



ANTILLES EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE

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General Secretary: Fr. Donald Chambers

Telephone: 1 868 622-2932 Email: aecgeneralsec@gmail.com Website: aecbishops.org

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Press Release

Antilles Episcopal Conference 69th Annual Plenary Meeting Archdiocese of Kingston, Jamaica May 11 -16, 2025

On Good Shepherd Sunday, the Archdiocese of Kingston, Jamaica, proudly hosted the Opening Mass for the 69th Annual Plenary Meeting of the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) at the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity. The mass featured a profound homily delivered by Bishop Kendrick Forbes of the Diocese of Roseau, Dominica, who encouraged the congregation to recognise and listen to the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

In his address, Archbishop Gordon, President of the Conference, urged the congregation to tackle the socio-economic challenges faced by the Caribbean with visionary leadership and prophetic courage. He remarked, “We must lead not with anxiety but with vision... as a regional communion of pastors, walking together with our people, listening to the Spirit, and proclaiming that God’s love is the strongest force for change and community development.”

From May 12 to 14, a spiritual retreat commenced with Archbishop Gordon’s address setting the spiritual tone for the retreat. He utilised John 20:1-10 as a Spiritual Compass to navigate the contemporary challenges highlighted during the Opening Mass. He implored the bishops to remain attentive to the presence of the Risen Christ, fostering a spirit of communal discernment among Church leaders. Fr. Peter McIsaac, the Spiritual Director, accompanied the bishops in learning the spiritual underpinnings and mechanics of “Conversation in the Spirit” as a communal tool to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd in this “changing era.”

During the business sessions, critical discussions ensued on various matters, including the financial report of the AEC, the establishment of a Catholic Directory for the region, guidelines for the dispensing of Church properties, and the AEC Youth Formation Programme scheduled for July 2025. Additionally, the bishops deliberated on guidelines for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

A focal point of the meeting was the examination of a Pastoral Letter titled “In the Eye of the Hurricane: Living the Rhythm of the Caribbean with Faith, Solidarity, and Hope.” This document aims to provide practical guidance on disaster preparedness and response, accentuating the essential role of faith in fostering resilience and service to those affected. Furthermore, progress was made on a Pastoral Letter addressing Human Relationships and Sexuality, which is intended to serve as a vital resource for Christian leaders navigating contemporary familial and societal issues.

In alignment with the week’s theme of active listening to the Good Shepherd, a panel discussion featured contributions from Professor Anna Perkins, a laywoman and theologian; Sr. Maxine McIntosh, a religious sister; Deacon David Chambers; and Fr. Richard Brown, a parish priest. Their insights illuminated critical pastoral matters, leading to the identification of five primary areas of concern: Youth Engagement, Vocations, Digital Media, Ongoing Formation, Inculturation, and the onboarding of missionaries from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The AEC Bishops concluded the meeting with a collective prayer for Pope Leo XIV. They expressed their heartfelt wishes for the swift recovery of Most Rev. Santiago de Wit Guzman, the Nuncio who was absent due to medical surgery.

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