

put all our talents and giftedness at the service of answering the call to unity and becoming builders of unity.

Once more I say: THANK YOU.

Your Archbishop



+Robert Rivas, O.P.  
Archbishop of Castries ;





*Graphics: Fr. Savaria Picchai John Wilson, MSFS*

I wish to thank the Vicars and all the VICARIATES for the role they played in the Assembly. I also wish to thank you, the Delegates, Clergy, Religious and Laity, for your commitment, stewardship, love for the Church and your participation in the four days of Assembly 2020. I further wish to thank all the working Committees of the Assembly with their coordinators for their hard work and initiatives in finding common ground and grasping the bigger picture for the progress and revitalization of the Church in Saint Lucia. May all our combined efforts bear fruit that will last.

I am glad that I appointed Deacon David Popo to be the overall coordinator of the Assembly. His gifts, experience, skills and commitment qualified him for that role. Thirty years ago I discovered his gifts and talents when he worked with me for a brief period in St. Vincent and it's a joy working with him now as a Deacon. For Synod 2008/2009, Msgr. Anthony and his team sparked, For the Assembly 2020, Deacon David and his team sparked. How much we need those sparks to get the fire going! When our shepherds are on fire the 'sheep' feel the heat!

The challenge ahead is to keep the flame alive; to implement our resolutions and put our hearts into working together to build unity guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, our source of unity. We already have our Stewardship Bus on the road and now we have our Unity Boat on the sea. Let's

call to unity (cf. Ephesians 4:3-5). They stayed with us for four hours as the Assembly began to unravel its theme: One Body, One Spirit, One Hope, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.

Bishop Gabriel Malzairé of Roseau, Dominica, set the stage for the days to follow with his reflection on the topic: How do we build unity in the Church out of our experiences of brokenness and loss? His ten practical steps for building unity will continue to echo for a long time throughout the Church in Saint Lucia and beyond. Yes, we can grow from our brokenness and loss but we must find ways of working together and not as lone-rangers or in Silos.

Looking back on the days of the Assembly, the year of planning, the rich Presentations and Food for Thought contributions; the courage to launch into the deep with a Virtual Assembly, the role of the Holy Spirit throughout the process, the unwillingness to accept defeat or to give up when it would have been the easier course to take, the team spirit at the core, the participation and commitment of those who put their heart in it; all these things came together and ignited a flame during the Assembly days that made it the Special Assembly it turned out to be. What an amazing experience of Church and, indeed, a kairos moment for stepping out in faith and new possibilities! Together we can overcome obstacles, heal brokenness and build unity.

**POST ASSEMBLY 2020 PASTORAL LETTER  
NUMBER ONE  
A VIRTUAL ARCHDIOCESAN ASSEMBLY**



November 18, 2020

Dear Delegates: Clergy, Religious and Laity,

On November 30, 2019, I announced the plan for an Archdiocesan Assembly in May 2020 to culminate with the Solemnity of Pentecost, May 28-31. Unfortunately the Covid-19 pandemic intervened and the Assembly in May had to be cancelled but, as Church, we did not give up. We refused to be defeated. We needed to find new ways of gathering and meeting as Church. The Assembly Planning Committee decided to have a Virtual Assembly. The Church was about to take a major leap forward into the digital milieu.

With Live-streaming of Masses, Clergy and Parish Zoom Meetings and more and more efforts at using virtual platforms throughout the Archdiocese, the Church refused to allow the Coronavirus to rob it of its encounters, meetings and ways of keeping in touch with its members in the midst of a pandemic. The Church began to reach into the homes of families and many who were abandoned before because they could not “go to Church”. The domestic Church began to benefit from this new visitation and encounter. The Church had reached the home.

One of the challenges of Assembly 2020 coming from the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) was to give a more forward looking place to communications as a key component in all Arch/Diocesan Pastoral Planning. Dayton University offered E-Seminars on the AEC Pastoral Letter: New ways of Being Church in a Digital Milieu. I led by example and participated in one of the E-Seminars with Bishop Gabriel Malzaire and a representative group of Clergy and Laity from the Province of Castries. This further clarified the vision for me of my responsibility in taking the Church forward in Saint Lucia in the age of social media and the new digital technologies.

We were challenged to move the Church from being a spectator to being an active and significant presence in the prevailing digital culture. We were made aware of the new virtual frontiers where both young and old were spending most of their time. This is now considered missionary territory and the Missionary Church would need to make its voice heard there and minister to its people in real time. Clearly we were being prepared for what was going to become the new normal. A fresh breath of life was blowing in the Church at a local and regional level.

The COVID-19 pandemic precipitated our plan by plunging us into the deep. There was no time to wait. The urgency to communicate and keep in touch with the Church on lockdown led to an outburst of creativity and new ways of thinking as Church. We slipped into the digital milieu out of necessity but also because the seeds were already

being planted for moving in that direction. The impact of what had taken place over the past nine months laid the ground work for our first ever Archdiocesan Virtual Assembly which has turned out to be a story of courage and hope.

Indeed, we may be the first Archdiocese in the AEC to have accomplished the feat of a Virtual Assembly that lasted four days using updated, modern technology, transmitting on Zoom Platforms from four Vicariate Centres according to the four VICARIATES of the Archdiocese, with quality production and transmission throughout the four days which culminated with a Pontifical Mass at the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. Our technical team under the direction of Mr. Ronald Norville, the Manager of CTBS, must be commended for their dedication and their dedication and excellent work. There is no turning back. The need to strengthen the capacity for communication, rooted in communion and collaboration, at all levels of Church ministries, must continue full steam ahead. I wish to commend the lay initiative of the producers of the Sunday TV Programme, Moving Mountains and the new look /faith Alive Sunday TV Programme of CTBS.

The Assembly was made up of approximately one hundred and fifty delegates, Clergy, Religious and Laity, from throughout the Archdiocese. A unique aspect of this Virtual Assembly was its opening: apart from the delegates, over eight hundred persons from the Caribbean and around the world joined the Church in Saint Lucia as it began its journey of building unity through answering the