



## **ANTILLES EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE**

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## **LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE ANTILLES on the Closing of Jubilee 2025**

### **“The Journey Continues - Walking Together in Faith and Struggle”**

As the Church in the Antilles joins the universal Church in closing the Jubilee Year 2025, we pause in gratitude to reflect on the fruits and graces that have quietly taken root among us. The Jubilee theme - *“Hope does not disappoint”* (Rom 5:5) - has not been merely a motto, but a lived experience within our dioceses. In a world marked by uncertainty, fragmentation, and rapid change, the Jubilee has reminded us that Christian hope is not a denial of suffering, but trust in God's faithful love that accompanies history and transforms it from within.

This grace of hope has strengthened our courage to face the shadows - within ourselves, within our Church, and within our Caribbean societies - not with fear, but with trust. It has renewed our confidence that even amid fragility and struggle, God is at work, patiently drawing new life from what appears broken or unfinished.

### **Jubilee and the Synodal Journey**

The Jubilee Year has unfolded alongside the Church's ongoing synodal journey, revealing how deeply hope and synodality are linked. To walk as a synodal Church requires patience, humility, attentiveness, and perseverance. It calls us to listen deeply, to allow ourselves to be challenged, and to remain open to conversion. These are precisely the graces the Jubilee has awakened among us.

As we continue to grow into a synodal Church, the Jubilee has invited us to loosen our grip on old securities and to trust that Christ walks with us on the road, especially when the way forward is unclear. Hope steadies us in moments of uncertainty; it opens our hearts to one another and sustains us as we learn to listen, discern, and walk together as the People of God.

### **GRACES OF THE JUBILEE YEAR:**

#### **Grace to enter Darkness – trusting God together**

*“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (Jn 1:5)*

One of the Jubilee's deepest graces has been the courage to name darkness honestly: experiences of confusion, failure, fear, and brokenness – personal and ecclesial. Rather than fleeing these moments, we are invited to remain with them in faith. Faith teaches us that darkness is not empty or meaningless. Like the Steelpan - born from painful struggles and the oil drums - or **Reggae and Calypso** - born from poverty and resistance - or **Revival music** - born from the pain sung into hope, our brokenness can become places where grace enters, and beauty is revealed. Synodality cannot grow where darkness is denied. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, who first spoke of disappointment before recognising the Risen Lord, we learn that Christ meets us precisely on the road of struggle. When embraced with trust, darkness becomes the space where compassion, humility, and communion are formed.

### **Grace of Conversion – from “I” to “We”**

*“Be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” (Rom 12:2)*

The Jubilee has renewed the call for conversion of hearts, minds and structures. This conversion invites us to let go of habits and assumptions that do not serve the Gospel and to open ourselves to a new experience of the Church, where Bishops, clergy, religious, and laity are all called to ongoing conversion of heart and mind. This grace calls us from self-centeredness towards community discernment, from solitary decision-making to communion. Conversion will make demands on us, but it leads us from fear to freedom. Only a Church that is willing to be converted can truly walk together. This means humility, vulnerability, and a willingness to shift from “I” to “we,” listening more deeply and accompanying more patiently.

### **Grace of Responsibility**

*“I will give you shepherds after my own heart” (Jer 3:5)*

The Jubilee has heightened our sense of responsibility. While synodality is often spoken of with enthusiasm, it must be demonstrated through intentional leadership. This grace calls on all those in leadership roles to model discernment, humility, and collaboration; to commit and invest in formation; and to ensure that synodal processes are stable and credible. Prophetic witness is sustained not just by words but by consistent, accountable leadership rooted in prayer.

### **Grace of Communion for Mission – Love that sends**

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship” (Acts 2:42)*

Despite the challenges, the Jubilee has allowed us to taste the fruits of synodality: deeper communion, renewed fraternity, and shared joy. Where clergy, religious, and laity engage in genuine listening and discernment, relationships deepen, and new vitality emerges. We are reminded that the bedrock of synodality is love - a love that binds us together and sends us outward in mission.

### **Grace of Hope – Courage to continue**

*“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.” (Is 40:31)*

Above all, the Jubilee has renewed our hope – hope that does not disappoint because it is anchored in a trust in God's faithful love. This hope gives us the strength and courage to persevere in the midst of challenges. As the Jubilee Year closes, this grace carries us forward.

Synodality is not a temporary initiative but a way of life the Spirit is forming within us. Christ remains our companion on the road. The dawn will come. **The journey continues.**

We therefore exhort each diocese of the Antilles to actively implement the fruits of the Final Document of the Synodal Assembly (2024), allowing its insights to shape pastoral priorities, leadership styles, formation programmes, and decision-making processes. We encourage regular evaluation of our synodal growth: Where are we becoming more participatory? Where do we resist conversion? How are we forming and inviting disciples to walk together?

Standing at this threshold of grace, we place our hands confidently in the hand of the Father and walk forward with renewed hope. If we do so, the Jubilee Year will not end as a memory but will bear lasting fruits in a Church that listens deeply, discerns faithfully, walks together courageously, and witnesses prophetically to the Gospel in the Caribbean and beyond.

We entrust this journey to the maternal care of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas, asking her to walk with us, that we may have the courage to follow her Son and become a self-emptying Church that relates, listens, discerns, and is fearless in bringing Good News to the poor.

**Bishops of the Antilles Episcopal Conference**

December 12, 2025

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Empress of the Americas