



**A STATEMENT FROM THE ANTILLES EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE**  
**On the Declarations, “Fiducia Supplicans”**  
**(On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings)**

Since the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith released the Declaration “On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings” on December 18, 2023, we have seen varying media interpretations and focuses. While the declaration explicitly affirms the Church’s traditional understanding of marriage, it allows pastors to bless people who freely ask for a blessing.

The guiding principle of the declaration is that blessings are grounded in the incarnation, Jesus Christ, who is “a blessing that has saved us all.” The declaration distinguishes between ritual blessings and non-ritual blessings. A ritual blessing requires that what is blessed be “conformed to God’s will”, while non-ritualized or spontaneous blessings are simply gestures that “provide an effective means of increasing trust in God” by the person who asks. Consequently, the declaration does not allow a ritual blessing to be given to those in irregular unions or same-sex unions but rather a non-ritual or spontaneous blessing because it calls forth God’s grace to help those who receive it to live according to God’s will and enable them to live whatever is good, true, and beautiful in their lives.

As the declaration states, “The world needs blessings, and we can give and receive blessings.” Therefore, the Church’s mission is to accompany and journey with humanity, bearing in mind Jesus’ teaching that God “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45).

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**Most Reverend Charles Jason Gordon**, President of the Antilles Episcopal Conference