for the celebrations is: St. George's Cathedral 200years: Affirming Our Heritage, Forging New Paths. 1820-2020. We invite you to join us for this celebration.

This synod places on record its thanks to God for the ministry of the Rev'd Canon Clement Francis as he retired from active ministry after serving his last post in the Parish of Christ- The King, with St. Francis, Carriacou, Grenada. The Rev'd Fr. Frank Garraway, assistant Priest, Parish of St. Mary, The Virgin, Bequia with Holy Cross, St. Michael and St. Matthias, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We hope to have a service in Canouan, where he resides to give thanks to God for his ministry. We hope than clergy and people will be able to join us for this celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The date is yet to be announced,

In addition we place on record our thanks for the ministries of Mr. Idris Baptiste and Ms. Dionne John former Diocesan Treasurer and Diocesan Director of Communications respectively. The Honourable Justice Francis Cumberbatch former Diocesan Chancellor who demitted office on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2017 and Mr. Clifton Nedd Diocesan Youth Director, who demitted office on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018.

This synod places on record it's thanks to God for the ministry of the Clergy and Lay members of the various Parishes throughout our Diocese who have been and continue to be faithful disciples and servants of God. The saints whose contributions are known to God and God alone or who have been forgotten or gone unnoticed. May God shower his richest blessings on you.

We welcome the following Clergy and Lay delegates who are attending synod for the first time:

**St. Vincent and the Grenadines:**

**Clergy:**

The Rev'd Pamela Daniel Rector St. Matthew Parish Church, Biabou.

**Laity:**

Mrs. Margaret Jackson, Ms. Marissa Davis, Ms. Najhma Mc Kenzie, Ms. Madge Hazell, Mr. Rosmond Richardson, Mrs. Elvina Abraham, Mrs. Sherene Wilkinson, Ms. Cheryl Evans, Mrs. Pamela Stephen-James, Diocesan Treasurer, Ms. Hannah Laidlow, Assistant Diocesan Treasurer, Mr. Stanley John QC, Diocesan Chancellor.

## **Grenada**

### **Clergy**

The Rev'd Mr. Samuel Byam

### **Laity:**

Mrs. Gertrude Niles, Ms. Rachel Forte, Ms. Vondi Cyrus. Ms. Thereia Lendore.

## **St. Lucia**

### **Laity:**

Mrs. Secodina Alcee, Mr. Mallet Edwards.

### **Observers:**

## **Companion Diocese of Calgary, Canada**

The Most Rev'd Gregory Kerr-Wilson Archbishop of Calgary and Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land Diocese of Calgary, Canada.

## **Church of England**

The Rev'd Canon Bruce Sharpe, Church of England, Bishop's Commissary

## **Barbados**

The Rev'd Canon Noel Burke – Rector, St. David's Church, Christ Church, Diocese of Barbados. I place on record my thanks to him for agreeing to lead the reflections at the synod.

## **Anglican Communion**

Mr, Clifton D. Nedd, JP, Anglican Alliance Caribbean Facilitator, Anglican Consultative Council CPWI Lay Member.

## **Appointments**

The Venerable Christian Glasgow, Rector, Holy Trinity Parish Church, Castries with St. Mary, La Caye and Archdeacon of St. Lucia.

The Venerable Michael Marshall, Rector, St. George's Parish Church, Church Street, St. George's with St. Alban, St. Peter, St. Luke, and St. Vincent and Archdeacon of Grenada.

The Rev'd Canon Ashton Francis Rector, ST. Paul's Parish Church, Calliaqua with St. John, Belair, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Rev'd Fr. Junior Ballantyne Priest in Charge St. James Parish Church, Layou with ST. Mary, Buccament, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2018, and Rector, Holy Trinity Parish Church, Georgetown with St. John, Holy Name, St. Peter, St. Luke and Byera Chapel, St. Vincent and the Grenadines 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2019.

The Rev'd Eleanor Glasgow, Priest in Charge Grace Parish Church, Rivierre Doree with St. Paul, Vieux Forte and Christ-the-King, Soufriere, St. Lucia.

The Rev'd Fr. Coleridge Brooker Priest in Charge St. John's Parish Church, Gouyave with St. Mark, St. Matthew and the Epiphany, Grenada.

Mrs. Sheree-Ann Auld- Mark – Diocesan Youth Director.

Ms. Ronise Henry – Youth Coordinator Archdeaconry SVG.

Ms. Glenda Polius – Youth Coordinator Archdeaconry St. Lucia.

Mrs. Curleen Marshall-Principal Anglican High School, Tanteen, St. George's Grenada.

Mrs. Pamela Stephen-James Diocesan Treasurer

Ms. Hannah Laidlow – Assistant Diocesan Treasurer

Mr. Kenneth (Skates) Alleyne – Diocesan Director of Communications.

### **Provincial Appointments**

The Most Rev'd Dr. Howard Kingsley Ainsworth Gregory Archbishop of the Church in the Province of the West Indies, Primate and Metropolitan.

The Rt. Rev'd Michael Maxwell Bishop of Barbados

### **Ordinations**

#### **Deacon**

The Rev'd Mr. Samuel Byam

#### **Priest**

The Rev'd Alison Samuel

#### **Seminarians:**

Ms. Keba Cuffy

Ms. Khadisha Smart.

## Remembrance

Since the last synod the following persons have passed:

The Rev'd Canon Hoskins Huggins

The Venerable Charles Adams

The Rev'd Fr. Calvert Friday

Mr. Jerome Mc Barnette

Mr. Franklin St. Paul

Mr. Allister Clouden

Mr. Chasley David

Ms. Guenette Delhia King

We extend our deepest sympathy to their relatives. Rest eternal grant unto them O'Lord and let light perpetual shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

I take this opportunity to recognize their dedication hard word and contribution of Principals, teaching and auxiliary staff, students, Parent Teachers Association, The Members of the Governing Body, the Governments, through the Ministries of Education, Business sector, well-wishers and Past students of the St Andrew Anglican Secondary School, Bishop's College, Carriacou, Bishop's College, Kingstown, and the Bequia, Community High School, of all Anglican Primary Schools.

**<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'**

**Acts 1:8**

Our focus in this synod is: Intentional Discipleship and our theme: Empowered by the Spirit: We Renew, Transform, Sustain, Proclaim.

Before his ascension Jesus instructed his disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. 'This', he said, 'is what you have heard from me; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' In addition he said to them you will receive power when the Holy

Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

From the very outset the disciples are informed that this is not a work which they are to carry out through their own strength, initiative or wisdom rather it is the work of the one who has commissioned them "to Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' (Matthew 28:19-20) This is the one who said "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.<sup>5</sup> I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:4-5)

Therefore, As Bishop Stephen Andrews Said:

"The Church is not an institution of our own making. It is part of a divine plan, intended from before the foundation of the world, and expressed in the particularity of a man called Abraham in a nation called Israel, and in Community called the Church. This is a work we share with Christ, because it is he who has called us to this work.

And because our calling is a response to Christ's invitation to renew, transform, sustain, proclaim, the second important thing to note is that it is Christ's own spirit that empowers us for the work. .... For left to our own devices and relying on our own native resources we shall most assuredly fail in our task. But if we allow the spirit to work through us, if we rely on his strength, then we can do all things through him who strengthens us. (Philippians 4:13) As St. Paul said there is no question of our having sufficient power in ourselves: we cannot claim anything as our own. The power we have comes from God: It is he who has empowered us as ministers of a new covenant not written but spiritual: for the written law condemns to death but the spirit gives life. (2Cor 3: 5-6)"

Central to the theology of Luke is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the Spirit that has filled John the baptizer (Luke 1:15), overshadowed Mary (1:35), stirred Elizabeth (1:41), unstopped Zechariah (1:67), and inspired Simeon. Jesus himself received the Holy Spirit. (3:22; 4:1, 18)



As John V. Taylor states:

To engage in the mission of God, therefore, is to live this life of prayer: praying without ceasing, as St Paul puts it, that is to say, sustaining a style of life that is focused upon God. This is indeed to engage in the mission of the Holy Spirit by *being* rather than by doing. To realize that the heart of mission is communion with God in the midst of the world's life. (*The Go-Between God* [1973] 227 [emphasis added]).

Some may see this as being Holy and pious and would rather see the church engaged in activism and programs. The point here is that it is important for us to be formed into the persons that God would have us be, for it is out of being that action flows. We note that after our Lord's Baptism he was led into the wilderness for forty days and forty nights before he began his ministry, and throughout his ministry he would go apart for a while to pray. It is this same Jesus, who healed the sick, cast out demons, brought good news to the poor and challenged those in authority. In the gospel according to Luke Our Lord spent the night in prayer before he chose the twelve apostles.

The rite of Holy Baptism in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church in the Province of the West Indies states:

“By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are united with Christ in Holy Baptism, sharing not only in His death but also in His resurrection, becoming God's children by adoption and grace, thus changing our created nature so deeply that the Holy Scripture says that in Baptism we are born again.”

Therefore it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we participate in God's mission and engage in this ministry.

**<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'**  
**Acts 1:8**

**Our focus in this synod is: Intentional Discipleship and our theme: Empowered by the Spirit: We Renew, Transform, Sustain, Proclaim.**

## **Renew**

Since it is in and through baptism that we are called to be ministers then it is most appropriate for us to renew our baptismal covenant, to renew our commitment to Jesus Christ our Lord.

We can never be baptized again, but we can, in response to a movement of God's Spirit and after careful preparation, reaffirm the promises made at our baptism. Let us acknowledge that we are creatures before God and take our baptismal covenant seriously. Through baptism we are called to ministry, we are called to serve. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians we are informed that the Holy Spirit apportions gifts and talents to each member so that they are empowered to carry on ministry for the good of the entire community: 'To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good' (1Cor 12:7).

All the baptized are empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry on various ministries for the good of all – and on behalf of – the congregation. All the Baptised are Disciples, ministers.

As Disciples and members of the Church we need to accept our mutual dependence upon each other, and to value and utilize each other's contributions.

1Cor. 12:14-27

<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many members, yet one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; <sup>24</sup> whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, <sup>25</sup> that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.



27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism, we have all been given talent that needs to be shared for the proper functioning and wellbeing of the Church and community. Everyone plays an important role in building up the Church. All are Disciples.

It is important that we do not see ourselves as volunteers, for being a volunteer and being a Disciple are two different things. Volunteerism has a long and noble history, however, when we volunteer we can suddenly withdraw our services, our commitment, without notice. In addition the level of commitment varies from volunteer to volunteer and some are quite outstanding and consistent in their dedication, but there are those who are not.

As disciples our commitment or service is not a private matter than can become lackadaisical or be withdrawn at any time. This is contrary to the biblical understanding of Commitment and Discipleship. Christians are not volunteers but Disciples.

We carry out our responsibility as Disciples not because we feel like doing so on a particular day, but rather out of a sense of faithfulness – indeed, obedience – to God. Ministry is not withdrawn when it is no longer convenient. In fact quite often it is inconvenient, for there is always an element of sacrifice. As Disciples we are called to present ourselves – our lives, our time, talent and treasure, as “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (Romans 12:1).

Christianity may be said to be personal but it is not private. It is inherently social. Our faith is to be lived out within the context of the community of fellowship of Christians to which we belong. This is not limited to Anglicans. This is made clear at our baptism. Baptism is not a private matter. It does not only concern the priest/deacon, the person to be baptized and the family. All baptisms ought to take place within the Eucharist as the chief service on a Sunday or other feast, for the congregation plays an essential role in every baptism, because the sacrament of Baptism belongs to the entire church.

Together we affirm our faith- We turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as our saviour; we put our whole trust in his grace and love; we promise to love God and obey him as our Lord; we renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness; we renounce injustice and all the evil powers of the world; we reject sin so as to live in the freedom of God’s children.

After the person/s is baptized we welcome them with these words: We welcome you into the Lord's family. We are members together of Christ, children of the same heavenly Father and inheritors together of His Kingdom."

**<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'**  
**Acts 1:8**

**Our focus in this synod is: Intentional Discipleship and our theme: Empowered by the Spirit: We Renew, Transform, Sustain, Proclaim.**

### **Transform**

Those of us who grew up in the Church and went to Sunday School and Confirmation Class, Evensong and Lenten services and Stations of the Cross and most of all on Sundays for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the sixties and seventies when we look at the attendance at worship today in comparison to those days with full churches and the large number of persons approaching the communion rails and today generally speaking people's lack of commitment to God and the Church and the low attendance at worship. We are concerned. This has led some to suggest that we need to transform our liturgical practice to attract people especially the youth back to Church. There are calls for us to throw away the forms of worship which we have inherited from the early Church. For many to continue in the present path will only lead to extinction.

This reminds me of the young boy whose father had given him a caterpillar and every day he will observe it then one day he noticed that there was a transformation and the Caterpillar no longer moved and this continued for three days, he thought the caterpillar was dead so he said to his father that he was going to throw it away for it was dead. His father then explained to him that the caterpillar had to go through the cocoon stage, that process of Metamorphosis, transformation, which to the boy seemed to be death, in order for new life to come forth.

Can it be that through it all God is transforming his church and at the moment because we don't know nor understand where God is leading us we are prepared to Change God's church for him rather than allow God to work God's purpose out. As The Rev'd Dr. Michael Clarke has said:

"The Church has seen many deaths and it can afford to do this because the Church is not the external structure or practice but the life-giving spirit within the institution. Like the

soldier crab, it wears a shell until that shell no longer fulfils its needs. When as priests we are focused on the life-giving spirit within the church because we journeyed with that Spirit and we know and are known by it, we are less disturbed by the metamorphosis that of necessity must go on - as we witness the Church changing from one degree of glory to another. If the caterpillar had awareness, it would be mortified going into its chrysalis state and if it was to do all in its power to prevent the dissolution of its membranes, the world would never know the butterfly. On the other hand if the caterpillar could preserve its consciousness, it would never know the freedom of being a butterfly.”

He continues: “Hence, rather than chasing after the structures to buttress them, it is in this time, that the Church needs to come to its centre..... As the times change and the nature of engagement changes we must be extremely mindful of our core purpose and use this time to lift this core purpose up. .... The age of decline, in fact, is not so much an age of decline but an age of transformation. The world as we know it in the Caribbean is transforming. The process is rapid and nothing - no thing is being allowed to escape the transformation. However, the nature of this transformation is on a higher plain. The nature of this transformation is about becoming more aware, more conscious.”

The Fifth mark of mission of the Anglican Communion is **“To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.”** In the world today a lot of attention is being paid to the importance of being a part of the engagement with the environment. The earth is being seen as in need of care and expressions of gratitude. Many people especially our youth are hearing these messages and responding to them. As a church we need to reflect on how we join in activities and practices which were not friendly to nature, but focused on what we can gain for ourselves in terms of wealth and prosperity at the expense of the environment and people especially those who live on the margins of society. It is true that most if not all of our clergy and the leadership of the church today are the descendants of slaves or indentured servants. The question though is has there been a transformation in the way we see ourselves and how we relate to each other as disciples and people generally and in the way we carry out our ministry and manage the affairs of the church or is this change only cosmetic.

As The Rev’d Dr. Michael Clarke said “Any institution that cannot and does not support the healing and the wellbeing of mother earth will be deemed obsolete. The age of

decline is about the age of correcting the wrongs the Church endorsed.” We must acknowledge the Anglican Church’s role in slavery and colonialism in our history as a Caribbean people. In so doing we must endeavor to correct the errors of the past and not perpetuate the vestiges of these aspects of our history. We must ensure that we are being faithful to the Gospel and not abusers of the privileges which are extended to those who are proponents of it.

The Church is not called to coerce nor force anyone to accept or follow its teachings, faith or practices. Although, sadly so, this has been part of our history especially during the period referred to as Christendom, when Christianity or the Church dominated the world. The Church can persuade, encourage and admonish as it seeks to win souls for the Kingdom of God.

For example in the current debate re- Human Sexuality the Church states:

## **1. Called to Full Humanity - Section 1 Report**

### **Subsection 3 - Human Sexuality**

Human sexuality is the gift of a loving God. It is to be honoured and cherished by all people. As a means for the expression of the deepest human love and intimacy, sexuality has great power.

The Holy Scriptures and Christian tradition teach that human sexuality is intended by God to find its rightful and full expression between a man and a woman in the covenant of marriage, established by God in creation, and affirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ. Holy Matrimony is, by intention and divine purpose, to be a life-long, monogamous and unconditional commitment between a woman and a man. The Lambeth Conference 1978 and 1998 both affirmed 'marriage to be sacred, instituted by God and blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ'.

The New Testament and Christian history identify singleness and dedicated celibacy as Christ-like ways of living. The Church needs to recognise the demands and pressures upon both single and married people. Human beings define themselves by relationships with God and other persons. Churches need to find effective ways of encouraging Christ-like living, as well as providing opportunities for the flourishing of friendship, and the building of supportive community life.

We also recognise that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power

for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We wish to assure them that they are loved by God, and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ. We call upon the Church and all its members to work to end any discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and to oppose homophobia.

Clearly some expressions of sexuality are inherently contrary to the Christian way and are sinful. Such unacceptable expressions of sexuality include promiscuity, prostitution, incest, pornography, paedophilia, predatory sexual behaviour, and sadomasochism (all of which may be heterosexual and homosexual), adultery, violence against wives, and female circumcision. From a Christian perspective these forms of sexual expression remain sinful in any context. We are particularly concerned about the pressures on young people to engage in sexual activity at an early age, and we urge our Churches to teach the virtue of abstinence.

The challenge to our Church is to maintain its unity while we seek, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to discern the way of Christ for the world today with respect to human sexuality. To do so will require sacrifice, trust and charity towards one another, remembering that ultimately the identity of each person is defined by Christ.

There can be no description of human reality, in general or in particular, outside the reality of Christ. We must be on guard, therefore, against constructing any other ground for our identities than the redeemed humanity given to us in him. Those who understand themselves as homosexuals, no more and no less than those who do not, are liable to false understandings based on personal or family histories, emotional dispositions, social settings and solidarities formed by common experiences or ambitions. Our sexual affections can no more define who we are than our class race or nationality. At the deepest ontological level, therefore, there is no such thing as "a" homosexual or "a" heterosexual; therefore there are human beings, male and female, called to redeemed humanity in Christ, endowed with a complex variety of emotional potentialities and threatened by a complex variety of forms of alienation. [12]

Whether with regards to human sexuality or other areas of human endeavor the church must be careful that it does not criminalize or demonize those who hold views and have practices which are different from ours and of that, much of which we do not yet understand. We must not fall to the temptation to misuse and abuse our position of power and trample on those who are in the minority or who are powerless.

The People of Israel were reminded in Holy Scripture: "the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, <sup>18</sup>who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers,

providing them with food and clothing. <sup>19</sup>You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." Deut 10: 17-19

**<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'**

**Acts 1:8**

This synod is being held under the theme: Empowered by the Spirit: We Renew, Transform, Sustain, Proclaim.

## **Sustain**

In the Acts of the Apostles we find the following:

<sup>40</sup>And Peter testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' <sup>41</sup>So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. <sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2: 40-42)

Ensuring that we have food for the journey is very important for us as Disciples, for the ministry we carry out is not our own. In addition amidst all the good and wonderful things of life, we live in a world where there is brokenness, a world in which there is sin and evil, a world filled with challenges. As Peter said 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' Further as more persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. In other words this was the means through which they were sustained.

Some factors affecting ministry in the Diocese are:

As intimated earlier the number of people that attend church and generally speaking people's commitment and regard for God and the Church have decreased. On occasions in some churches the congregation consist of people who are over fifty years with only a handful of youth.

The majority of our clergy are over fifty years and there are those who will retire in the next two to ten years.



There are some parishes which are experiencing financial as well as human resource challenges. We are seeing a decline in the number of persons offering themselves to the ordained ministry.

While we continue to receive qualified, competent and dedicated Christians to serve at the Parochial, Archdeaconry and Diocesan levels. In some areas this is lacking.

Although there are youth groups and youth ministry, Sunday school and Christian Education classes in some parishes. There is need for a more focused and concentrated effort in these ministries.

If we are to sustain our ministry over the next ten to fifteen years, we need to discern identify, nurture youthful vocations and train twenty full time parish priests; we need by the grace of God to make disciples and to work towards the development of wholesome family life and build strong and stable families; we are to be readily available to parishioners and people in the community to be a listening ear, a source of comfort, prayer and spiritual enablers and to be more intentional in our ministry to the elderly, the sick and shut-in, those whose lives have met with adversity, the less fortunate and those who seek our assistance to supply their daily means of survival.

Empowered by the spirit I am confident that with prayer, reading and studying Holy Scripture, regular worship and reception of the Body and Blood of Christ and participation in other sacramental rites of the church, sustained effort, and adequate resources, this can be achieved.

As Archbishop Drexel Gomez has said in a document entitled “Missional Imperatives for the Anglican Church in the Caribbean (2015) “Anglicans are generally sustained by the mystical and spiritual efficacy of Word and Sacrament. This sacramentality of life not only enables diverse peoples to join in regular praise and worship in celebration of the mysteries of God, but also to affirm the sacramental nature of the whole people of God as the vibrant and veritable Body of Christ.”

And it is our Lord who said: <sup>53</sup> ‘Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; <sup>55</sup>for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup>Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup>Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup>This is the bread that came down from

heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.’ (John 6: 53-58)

**<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’**

**Acts 1:8**

This synod is being held under the theme: Empowered by the Spirit: We Renew, Transform, Sustain, Proclaim.

## **Proclaim**

“The Caribbean continues to be saddled with moral, spiritual, social, political, economic, and environmental challenges, just as much as any other region in the world. It is cold comfort to claim affiliation with other regions of the world that are experiencing similar challenges. It is for us to examine very carefully and prayerfully the root causes, the attendant ripple effects, as well as the modes of confrontation that can be engaged locally, nationally, and regionally. Challenges of Poverty, Cultural alienation and imitation, External Influences, Dependence, and Fragmentation persist in the region. Human trafficking, Drug trafficking and consumption, Domestic violence and abuse, (Adultery and child molestation and abuse my addition) Family reconfigurations, and Institutional Injustices all assault the human condition in the region. Cries for Justice – whether Reparatory, Economic, Restorative, or Distributive – are rising more eloquently, coupled with the rising expectations of our youth to whom we have given life; but we have not found for them enough bread.” (Kortright Davis –paper entitled the Mission of Christ 2016)

It is in this context that we are called to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. It will be important for us to interface with government through our parliamentary representatives and other social partners including our youth as we endeavor to proclaim the Gospel throughout the diocese of the Windward Islands and beyond.

We must endeavor to create relationships of trust, respect and forbearance through which we listen to, interact with and challenge each other. Consequently when we witness to the power of truth it is out of a context of love and concern for the wellbeing of all people and for our nations and world. Like our Lord, the apostles and prophets we’ll be doing so from an informed, knowledgeable and concrete understanding of the prevailing circumstances and underlying realities.

35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' <sup>36</sup>He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' <sup>38</sup>He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' <sup>40</sup>Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' <sup>41</sup>Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains. (John 9: 35-41)

In spite of our due diligence in proclaiming the Gospel, there will always be those moments when others are offended by our proclamation for it is not always easy to acknowledge the truth especially when we are in positions of power: ***As Archbishop Gomez has said:*** "Anglicans have traditionally been marked out as a distinctive group of Christians who optimize the essential nexus between the prophetic, the pastoral, and the practical. This means that the challenges and inequities of society that assault the rights and freedoms of human beings to pursue wholesome and fulfilling lives can be comprehensively addressed through the total ministry of the Church. In effect, this often brings the Church into a fertile, and sometimes acerbic, encounter with the structures of power and governance, as it seeks to speak truth to power. But this should hardly ever restrict or restrain the church from bearing faithful and courageous witness to the power of truth."

It is important that we do not limited our view of proclaiming the Gospel to preaching at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, Morning or evening Prayer, Weddings and Funerals or at other church services. For we can and need to proclaim through what can be referred to as teaching and educating. As Deale Lee a member of the Holy Trinity Parish Church, Castries, St. Lucia said as he made a presentation at the Clergy Conference held in Grenada in 2018:

"I think this a crucial aspect of the role of a priest in modern society. Ironically the increasing availability of information makes it difficult to discern truth. Persons can seek to teach themselves about the love of God and Christianity, through the myriad resources available, but without instruction and guidance these persons often end up lost and disillusioned or worse yet misguided. The Anglican priest must therefore see teaching the faith of the Anglican Communion as an essential task and dedicate significant time to this. The teaching must not be aimed only at our younger members,

but just as professionals are required to undergo continuous professional development, so too should all the members of the church.”

21 They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup>They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Acts 1: 21-22

As we proclaim the Gospel as disciples it is important for us to be conscious and aware of our own human frailty, failings and sin. As disciples we do not proclaim the gospel of or about ourselves it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord and God, which we proclaim. Therefore we can use our own faults and failings as opportunities to identify with people’s experiences and to counsel and guide them. When we proclaim it is important that we do not cause people to focus so intensely, so deeply on their faults and sins that they see themselves beyond God’s redeeming love and grace; that they become blind to the good news of the forgiveness and transforming power of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus Christ our Lord. People must hear of the goodness and graciousness of God. The redemptive love of God in Jesus Christ.

**<sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’  
Acts 1:8**