Ban on Plastic

BY MYRNA JULIEN

On February 1, 2019, Grenada took the bold step of effecting an import ban on single use plastic shopping bags.

The damaging effects of plastics on human health, animals and the environment cannot be over emphasized. Apart from the pollution we are familiar with, it has recently been established that plastic waste in the marine environment during decomposition, has been contributing to the release of dangerous greenhouse gases which are responsible for global warming. When plastic waste breaks down into small bits, they get into the food chain - that is, when animals and fish etc. feed on products which are contaminated with small bits of plastics, we in turn get the plastics into our bodies when we consume meat, fish, poultry etc.

The move to clean up our environment of plastic waste especially in the marine environment, will not only present a huge challenge to physically remove the trillions of pieces of large and micro plastics floating or resting on sea and ocean beds, but the huge cost associated with such clean-ups is also unimaginable.

In Grenada, we have no space for land-filling waste as our landfills are almost filled to capacity and we cannot find another location in Grenada to develop a new landfill. Land space is critical. We must seek to reduce our waste. 16.4% of the waste entering our landfill consists of plastic products.

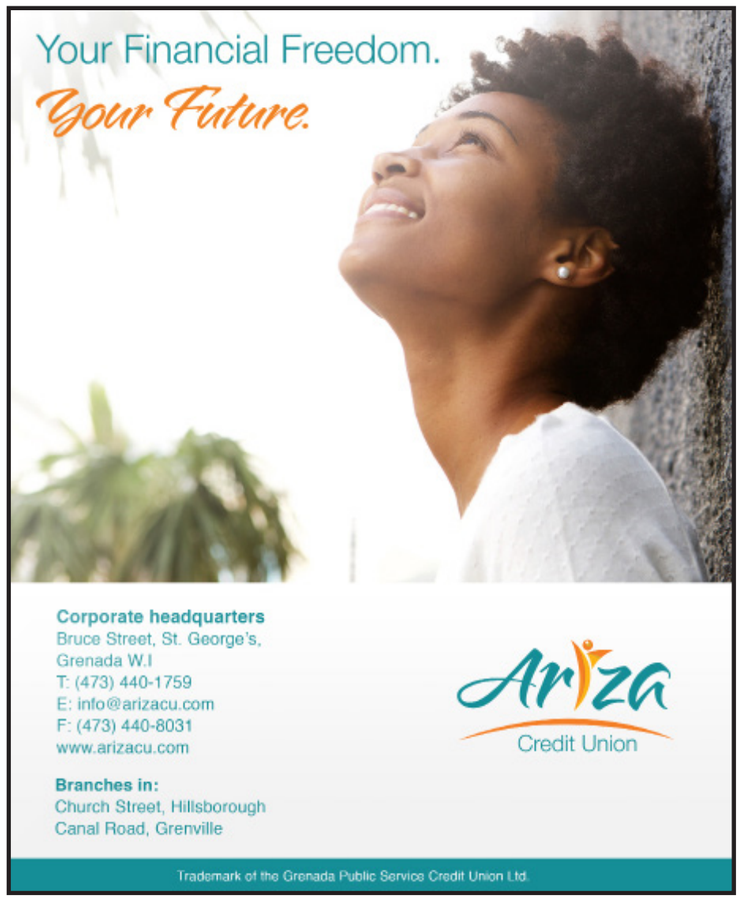
The countries which once recycled plastics are no longer doing so as it is cheaper to produce new bags than recycle used ones. Recycling plastics makes no economic sense.

We are heavily challenged by the poor disposal of plastic waste including bottles, drinking straws, cutlery, food containers, cling wrap, snack packages and so many other items. Apart from the unsightliness of litter, plastics serve to clog drains; this results in flooding and property damage. Plastics are a fire threat at illegal dumpsites.

The plastic bag we discard today will take 1000 years to decompose completely, on land and 450 years in the marine environment.

Support the ban on plastic shopping bags… switch over to durable, long lasting, reusable shopping bags or request a paper bag at the check-out counter. It is the first step in our efforts to completely curb the sale, distribution and use of single use plastic items.

May Almighty God Bless our efforts to clean-up, protect and enhance God's wonderful creation… Planet Earth.



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40 DAYS 40 NIGHTS

The Journey Has Begun

LENT 2019

Students, Staff and Faculty of TAMCC at Ash Wednesday Service conducted by Deacon Raphael Johnson

Teachers at TAMCC receiving ashes

Students receiving ashes

Lent 2019

IT'S LENT AGAIN! "It seems like just the other day that I was in Church for Good Friday and Easter Sunday." Without Carnival to warn you, Lent just creeps up on you. We have to take personal responsibility for our awareness and practice of Lent. This year we join the three Lenten disciplines –

PRAYER, ALMSGIVING, FASTING

– to our three diocesan watchwords –

LIVE CHURCH, BUILD COMMUNITY, SERVE COUNTRY.

We cannot hope to make our watchwords real and true unless we become people of prayer, generosity and self-denial.

I ask every Catholic in the diocese to give serious thought and prayer to the three watchwords, especially **LIVE CHURCH.** Our faith tells us that we are all parts of one Body (1Cor.12). When we come to Church, we meet our Body in Church. If we look around as we enter or leave the church building, we are seeing our Body, a fellow member of the Body of Christ. Lent has six weeks. We can promise ourselves to get to know one new member of the Body every week. Get a telephone number.

SHEPHERD'S VOICE

+Clyde Martin -
Bishop of St.George's-in-Grenada

Greet a fellow Catholic who lives on your street, in your area. Invite two or three of your fellow Catholics to Mass or some other Church function every week, especially those who have lapsed. When you meet them at a funeral, remember to greet them. Take note and pray for them before the day is through. The communion which we share at Mass is not just a piece of consecrated bread. It is a network of relationship with God, one another and every thing that is; this relationship is meant to animate our whole life. **WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

We must **LIVE** that both inside and outside the building we call **CHURCH**. The building means little unless the relationships are alive and active, transforming hearts and communities.

This year 2019 I invite all those who can, especially from 16 to 60 years of age, to **FAST** for Lent, especially on Fridays, but not only on Fridays. Our Catholic practice of fasting means that we have only one full meal during the day, avoiding solid food, preferably from 6:00a.m. to 6:00p.m. Any pangs of hunger or longing for food should be turned into a prayer. Any money saved should be given to the poor. I encourage the parishes to have fasting envelopes in which the money saved by the denial of food is given to a charity to be determined by the parish.

Most important of all, I invite you to join me in turning our fasting into **PRAYER FOR THE NATION AND OUR LEADERS.**

It is not easy to guide a nation, especially when one is committed to building a genuine democracy. The temptations to pride, greed and arrogance are very great. The very adulation of the people can become a noose around our necks which slowly destroys our true soul. Join me every Friday in prayer and fasting for all our leaders in every sector of national life. May we all be trustworthy, honest and creative, beyond our self-interest and our fears, in the best interests of Grenada, according to God's Will.

REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL CLERGY MEETING 2019 *(Msgr. William John-Lewis)*

The 35th Annual Meeting of the Association of Diocesan Clergy of the Province of Castries was convened at the Benedictine Monastery at Coubaril, St. Lucia from February 10 -15, 2019.

The first official event of the meeting was the Opening Mass which was held at Our Lady of Fatima Church in La Clery. In the absence of the Metropolitan Archbishop Robert Rivas, Bishop Gabriel Malzaire, Bishop of Roseau and President of the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) presided at this important ceremony marking the beginning of the meeting. In his homily, His Lordship, using the Scriptures of the day as a point of departure, reflected on the challenges of evangelization in today's world. Underscoring the theme of this year's meeting, he emphasized the importance of taking advantage of all the new technology available, having the Bible in one hand and the tablet, ipad, or iphone in the next, in our preparation for spreading the Good News.

The topic for study at this year's meeting was the Pastoral Letter on Communications from the bishops of the AEC, entitled, "New Ways of Being Church in a Digital Milieu." The whole of Tuesday was dedicated to the study and application of the pastoral letter. Msgr. Michel Francis, the Chairman of the Association called the meeting to order. Msgr. William John-Lewis from the Diocese of Roseau made a presentation highlighting the relevance of the document in the work of evangelization. He then invited the participants to break into their respective dioceses to begin working on the Integrated Pastoral Communications Plan (IPCP) that is suggested as the ultimate goal of the document, namely, that each diocese devise an IPCP which would be used in forming a similar plan for the AEC. In the afternoon session, media experts were invited to share on the importance of the use of radio, and certain aspects of social media in implementing the pastoral letter.

The next day was dedicated to school visits. The promotion of vocations remains an important activity for this meeting. This is done by visiting the primary and secondary schools. While the clergy share their own vocation story, they engage their listeners in reflecting on the possibility that God might be calling them to the priesthood, diaconate or consecrated life. On Tuesday and Wednesday, Mass was celebrated in the parishes of Bexon and St. Benedict respectively.

Over the past few years, a fund-raising concert, with performances mainly from the Clergy, has become an important aspect of this meeting. This year, the concert, coincided with Valentine's Day. The theme for that night was "love". The Clergy and other invited guest artistes regaled the capacity crowd at St. Joseph's Convent Auditorium with love songs, jokes and dance performances. Prior to the beginning of the concert, patrons were treated to light refreshments and were given the opportunity to have their pictures taken to memorialize the occasion. Among those honoured that night were Mr. and Mrs. Michael Aubertine.

At the business session held on Thursday morning, Msgr. John-Lewis, the zonal Representative of the Catholic Biblical Federation, informed the meeting that the Biblical Federation was promoting 2020 as the Year of the Word of God, that is, from the First Sunday of Advent 2019 to the Feast of St. Jerome, 30th September 2020. In this regard he suggested that the Association consider the Word of God as the theme of next year's meeting.

The last day of the meeting included a tour of the island, the highlights being the town of Soufriere with a visit to the Fond Doux Resort, a former Cocoa Plantation, for lunch, followed by a trek up the hill of Tet Paul with spectacular views of the imposing Pitons.

The next meeting is carded for April 19th – 25th 2020 in the Diocese of St. John's – Basseterre.

Lent:

Getting ready for Jesus' death and resurrection

Lent is the special time when we prepare for the celebration of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. We get our souls ready by doing prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Prayer is talking with God. We need to talk with God even more than we need to talk to our family and friends. Lent is a good time to get into a habit of talking with God every day.

Fasting is eating less than you normally would. It's a good idea to give up a little something you like for Lent. Giving things up helps us remember we need God, not just food.

Almsgiving means giving to those who are in need. It helps us to be generous like God. Maybe you have a bit of money you can give to the poor or to the Church.

Answers to True or False: 1. true. 2. false. 3. false. 4. true. 5. false. 6. true. 7. false.

Jesus spent 40 days in the desert preparing for His work. During Lent we spend 40 days getting ready to celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection.

Can you find your way into the desert to be with Jesus?

Jesus Was Tempted by the Devil: True or False?

How well do you know the story from today's Gospel reading?

1. Jesus went to the desert and didn't eat anything for 40 days. True or False?
2. Jesus was never tempted by the devil. True or False?
3. Jesus wasn't hungry, even after 40 days with no food. True or False?
4. The devil said that all the kingdoms of the world belonged to him. True or False?
5. Jesus said that He would only worship the devil if he gave Him all the power first. True or False?
6. Jesus wouldn't throw Himself off the Temple because He said it was "putting God to the test." True or False?
7. The devil kept bothering Jesus, even when he ran out of things to tempt him about. True or False?

Editorial

One of the sacrifices that is quite apt for this Lenten season, is time – that is time we spend on our own affairs. In this modern era, where it is normal to be forever busy, it is fitting that we take time to meditate, to appreciate nature and to give some of this precious time to others.

When we are not imprisoned by the routine activities that we believe we must do, we are free to reflect more, to meditate – in doing so we grow in mental fortitude, we develop spiritually and we become better equipped to build meaningful relationships. When we take time to commune with nature – God's own gift to us, we are energised.

In giving time to others, we continue to contribute not only to the welfare of our community but we also experience a sense of well-being. In that way everyone benefits. This Lenten journey, if used wisely, can be a journey in self-discovery, to the extent that by Easter we are in full bloom, bursting to "Live Church, Build Community and Serve Country".

We appeal to you across the Diocese to submit items for publication in Catholic Focus to
Email: catholicfocusgd@gmail.com

Dialogue With The Bishop

Caris Annisha Degannes
St. Rose of Lima – Duquesne, St. Mark

"Where two or three are gathered in my name there I am with them" (Matthew 18:20) and "Church is not a building but the people", are two sayings that became living realities on Sunday 17th February, as young adults from across the diocese of St. George's-in-Grenada, converged at Wildwood's Park to converse with the His Lordship Bishop Clyde Martin Harvey.

Behold: clear, cloudless skies with the sun starring in all its grandeur, sending forth its radiant rays to brighten the day. Feel: the soothing Grenadian breeze as it danced across the park bringing relief to sweaty brows. See: the mesmerizing water compelling you to come in, leave everything behind and take a dip. Each element working in tandem to create the perfect backdrop for the young adults' conversation with the bishop.

Shouts of joy and praise filled the air as we started the day's proceedings. This was then followed by group discussion. Three questions were put forward: - (1) where we are as young adults, (2) what do we want from the church and (3) what are we willing to give to the church. Interestingly, despite the fact that we all represented different parishes, the answers to the questions proved that as young adults we have similar needs, similar struggles, similar hopes and we are aware of the sacrifices we need to make, if we are to continue building church, community and country. The young adults concede that while they are frustrated, concerned about the lack of employment, battle with medical issues, as well as wondering about choosing the right spouse and discerning God's plan for their lives, they are filled with a sense of hope because their trust lies in a God of possibilities.

The responses to the second question covered the spiritual, social, financial and emotional aspects of an individual. One need, however, that was prevalent among the groups was a cry for professional help in the form of counselling. Young adults also pleaded for open and honest conversation about the various issues that are bombarding the Roman Catholic Church. They similarly committed themselves to use the gifts with which they have been blessed, to 'give back to the church'. The day culminated with an appetizing lunch, lively music, fellowship and a swim in the tranquil waters of BBC Beach.

I encourage the adults in the various Mass centres throughout the Diocese to inspire the youth and young adults to get involved in the various activities and to support their various ventures, to correct them with love and continue to keep the future of the Roman Catholic Church in Grenada in your daily prayers.

Cathedral Men On The Move

By Lawrence Duncan

Visit to Saint Martin De Porres Church with Bishop Clyde Martin Harvey

As a result of the dwindling participation of men in the life of the church, Bishop Vincent Darius OP (deceased) and Fr. Mark Haynes saw the need for a men's organization in the Cathedral Parish. On March 25, 2006, Bishop Darius met with men of the parish and the seed was planted for the formation of "Cathedral Men in the Footsteps of Christ" (CMFC). The group was launched officially, on November 18, 2007 at the Cathedral Consultation.

CMFC has as its Mission "To help in the general upliftment of all men of the Cathedral Parish." This mission continues to be challenging due to the lack of participation of men in Church life, although based on the last the 2011 national population census, Catholic men numbered 19,099 compared to 18,841 women. We continue to see dwindling numbers of men participating in men's events like the Eucharistic Passover for Men, which incidentally will be held on the 15th and 16th June this year.

On Sunday February 10, 17 members of CMFC accompanied by members of their families journeyed to St. Peter's Church, Gouyave to worship and socialize with the men there; this was a very spirit filled and entertaining event.

Our 10th Annual Retreat which was postponed from November, 2018 was held on the February 23, 2019, under the theme "Each of you has received a special grace, so…. put yourself in the service of others," (1 Peter 4:10). The morning presenter was Bishop Clyde Martin Harvey who was very inspiring and challenged us with the question "what does it mean to be a real man?" Bishop Harvey used real life situations and personal experiences in his discourse, and challenged us to be better men, to remember – Jesus is first, others second and self-third. The second presenter for the day was Deacon Gabriel Obi Osang who reminded us that we either use our graces (gifts) or lose them. The recommendations from the day's activities were: (1) increased evangelization (2) a mentorship programme for young boys in the parishes and (3) the lives we live must be an example to the youth. The retreat concluded with Benediction.

Making notes at 10th Annual Retreat

On the Sunday following the retreat, CMFC visited the Mental Home, where we prayed and sang with the residents. What was striking was the number of the residents who are Catholics, who could relate to the prayers and hymns from the Praise the Lord. One particular young man shared with us about his life as an altar server and as a student at NEWLO.

Our visit to the Mental Home told us that there is a call for us as church to become more active – let us build communities. People are looking for new life and renewed hope. We are the ones to give that hope and new life.

When God calls saying… where are you? Can we reply saying that we are in the highways and by-ways doing His will? That answer is only within us.

Church - let us reach out and touch someone's life.

Lenten Recipe:
Grilled Red Snapper with a Pepper and Caper Salsa

(Taken from the Caribbean Journal)

This recipe was submitted by the Hyatt Regency Trinidad's executive chef Fernando Franco and his team, who are members of the 2016 'Caribbean National Team of the Year' at Taste of the Caribbean in Miami.

Ingredients:

8 oz. red snapper filet
2 medium red bell peppers
3 oz. capers (rinsed and drained)
2 cups arugula
1 oz. minced garlic
1 oz. cilantro
3 tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp. kosher salt
1 tsp. freshly ground pepper

Method:

Salsa

Heat pan over medium-high heat and grill the peppers on all sides until charred

Place the charred peppers in a bowl with 1 tablespoon of water and cover the bowl with plastic wrap for 30 minutes.

Remove the charred skin, core and seeds from the peppers.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the olive oil, capers and cilantro; add the peppers.

Season the salsa with salt and pepper to taste and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Snapper

Brush both sides of the snapper with olive oil and season evenly with salt and pepper.

Once the grill is hot, place the filet directly on the grill and cook about 3 ½ minutes on each side.

Arrange the fish on a dinner plate and top with salsa and arugula leaves.

Enjoy!

VACCINES:
Making Healthy Adults

By Dr. Sonia Nixon

Non Communicable Chronic Diseases, or NCDs, have been the most frequently discussed health topic in Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique in recent times. The daily discourse raises concerns about the proliferation of diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes, and their potential to become complicated, causing heart attacks, blindness, loss of limbs and kidney failure, among other things. Moreover, our aging population is mostly affected by NCDs.

A male baby born in Grenada in 2019 is expected to live for 72 years and a female for 75 years, if all goes well. This was not always the case. Prior to the advent of vaccines, many children died before the age of five as a result of transmissible illnesses so fewer people were able to achieve their life expectancy. Infectious illnesses like measles, mumps, rubella or German measles, whooping cough, tetanus and polio were rampant and claimed the lives and futures of children. Countless families can attest to loss of their young relatives because of diseases over which they had no opportunity to prevent, nor treat. Besides, many families lived in poverty and the young ones were malnourished, with little chances of combating these rabid diseases which spread quickly throughout communities taking defenseless victims.

With the development, availability and acceptance of vaccines globally, fewer people contract those diseases that are now considered preventable. There are very few people who cannot accept vaccines and are protected by "herd immunity" that results when a very large portion of the population accepts them. In the Caribbean, for example, there are no reported cases of measles that originated here in 30 years. This results from having achieved over 95% immunization which is required to ensure protection. The regional and local health authorities struggle daily to ensure that all children (and adults) remain free of risk for the vaccine-preventable communicable diseases that we know. Families are encouraged to ensure that all children are vaccinated according to the schedule outlined by the World Health Organisation (WHO). This process starts at birth and continues systematically until the child is due to enter school. Children are not accepted in school, at any stage, if vaccines are incomplete, unless there is an allowed exception.

Unfortunately, in recent years, the Anti-Vaxx movement has waged a bitter, misleading and unfortunate campaign against the WHO vaccine programme. Their unfounded and misdirected myths have been repeatedly scientifically dispelled. The vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), has been the most targeted as the Anti-Vaxx movement blamed it as a cause for autism in children. A recent CNN report speaks of a new independent research of over 650, 000 vaccinated children showing no evidence of a relationship between MMR and autism. This movement arose in a period where communities were free of diseases because our children participated in a reliable and systematic schedule of immunizations. Current generations have been spared the tragedy of losing three of four children from the eight who may have been born into a family. Fortunately, our children have not experienced recently the lifelong physical disability caused by polio, as occurred in Nigeria a few years ago when large groups refused that vaccine. The authorities were sent scurrying to immunize thousands of children to prevent imminent infections. Some countries in Europe, Venezuela, Brazil, and even the city Brooklyn in New York where many of our friends and relatives live, are presently experiencing widespread epidemics of measles. Sadly, where parents have refused to vaccinate, or in socially and economically challenged public health situations, children have become the unfortunate victims of these easily preventable conditions. Measles in not a simple rash with fever and symptoms of the common cold, but a serious and invasive viral illness that causes damage to the brain, lungs, eyes to otherwise defenseless and vulnerable young individuals often resulting is severe suffering, long term disability and premature death.

The Ministry of Health in Grenada provides free, to all citizens, a programme of immunization through effective and safe vaccines that guard against these potentially disabling and fatal, but otherwise completely preventative diseases. Those against the Hepatitis B and Human Papilloma Viruses will protect from cancers and are included in the 10 vaccines within the Extended Programme of Immunization. People may seek their vaccines at their health centres.

We owe it to our children to give them an opportunity to achieve their fullest potential by ensuring a safe, disease free and happy journey throughout childhood, and the possibility of achieving their life expectancy, hopefully free from NCDs too.

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AEC Mission Congress 2019

Secretary of the AEC - Lauren Branker

For the past six months, the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) Mission Congress 2019 planning team, have been meeting to strategize and implement plans to ensure that from the 18th – 22nd September, the AEC would have the opportunity to participate in its first Mission Congress! The general aim of this first AEC Missionary Congress is to give an important impulse to the process of strengthening Church life throughout the AEC Dioceses in accordance with Pope Francis' vision of an active Church that powerfully witnesses to Christ and one that has a missionary zeal.

The AEC Mission Congress 2019 will be hosted in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 18th – 22nd September, 2019. The first event is a Children's Rally on the 18th September, 2019. Over 3000 students from primary and secondary schools are expected to attend. Teachers are also expected to participate in this rally as well. On the Friday and Saturday, core workshops will be hosted for approximately 500 persons. On the last day, Sunday 22nd September, 2019, the grand event, will be held at the Savannah. On this day, there will be concluding workshops and Mass. People from every parish, community and town are invited to witness the glory of Mission! All are invited! Come and be a part of this Missionary movement!

If you are interested in volunteering your time, talent and/or treasure we ask you to visit our website pmsantilles.org or send us an email at aecmissioncongress@gmail.com. Please continue to prayer for us as we journey towards the first ever AEC Mission Congress 2019!

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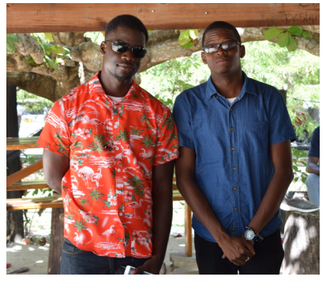
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