



Archdiocese of Castries

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Press Release

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The Mission of the Church

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The Mission of Jesus Christ

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Holy Scriptures, from the Old to the New Testament, tell us in so many ways that Jesus Christ was sent by the Father for one single purpose, that is, to save humanity from the clutches of evil, sin, and destruction. Here I quote the text of the Gospel of John in which we are reminded that: *“God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world not to condemn the world but so that thorough Him the world might be saved” (Jn 3:16-17)*. Saint Paul in his turn reminds us that: *“what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners” (Rom 5:8)*. With these texts and many others, we are clear about Christ’s mission to the world.

Therefore, the Church which He founded has the very same mission, that is, to save humanity through her teaching, and her manner of life. In other words, it is the function of the Church to assist its faithful followers to eliminate sin in their lives in all its forms and manifestations.

According to Saint Paul, the Church, the Body of Christ, embraces all people, seeking to bring them to *communion* with Christ its head. Sin remains the only element that keeps that human person from that *communion* with the Church and therefore, with Christ.

Of necessity, the Church must remain open to everyone and anyone who genuinely wants to come to Christ and must not be seen to condone any action which the Holy Scriptures teach to be sinful. Again, we reiterate, the role of the Church is to help the faithful on their journey to salvation, not to justify or condone human sinfulness in any of its forms.

On December 18, 2023, the *Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith* published a Declaration entitled “*Fiducia Supplicans*” on the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings. This declaration has created unprecedented attention by media platforms worldwide, creating untold confusion in the minds of believers, to the point that on January 04, 2024, the same Dicastery published another document seeking to clarify the application of the *Declaration*. However, the confusion continues.

Truthfully, the “*Declaration* remains firm on the traditional doctrine of the Church about marriage, not allowing any type of liturgical rite or blessing similar to a liturgical rite that can create confusion”. However, it recommends a certain openness for the Church to grant non-liturgical blessings to persons in irregular unions, including same-sex unions.

The January 04, 2024, explanatory document states that “*each local Bishop, by virtue of his own ministry, always has the power of discernment in loco (on location), that is, in that concrete place that he knows better than others precisely because it is his own flock.* Therefore, considering the great confusion created in the minds of the faithful in the *Archdiocese of Castries* and the *Diocese of Roseau*, as head of those two ecclesiastical territories, I hereby state the following:

1. The Gospels present Jesus as mercy *par excellence*. Whenever He hobnobbed with prostitutes, tax-collectors, and sinners, He was always on mission and therefore brought many to conversion. Jesus never condoned any sinful condition, but rather showed compassion to the sinner and told them “*Go and sin no more.*”
2. The teaching of the Church on marriage between one man and one woman is unchangeable. This truth is deeply ingrained in the tenets of Holy Scripture, generally accepted in the psyche and practice of our Caribbean people and endorsed by our country’s Constitution.
3. Rooted in the Sacred Scriptures, the Church teaches that marriage is the union for life of one man and one woman, that is open to life and so consequently the Church cannot approve, sanction, or bless any irregular marital union, such as common law unions, adulterous unions, polygamous unions, or same sex unions.

4. The Declaration makes the important point that a blessing from the Church must have an *ascending value*; meaning that it must tend toward the conversion of those who seek it. Therefore, the Church will not endorse any one who seeks its blessing for selfish and inordinate ends, such as the acceptance of sinful life situations.

5. No clergyman in the *Archdiocese of Castries* or the *Diocese of Roseau*, for which I am responsible, is permitted to grant blessings upon any sinful union. And finally,

6. The Church remains open, as its mission dictates, to anyone of any colour, creed, class, persuasion, or orientation, who wishes to be converted to Christ for the salvation of his or her soul. As such, we will bless anyone who sincerely ask the Church for a blessing on their journey to God. For God's sun shines on good and bad alike and his rain falls on the just and unjust alike as Jesus tells us in the Gospel of Matthew 5:45.

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+Most Reverend Gabriel Malzaire
Archbishop of Castries,
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