



The Archdiocese of Port of Spain



Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon
Highlights of the first year 2018



Transformation and Connection

Archbishop's Address



Theme: Transformation and Connection

Brothers and Sisters,

I have spent this my first year getting to know the Archdiocese and its people anew. This Report highlights the efforts of 2018, in laying the foundation for the transformations needed to ensure that the local Church responds to all that her people require.

We have come to this time in the local Church's life with no small thanks to the many who have worked in the vineyard of our Archdiocese, those who have served and ministered through the decades. Borrowing from the world of athletics, today the Church in Trinidad and Tobago must take hold of the baton it has been given by our predecessors—priests, religious and laity—and run the race before it, doing its best for the betterment of our people.

We who comprise the Church of Trinidad and Tobago today must run our leg of this race with honest dialogue, genuine collaboration and communication, sincere commitment and willing sacrifice. Nothing less will do. It is critical that this collaboration takes place between our departments, commissions and parishes. We can no longer operate within ourselves but reach out to each other in this spirit of dialogue. This gradual process has begun and will continue in the coming months and years, using the digital technology available, to break down the culture of operating in silos.

Each of us has been called and given gifts and talents by God for the building up of His Kingdom on earth, in this time, this place, this society in a volatile, uncertain and complex world. To be the best version of ourselves calls for active discernment, then taking the risk to follow our vocation in life. As disciples of Christ, we must continue as Church and as individuals reaching out to the poor, the disenfranchised, the underprivileged, those on the margins of society.

We need to welcome everyone, particularly our young people who are no longer the future Church but a faith community that cannot be alienated from the experience that is Church.

It is our young people who will lead our Church in this 21st century.

The implementation of our Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan with its three main priorities, requires concerted action and effort. Every mature member of the Church will be challenged to participate in this faith-building exercise which, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will bring about a more dynamic and effective Church.

This overview focuses on three major areas and will hopefully bear witness to the work being done in the Archdiocese to enrich the lives of Catholic faithful in Trinidad and Tobago as we move forward, building our civilisation of love.

HIGHLIGHTS



January 31—Living Water Community's Marian House celebrates 30 years of helping young men whose lives were in crisis. Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon was the main celebrant and Fr Christopher Lumsden, co-celebrant.



March 19—The new Vatican representative, His Excellency, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu is introduced to the public for the first time at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at the 50th anniversary of the episcopal ordination of the late Archbishop Anthony Pantin.

August 14—Apostolic Nuncio Fortunatus Nwachukwu imposes the pallium on Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon during Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.



September 22— 'The Pursuit of Truth @125', a short film on the history of the *Catholic News* on the occasion of its 125th anniversary, is aired in the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival, MovieTowne, Port of Spain. It was also shown at Archbishop's House, November 29.





September 28—The Second annual 'Priests Can Cook' is held at the forecourt of the Grand Stand, Queen's Park Savannah. Despite the rain, a large crowd turns out to support.



December 12—Archbishop Emeritus Joseph Harris CSSp, second from right, launches his biography *God's Will* at NALIS, Port of Spain.

December 7—Extracts from the Archives of the Irish Dominicans in Trinidad and Tobago 1895–2018 is launched at St Dominic's Pastoral Centre, Diego Martin.



December 8—Launch of the third revised edition of *Called to Serve* by Sr Marie Thérèse Rétout OP at the Holy Name Convent Chapel, as part of the 150th anniversary celebration of the Dominican Sisters.



ARCHDIOCESAN YOUTH ACTIVITIES



June 23—The Point Fortin Youth Choir leads the praise and worship at the Catholic Youth Expo.



June 23—Catholic youth carry a large wooden cross at the start of the Catholic Youth Expo at the Centre of Excellence, Macoya, Tunapuna.



June 23—His Excellency Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu and Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon sit with other invited guests at the Catholic Youth Expo.



August 25—His Excellency Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu (third from left) and Winston Garcia, Episcopal Delegate for Youth (left) with the 2018 winners of the Shepherd's Cup small-goal football tournament, Bourg Mulatresse.



June 23—Action in the final of the Shepherd's Cup between Bourg Mulatresse and Manzanilla. Bourg Mulatresse won 2-1.

Section 1



Archdiocesan Transformation Planning the way forward



OVERVIEW

At the end of the local Synod in 2009, three areas of pastoral priorities were identified: New Evangelisation; Revitalising Catholic Culture and Identity; and Regeneration of the Moral and Spiritual Values of the Society. Given the consistently decreasing numbers of practising Catholics that is both a national and worldwide trend, the local Church is in need of firstly understanding the areas of lack with a view to re-visioning and re-energising. There are two considerations before a first step to change can be made. Firstly, this could not be a top-down approach; it necessitated the involvement of all Catholics and parishes. Secondly, such major transformations cannot be made overnight.

Development of a Pastoral Plan 2019-2023

On **January 16, 2018** a meeting was convened with local clergy to discuss areas of priority in the local Church. Five areas or pillars were earlier identified by a team comprising:

1. Archbishop Jason Gordon
2. Vicar General Fr Martin Sirju
3. Fr Gerard Tang Choon O Carm
4. Rev Roy Raghunanan
5. Dr Terrence Farrell
6. Anna Maria Garcia-Brooks
7. Deborah de Rosia
8. Patricia Narayansingh
9. Anne Marie McGrath



• **February – April, 2018:** Clergy, broken up into teams of five, were given an opportunity to express the challenges in the Archdiocese in these areas of i. Clergy and Vocations; ii. Catholic Education; iii. Parish; iv. Family Life; v. Leadership in Church and Society. A statement or 'problematic' was developed on each to be shared with the parishes for feedback over three months.

• On **February 24, 2018**, Fr Martin Sirju explained the five statements in the *Catholic News* in an article titled 'Some critical issues for our dialogue—Statements exploring some of the important pastoral challenges in the Archdiocese



70 Chaguanas parishioners gather on Sunday, November 18, 2018 to discuss the Draft Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan



Small group of Chaguanas parishioners discuss 'Leadership in Church and Society'.

of Port of Spain'. Priests took the statements back to parishes for parish consultations and facilitated the discussions.

• **Thirty-three (33) priests** across **44 parishes** engaged with teams of parishioners, and approximately **1,200 parishioners** provided feedback. The information was compiled and collated and Dr Terrence Farrell summarised the information at a meeting with clergy **June 18, 2018**.

• The Archbishop's column of **August 5, 2018** in the *Catholic News*, 'Moving towards a Pastoral Plan', gave an update of some of the feedback received in each of the areas and what stage of the planning process had been reached.

In each of the areas the following were presented:

“**On Parish:** 1. The need to be more welcoming/hospitable.; 2. Better communication among and between parish ministries and parishioners; 3. Need to engage our youth.

On Families: 1. The need for fathers to play a greater role; 2. Lack of pastoral care for hurting families. 3. Lack of spirituality in the home; 4. Domestic violence; 5. Social media as a barrier to communication.

On Catholic Education: 1. Absence of a Catholic ethos in schools; 2. Non-Catholic or non-practising teachers; 3. Parish priests not present in the schools; 4. Injustice in placement of students; 5. We are not effective in recruitment and selection of practising Catholic teachers for our schools.

On Clergy and Vocations: 1. Poor image of clergy arising out of scandals; 2. Priests are tired and overworked; 3. Homilies need to be more inspiring; 4. Lack of support for vocations in a secularised society.

On Leadership in Church and Society: 1. Lack of accountability; 2. Need for a clear Church voice on national issues; 3. Role of the laity and women beyond lay ministry; 4. Conflicting views on liturgical matters; 5. Older people unwilling to relinquish positions of authority.

• **November 2018:** From the discussions which emerged at parish level, six pillars were taken again to the parishes in the Draft Pastoral Plan in order to gather suggestions on actions that can be implemented at an Archdiocesan level: i. Parish; ii. Family Life; iii. Catholic Education; iv. Leadership; v. Youth; vi. Clergy and Vocations to be incorporated into the final document. 'Youth' was added as a separate pillar as a need that had to be specifically addressed.

Aspiration statements were created for each pillar and used with guidelines, 'Objectives', for suggested actions to achieve the ideal as represented in the statements and as envisioned by the Church body. Each section of the Draft Archdiocesan Plan began with an overview of some of the challenges and inadequacies as collected from the initial parish consultations.

Aspirations



ASPIRATION FOR PARISH:

Our parishes are Christ-centred communities that continually form missionary disciples, especially among the youth, spaces of welcome and hospitality where all are initiated into the sacred mysteries and where by encountering Jesus Christ, our parishioners will be friends and defenders of the poor.

ASPIRATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

Our Catholic Schools are led by principals and teachers who are missionary disciples who are steeped in the philosophy of the Catholic education who work with parents/guardians to ensure each child achieves his/her full potential as children of God and citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and the world community through excellence in faith, academic, physical, emotional and character formation within excellent facilities.

ASPIRATION FOR CLERGY AND VOCATION:

The priests, by their life, preaching and witness, hold before the People of God their vocation to holiness, forming their people as missionary disciples through initiation into the sacred mysteries, and who are friends and defenders of the poor, calling their people to discern and live vocation, leading their parish communities to integral development and service of the whole society.

ASPIRATION FOR LEADERSHIP IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY:

The leaders of Church, clerical and lay, are co-responsible for the mission of the Church in Trinidad and Tobago, as leaders in government and business, are formed through the witness of the clergy in the principles of servant leadership.

ASPIRATION FOR FAMILY LIFE:

Each family is a domestic Church, with Christ at the centre of all activities, which provide care for the elderly and a loving and nurturing environment for the formation of children as missionary disciples who are deeply connected to a supportive parish community.

ASPIRATION FOR YOUTH:

Our young people, continually discerning their vocation and being formed as missionary disciples, live and embrace stewardship as a way of life, offering their talent and being formed as missionary disciples, through participating fully at all levels of Church while witnessing the joy of the gospel to their generation by leading transformation in Church and society.

The next stage will be the finalising of the plan and roll out to the parishes in 2019.

MEMBERS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE PASTORAL PLAN TEAM ARE:



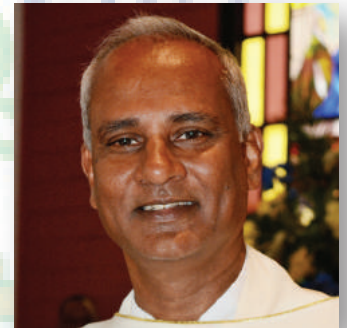
Archbishop Jason Gordon



**Dr Terrence Farrell,
Facilitator**



Gary Tagallie



**Fr Martin Sirju,
Vicar General**



Fr Jason Boatswain



Fr Matthew d'Hereaux



**Fr Gerard Tang-Choon
O Carm**



Dr Ruby Alleyne



Fr Matthew Ragbir



Sr Lystra Long

Section 2



Catholic Education

Giving our young citizens the education they deserve





May 2—Students of St Peter's RC Primary, Carenage pray during a visit by Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon.

OVERVIEW

Catholic Education is an essential dimension of the mission of the Church in Trinidad and Tobago but it remains entrenched in complex and problematic issues.

There are two interrelated questions that need to be considered:

1. What is the mission of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain in the early 21st century?
2. How do we transform our schools, especially all of our most vulnerable schools, to that mission in a reasonable time frame of 5–9 years?

There are thus four gaps that have to be addressed:

1. **A Mission gap.** A clear mission for our Church that sees Catholic Education as an essential dimension of this; and a clear mission that sees Catholic Education as essential to Church and parish life.
2. **A Governance gap.** This a question of adequate resources—human and fiscal—to create the necessary structures, policies, and support for the governance of our primary and secondary schools.
3. **A Performance gap.** Every child entering our schools must have value added to their experience within the Catholic Education system. How many of our schools and students are failing the minimum standards of education thus frustrating the life chances of these young citizens?
4. **A Transformation gap.** There is need to examine whether the capacity to transform our schools into our articulated mission, vision, philosophy, values etc, exists.



September 30—Archbishop Jason Gordon awaits the start of a procession with students of St Theresa's RC Primary outside the church's entrance.



The Parent Teacher Action Team of St Gabriel's Girls' RC Primary hosted a walk-a-thon on May 12 themed **Restoring Family Values, Reclaiming Trinidad and Tobago.**



On **July 11**, he met with students of St Mary's and Fatima Colleges.

ACTIONS

Given that our schools are tasked with not only the provision of creditable academic reach but also the shaping of the spiritual and moral characters of our young citizens, a national Catholic consensus on the state of education in our schools is necessary in formulating a path forward in terms of policy and execution. To this end, Catholic Education was one of the six pillars of the proposed Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan discussed in all parishes throughout the country.

Discussions on Catholic Education in the Draft Pastoral Plan were guided by the following objectives:

1. To develop criteria for the assessment of values and virtues at our schools
2. To define, promulgate, and measure the key elements of Catholic ethos and identity for our schools
3. To develop a plan to restructure the relationship between the Church and the Government to ensure that the Catholic ethos and identity of our schools are retained
4. To ensure that our principals and teachers are formed as missionary disciples
5. To pursue aggressively the recruitment of male teachers for our primary schools

6. To upgrade and enhance the physical environment and facilities at all Catholic schools to support the holistic development of our children

On July 13, 2018, a discussion was held, facilitated by Dr Ruby Alleyne, on the subject '**A Working Paper On Catholic Education—A Crossroad**'



November 12, with Sixth Form students from Providence Girls' Catholic School and St Francis Boys College.



May 11, meeting with Sixth Form representatives of Holy Name Convent and St Joseph's Convent Port of Spain.

Mt Lambert RC pupils and staff join Fr Jayson Grell (bottom left) as he blesses the school's 'Prayer Wall' a week before the Feast of All Souls.



Catholic Primary Schools

The Archdiocese of Port of Spain owns and manages 118 Catholic primary schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago which cater for thousands of children of all ethnicities and religions in all geographical areas of the country.

In 2016, there were 29 Catholic primary schools throughout the Archdiocese which were on special academic watch. As expected, the numbers dropped by 2018.

Dr Jennifer Sancho, CEO, United Way and Dr Tim Conway have collaborated with the Catholic Education Board of Management (CEBM) with regard to a pilot introduction of the Neuro-development of Words (NOW) programme that uses research-based methods to effectively improve the skills of students with learning disabilities or learning difficulties. Two RC schools: Mucurapo Boys' and Diego Martin Boys' participated in this programme in 2018.

Beginning in 2016 and continuing in the present, there has been a concentrated effort to improve the schools' performance

through the implementation of the Quality Assurance System. These efforts included the following:

- Use of data to identify areas of strength and weakness
- Training and coaching for Principals in the School-Based Management/School Development Planning and Implementation model
- Prompt filling of teacher vacancies
- Close monitoring of selected schools
- Coaching of principals
- Training for teachers of Standards One and Three in the teaching of mathematics

The Sugata Mitra model of child-driven education was also reviewed in partnership with Light Bulb in to transform the classroom experience. A seamless primary to secondary school with no SEA exam, in a technology-rich classroom is a revolutionary experiment.



May 2—Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon, on a visit to St Peter's RC Primary, Carenage, prays for students writing the Secondary Entrance Assessment examination.



A combined schools steelband, from Arima Boys' RC and Arima Girls' RC, performs for visiting judges during the last week of January in a bid to earn a place in the February 4 Junior Panorama finals at the Queen's Park Savannah.



March 7—Archbishop Jason Gordon addresses teachers at the Catholic Primary Schools Teachers' Day of Renewal, reminding them that teaching needed to be seen as a vocation, not profession and beseeched them to search out the pupils in need of affirmation, encouragement and love. The theme of the conference was **Missionary Discipleship—Living Your Vocation**.



May 18—The Archbishop celebrates Mass at Our Lady of Fatima RC with the Association of Principals Catholic Schools (APCS). In his homily, he reminded them that as leaders, they must accompany their charges to what God wants from them.

November 9— 66th Annual Conference Catholic Teachers' Association - Primary & Secondary Schools). Theme: **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make straight your paths"**, Proverbs: 3:5-6



Teachers greet each other at the Sign of Peace during the November 9 Mass at the CTA Convention.



November 27—CREDI President's Honours List winners Marissa Josann Celestin (from left), Chrelle Moses-Belmar, Calota Escovalez and Joreen Joseph.



May 16—Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon speaks at CREDI's Hidden Disabilities Conference.



May 16—Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon greets Dr Tim Conway at CREDI's Hidden Disabilities Conference.

FUNDING OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The **Catholic Education Board of Management (CEBM)** and the **Catholic Religious Education Development Institute (CREDI)** are intrinsic to the enhancement of education in our schools—CEBM in terms of offering a governance framework; and CREDI, in transforming both school and classroom.

The funding for both bodies is a concern that has to be tackled given the limited resources of the Archdiocese, and what is and will be required in the future of CEBM and CREDI. A self-sustaining model will also have to be developed for CREDI.

A major fundraiser for schools is the now-annual event 'Priests Can Cook'. After the success of the first 'Priests Can Cook' which generated \$256,000 in funds for primary schools on special watch, the second was held on September 28 at the forecourt of the Grand Stand, Queen's Park Savannah. The amount of \$300,000 was raised and distributed among seven primary schools.

An initial meeting was held on **November 12, 2018** with the following to discuss the possibilities for funding Catholic education:

1. George Janoura
2. Vincent Pereira
3. Derek Hudson
4. Ian Welch
5. Monty Pemberton (via Zoom)
6. Ian Benjamin
7. Jacqueline Francois
8. Pat Narayansingh
9. Charles Percy
10. Nicholas Gomez

Subsequent meetings will be held in 2019 to map out a clear model and plan with regard to this.

Funding Requirements for the Next Five (5) Years (\$ million)						
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
CREDI	5.0	5.0	5.0	3.0	3.0	2.0
CEBM	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
East Port of Spain	0.5	5.3	4.7	4.5	4.3	3.9
Pilot Project #1	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5
Total	8.5	13.6	13.0	10.8	10.6	9.4

Figure 1: Funding Requirements. **Source:** Terrence Farrell, 'Fundraising Options for Catholic Education', November 9, 2019



After the success of the first 'Priests Can Cook' which generated \$256,000 in funds for primary schools on special watch, the second was held on September 28 at the forecourt of the Grand Stand, Queen's Park Savannah. The amount of \$300,000 was raised and distributed among seven primary schools. **In this November 19 photo from left to right:** Sharon Mangroo, CEO of the Catholic Education Board of Management; Archbishop of Port of Spain Jason Gordon; Gail Coutain, Administrative Assistant, Office of the Vicars for Clergy; and Nestor Lambert, Chairman of the Priests Can Cook Committee.



September 28 —Fr Christopher Lumsden.



September 28 —Cross-section of patrons.



September 28 —Fr Gerard Tang Choon O Carm (left) and Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon.

DISCUSSIONS/MEETINGS WITH REGARD TO IMPROVEMENTS IN EDUCATION WERE HELD OVER THE YEAR 2018 WITH:

1. Anthony Garcia, Minister of Education
2. Dr Fazal Ali, Head of the Teaching Service Commission
3. Heads of Catholic School Boards
4. Dr Jennifer Sancho, CEO, United Way
5. Dr Tim Conway
6. Sharon Mangroo, CEO, CEBM
7. Dr Roland Baptiste, Chair, CEBM
8. Nicholas Gomez, Light Bulb
9. Joel Pemberton
10. Dr Fazal Ali, Head of the Teaching Service Commission,
11. Heads of Catholic School Boards
12. Catholic Teachers Association—Primary & Secondary Schools—66th Annual Conference
13. Association of Principals of Primary & Secondary Schools

Section 3



CLERGY and VOCATIONS

Growing vocations and sustaining clergy



OVERVIEW

That the number of individuals joining orders and religious congregations is dwindling has been a longstanding issue, and has as its source many prongs beginning with family life. In the archbishop's column 'The 'heart' of our Archdiocese' the following was highlighted:

"At present, eight priests are in their 80s, 18 are in their 70s and 28 are in the 60–70 age bracket. Many of our older priests make an invaluable contribution to our diocese: they assist with Masses, hear Confession and offer support when a parish priest is on leave. Within 15 years, 28 priests now in active diocesan service will retire and become 'support'. We now have over ten parishes without a resident priest. It takes seven to eight years for a man to discern his vocation and be ordained."

In 2018, we undertook an approach of reminding the faithful of the sacredness of where they were in their present status. Thus vocations were not simply in joining the priesthood or a convent, but in single life, and married/family life for example. It was recognised as well, that in the process of discernment—whether there was a calling to join religious life—the family was the first space to do so. Catholic schools are also essential in the formation of disciples.

ACTION

May 12, 2018. Eight men joined the Aspirancy Programme of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain. The Generation S team, led by Fr Matthew d'Hereaux, Vicar for Vocations and Priestly Formation, has been doing stellar work in keeping the idea of discerning vocation to religious life to the forefront through campaigns both via print (*Catholic News*) and social media. The slogan 'Dare to be Different—think and talk priesthood' challenged Catholics to consider the path to priesthood.

May 28. Fr d'Hereaux and Sr Philip Geoffroy SJC were guests on the monthly programme on *TrinityTV*, 'Family Life: A Catholic Vision', to discuss the first, upcoming vocations conference.

June 18. Generation S' Diocesan Vocations Assembly 'Vocations and You' was held at Holy Faith Convent, Couva with attendance by interested parents, youth leaders, teachers, catechists, religious, lay consecrated persons and members of parish vocation committees.

June 26. following the vocations conference Tricia Syms of the Archdiocesan Family Life Commission and Sr Philip Geoffroy SJC of Generation S' were invited to speak at St Xavier's Private School morning assembly on the 'Vocations of Marriage and Family and Religious Life'.



July and August. Organised by Parish Vocations Committees, or PVCs, a 'Vocations Cup' was passed on from family to family within parishes. Each family, while the cup was in their care, reflected together and recited the accompanying prayer that faithful open their hearts to the call of religious life.

November 11–16, Vocations Awareness Week is meant to promote the idea that vocation as a topic is the lifeblood of a local Church and must be part of the vocabulary of a local Church.

THE NORTHWESTERN MODEL OF PASTORAL CARE

The northwestern peninsula became a site of a new model of pastoral care. A team of priests and seminarians were assigned for the Sangre Grande/Coryal cluster, the Mayaro/Manzanilla/Rio Claro cluster and the Toco/Matelot cluster. Frs Raymond Francis, Simon Peter Ango and Matthew Ragbir, Rev Lindsay John, and seminarians Kwesi Alleyne, Stephan Alexander, Frantzo Simbert and Kenwyn Sylvester comprise the team for the three clusters. They would live together and work and plan together, forming then a thinktank to generate ideas on all areas of parish life.

The intention is when these seminarians become young priests, they will stay in the cluster with other fourth-year seminarians joining them, thus moving away from the traditional structure, and thinking, of one priest, one parish.



GENERATION S



June 18—Group discussion at Generation S' Diocesan Vocations Assembly 'Vocations and You' at Holy Faith Convent, Couva.



June 18—Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon speaks to participants at Generation S' Diocesan Vocations Assembly 'Vocations and You' at Holy Faith Convent, Couva.



November 9—Archbishop Gordon and Seminary Rector Msgr Allan Ventour take a photo with seminarians and pre-seminarians at the annual fundraising Dinner and Dance at the Centre of Excellence, Macoya, Tunapuna.



SEMINARY LIFE

The Seminary team is made up of Msgrs Allan Ventour, Cuthbert Alexander, Fr Arnold Francis and Fr Matthew D'Hereaux (Episcopal Vicar for Vocations & Priestly Formation), There are 9-15 seminarians, and eight at Aspirancy House.

FUNDING FOR SEMINARIANS

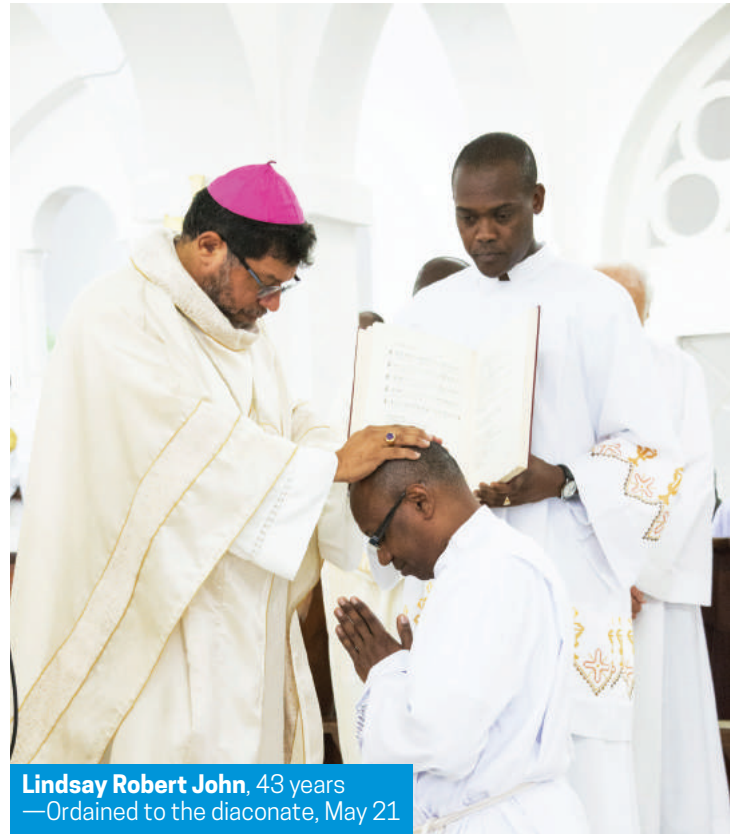
In **April 2018**, the Appeal launched a series of fundraising measures starting with the sale of prints by well-known artist Sundiata. The print depicted Mount St Benedict with the Seminary in the foreground with the peace lily. Each print is \$250 or more and sales are ongoing.

A boat cruise on the Harbour Master was done in **May, 2018** and raised approximately \$50,000.

November 25. The annual collection for the seminarians was held on the Feast of Christ the King.

ORDINATIONS, PROFESSIONS AND ANNIVERSARIES

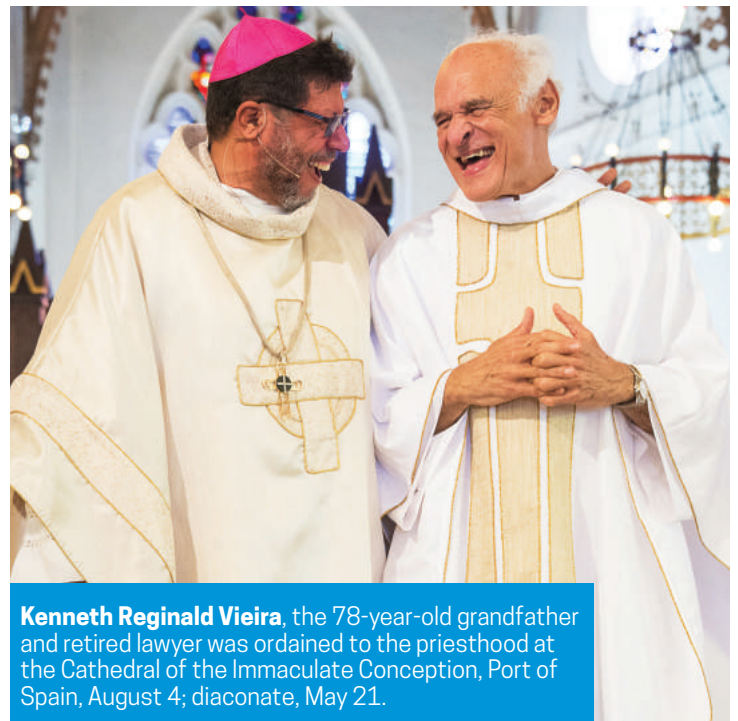
Natania Antoine of the order of St Joseph of Cluny took her first vows on September 30 (see photo above).



Lindsay Robert John, 43 years
—Ordained to the diaconate, May 21



April 29—The Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Vienna celebrate 150 years of mission on these shores.



Kenneth Reginald Vieira, the 78-year-old grandfather and retired lawyer was ordained to the priesthood at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Port of Spain, August 4; diaconate, May 21.

THE FOLLOWING PASTORAL APPOINTMENTS WERE MADE IN 2018:



Rev Lennox Toussaint
Episcopal delegate for
Administration: Pastoral Offices



Fr Martin Sirju
Vicar General, Administrator of the
Cathedral of Our Lady of Immaculate
Conception, Port of Spain



Rev Roy Raghunanan
Episcopal delegate for Administration:
Chancery Offices



Fr Matthew d'Hereaux
Episcopal Vicar for Vocations and
Priestly Formation; parish priest of
St Joseph RC Church, St Joseph



Fr Dexter Bereton CSSP
Parish priest, Erin



Fr David Khan
Episcopal Vicar/ Southern Vicariate
and parish priest of Our Lady of
Perpetual Help, San Fernando



Fr Steve Ransome
Priest in charge of the parish of
St Theresa's, Barataria



Fr Christopher Lumsden
Episcopal Vicar/Northern Vicariate



Fr Gregory Mc Lawrence CSSp
Parish priest for the parish of Holy
Trinity, Arouca



Fr Gerard Tang Choon O Carm
Parish priest Mary Immaculate Queen
of the Universe, Bourg Mulatresse



Fr Kizito Ameloko
Priest in the cluster of Santa Rosa/
Malabar



Fr Hasely King O Carm
Parish priest Holy Cross, Santa Cruz



Fr Emmanuel Dafe
Lecturer in Philosophy at the Seminary of
St John and the Uganda Martyrs/pastoral
ministry and pastoral care of the parish
communities of the Cathedral, Sacred
Heart RC and environs



Fr Brent Alexis O Carm
Parish priest St Michael's, St Joseph



Fr Martin Egesigwe
Lecturer in Philosophy at the Seminary of
ST John and the Uganda Martyrs/pastoral
ministry and pastoral care of the parish
communities of St Martin de Porres,
Gonzales and environs

MEETINGS WITH CLERGY

1. January 12 - Started a process of meeting the Priests of the Archdiocese on a one-on-one basis
2. January 29, 2018 - Met Exorcists of the Archdiocese
3. February 9, 2018 - March 5, 2018: Seminary Formation
4. February 10, 2018 - Met Permanent Deacons and their wives
5. February 10, 2018 - Mass and meeting with Seminarians
6. February 10, 2018 - Met Diocesan Priests/Province of Port of Spain
7. Met Priests of the Central Vicariate
– Episcopal Vicar - Fr Derek Anton
- Met Priests of the Southern Vicariate
– Episcopal Vicar - Fr David Khan
- Met Priests of the Suburban Vicariate
– Episcopal Vicar - Fr Gerard Tang Choon
- Met Priests of the Northern Vicariate
– Episcopal Vicar - Fr Christopher Lumsden
- Met Priests of the Tobago Vicariate
– Episcopal Vicar - Msgr Esau Joseph
- Met Clergy of the Archdiocese
8. June 1, 2018 Held a Day of Recollection with the Seminarians

Pastoral Activities



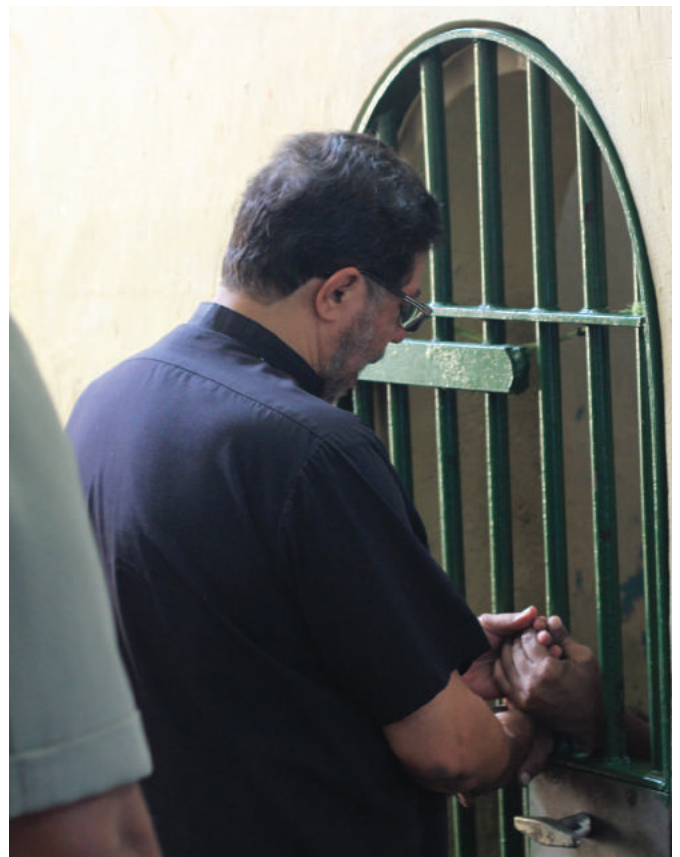
PRISON MINISTRY



Archbishop Gordon visited clients at the Maximum Security Prison, Golden Grove Prison (male and female facilities), Carrera Convict Prison, Port of Spain Prison, the Eastern Correctional Rehabilitation Centre, and the Youth Training Rehabilitation Centre, Monday, December 10 to Friday 14.



Inmates at the Eastern Correctional Rehabilitation Centre, Arima listen to Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon during his visit.



Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon prays with an inmate in the Condemned Section (Death Row) of the Port of Spain Prison. **All photos courtesy the Communications/PR Department of the Trinidad & Tobago Prison Service.**

June 15— The first-ever *Archbishop Live* occurred at Our Lady of Fatima Church, Curepe to address and respond to questions on the Church's position on LGBTQ++ rights. Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon speaks to attendees. Seated at left is Fr Matthew Ragbir.



June 9— Archbishop Jason Gordon addresses the symposium on 'Understanding and Promoting Restorative Justice in Trinidad and Tobago'. Seated at the head table from left: Prof Rose-Marie Belle Antoine, Dean, Faculty of Law; attorney Hazel Thompson-Ahye; Glenda Jennings-Smith, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National Security; and Carlos Coraspi, Assistant Commissioner of Prisons, Offender Management.



October 27—A Mass of solidarity was held for PETROTRIN employees and their families who lost their jobs following the closure of the State-owned company at St Peter's Pointe-a-Pierre.



October 27—The Archbishop attended a session on the sex abuse scandals of the Church hosted by Couples for Christ and the Archdiocesan Family Life Commission. The session allowed those present to ventilate their feelings and concerns following the revelations of the extent of sex abuses perpetrated by priests.





October 24—Archbishop Gordon conducts visits to flood victims in Greenvale, La Horquetta and Sangre Grande. Archbishop Gordon and Mayaro parish priest Fr Simon Peter Ango visit an affected area in Mayaro.



Inside St Francis of Assisi RC Church, Sangre Grande after flood waters subsided and cleanup operations began October 20-21.



A drone photo on October 17-19 of an area of Sangre Grande surrounded by flood waters.

CONFIRMATIONS



Church of the Assumption, Maraval.



Church of the Holy Spirit, Malabar, Arima.



La Divina Pastora RC Church, Siparia.



San Raphael RC Church, San Raphael.

Section 4



Financial Statements

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN

The Archdiocese of Port of Spain is headed by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Port of Spain, a Corporation Sole incorporated under the provisions of the Roman Catholic Archbishop Incorporated Ordinance No. 41 of 1960 as amended by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Port of Spain Incorporation Amendment Act No. 25 of 1963.

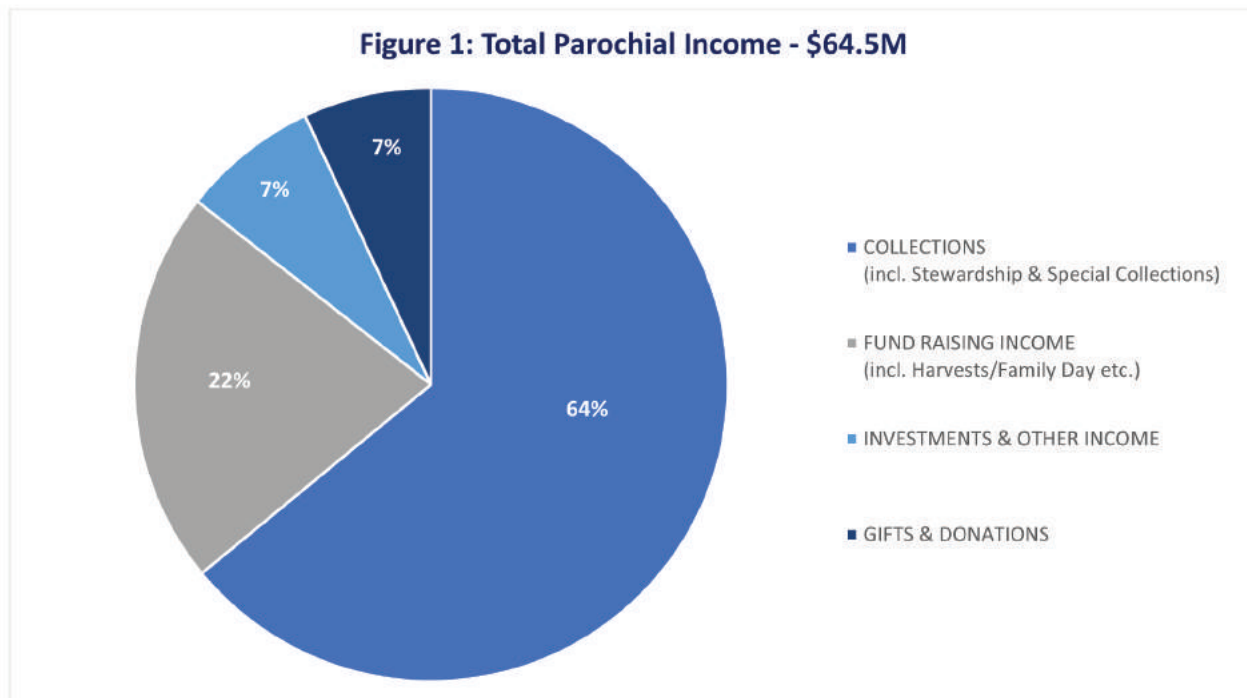
The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Port of Spain reports to the Cardinal Secretary of State or the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation "De Propaganda Fide" of the Roman Catholic Church or both of them, based in Rome, Italy.

The Head Office of the Corporation Sole also called the "Chancery" is the administrative centre for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Port of Spain (the "Archdiocese"). Its purpose is to provide support and services to the parishes, schools and other Church agencies of the Archdiocese.

2018 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The financial highlights presented within this report cover the Income and Expenditure incurred by the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain, referred to as "**Parochial Income, Figures 1-2**" and **Parochial Expenditure, Figures 3-4**" for the year ended December 31, 2018.

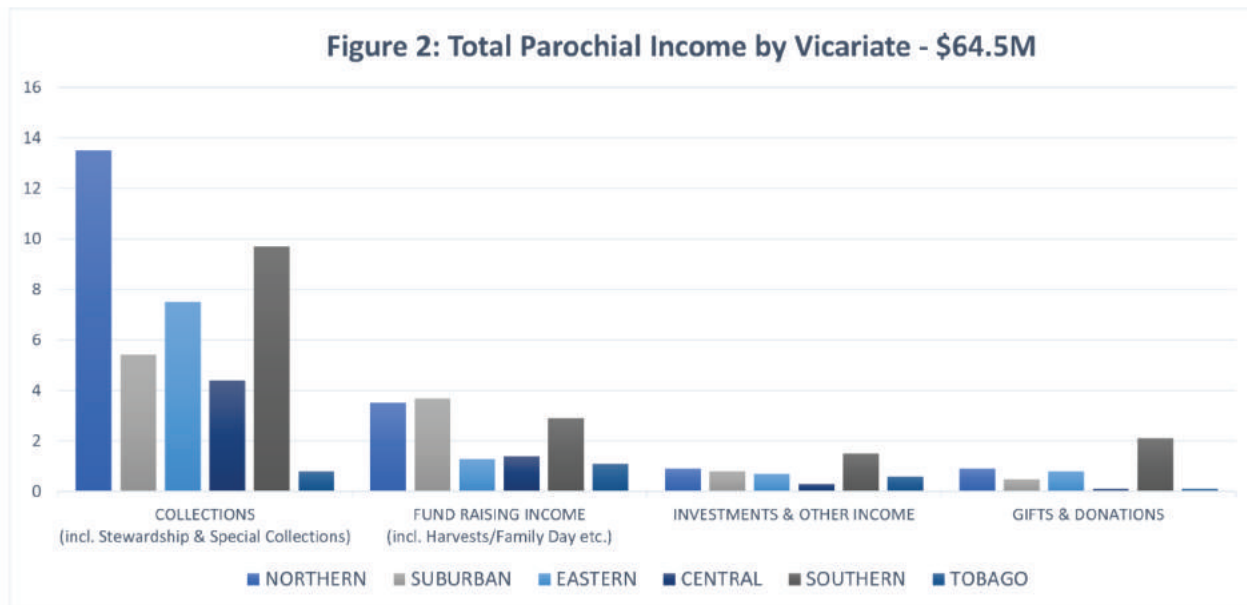
The Income and Expenditure position of the **Chancery Administrative Offices** is also reflected under **Figures 5-6** and **7-8** respectively.



Source: Office of the Chancery: Finance Administration - Parish Returns

Total Parochial Income for 2018 as shown in Figure 1, amounted to \$64.5M with 63% of the income generated from the generosity of the faithful through Weekend Collections, Stewardship and Annual Special Collections such as Seminary, Peter's Pence, Mission Sunday and support for the Clergy.

Parishes which undertook special fundraising efforts to support Pastoral Ministries, yielded 22% of this income with the remainder of income from returns on investments held as well as gifts and donations.



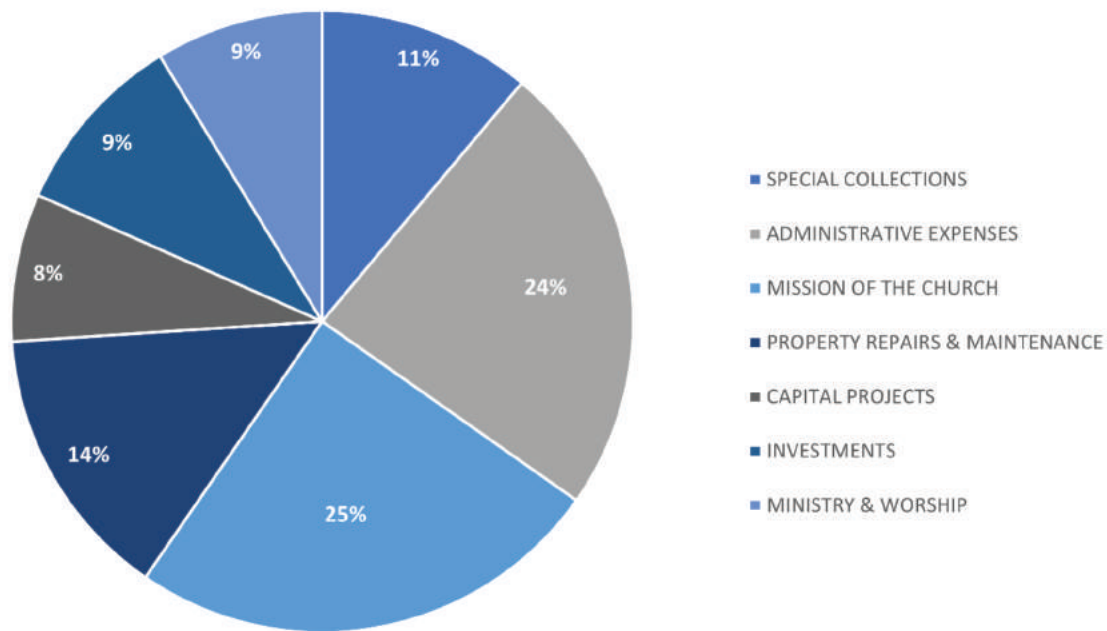
Source: Office of the Chancery: Finance Administration - Parish Returns

The Northern and Southern Vicariates are the largest contributors to the Overall Parochial Income as reflected in Figure 2, with income of \$18.7M and \$16.2M, respectively.

The Suburban and Eastern Vicariates continue to be valuable contributors with income levels of \$10.4M each.

Contributions from Central and Tobago Vicariates, our smaller Vicariates, amounted to \$6.2M and \$2.6M respectively.

Figure 3 - Total Parochial Expenditure - \$67.6M

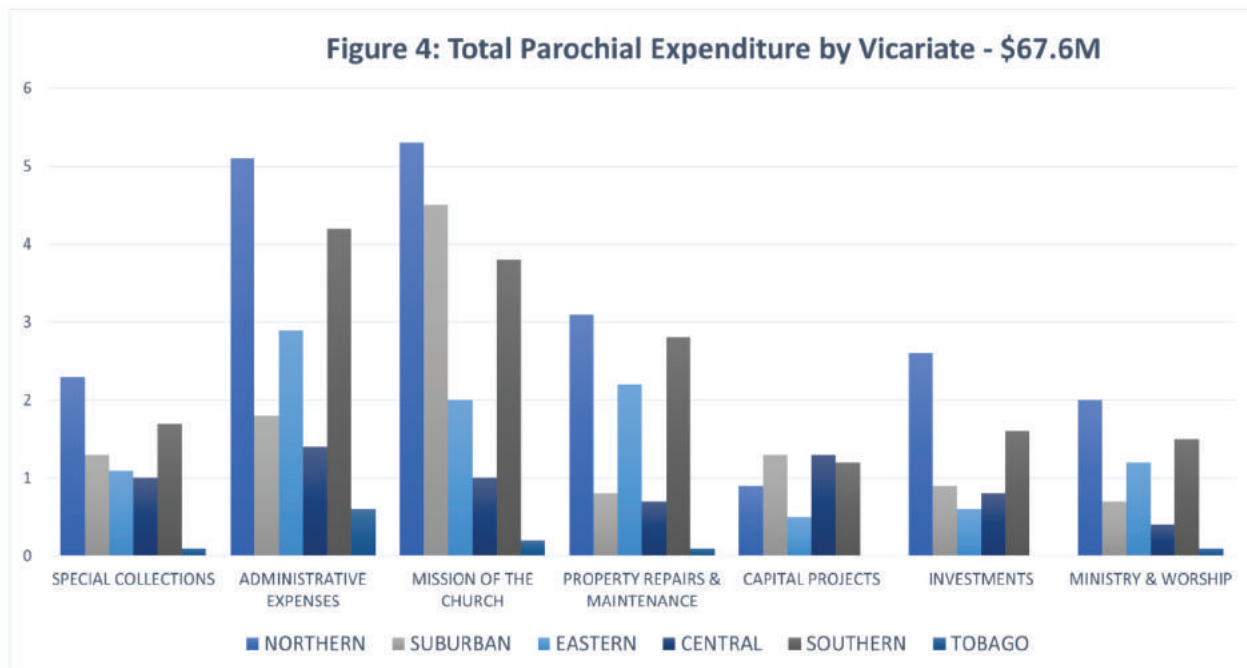


Source: Office of the Chancery: Finance Administration—Parish Returns

Total Parochial Expenditure for 2018 amounted to \$67.6M with 25% distribution to the overall Mission of the Church plus 11% remitted towards Special Collections which included funds for the Seminary, Peter's Pence, Mission Sunday, and support for the Clergy.

Parish Administrative costs accounted for 24%. With the ageing of our Churches and supporting infrastructure, upgrades through ongoing repairs and maintenance and capital projects accounted for 14% and 8% of the expenditure, respectively.

Funds set aside for investment in future building and other projects through Investments accounted for 9% of overall expenditure with localised spend at the parish level on Ministry & Worship at 9%.



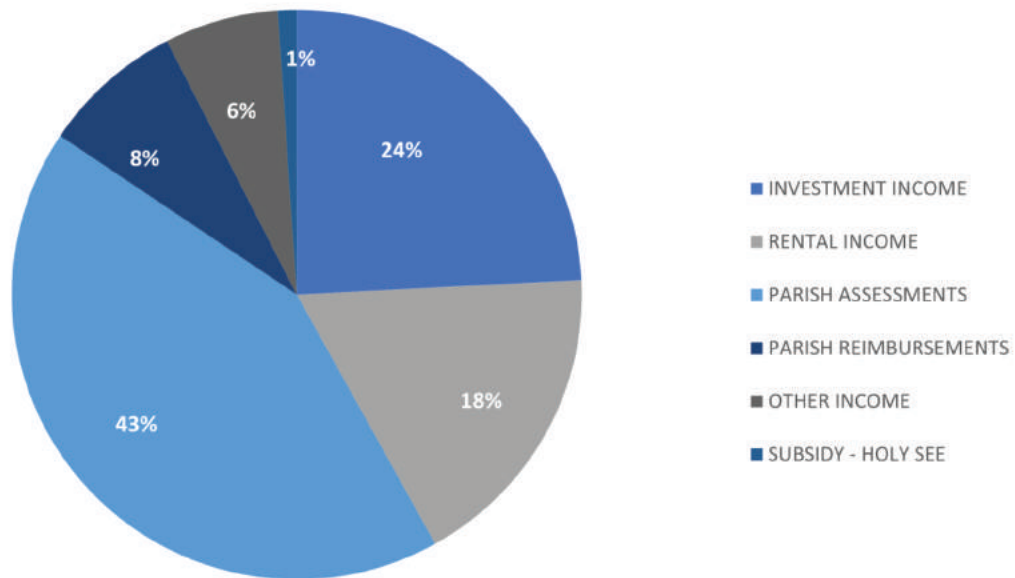
Source: Office of the Chancery: Finance Administration - Parish Returns

The Northern and Southern Vicariates incurred the largest spend in overall Parochial Expenditure as reflected in Figure 4, with expenditure for 2018 at \$21.3M and \$16.8M, thereby generating a net deficit spend for 2018 within the Vicariates of \$2.5M and \$0.6M respectively.

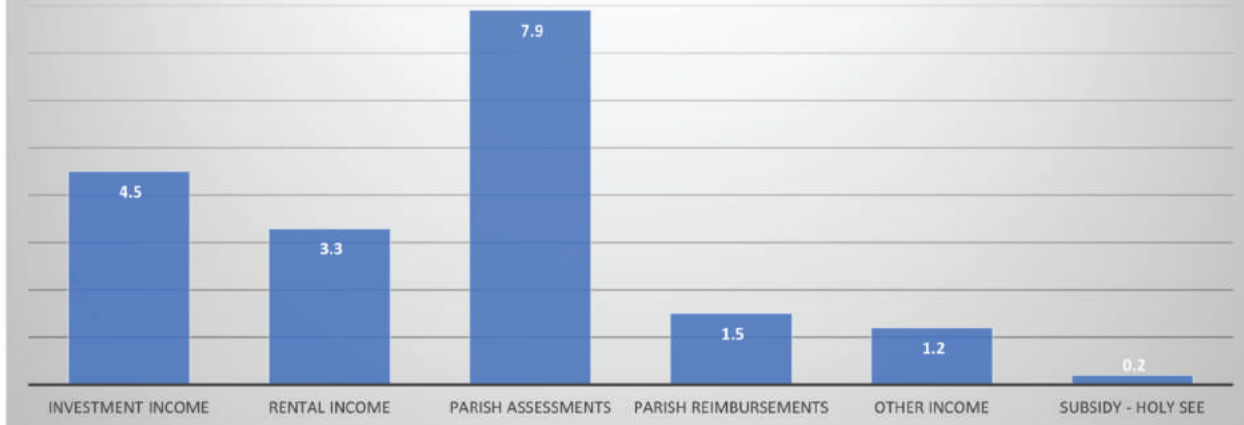
Suburban and Eastern Vicariates expenditure levels were \$11.3M and \$10.5M respectively with a net deficit spend of \$0.9M and \$0.1M.

Our smaller Vicariates, Central and Tobago, incurred expenditure of \$6.6M and \$1.1M. Whilst Central yielded a net deficit spend of \$0.4M, Tobago was the single Vicariate with a net surplus of \$1.5M.

**Figure 5: Office of the Chancery Administrative Offices
Total Income - \$18.6M**



**Figure 6: Office of the Chancery Administrative Offices
Income by Type - \$18.6M**



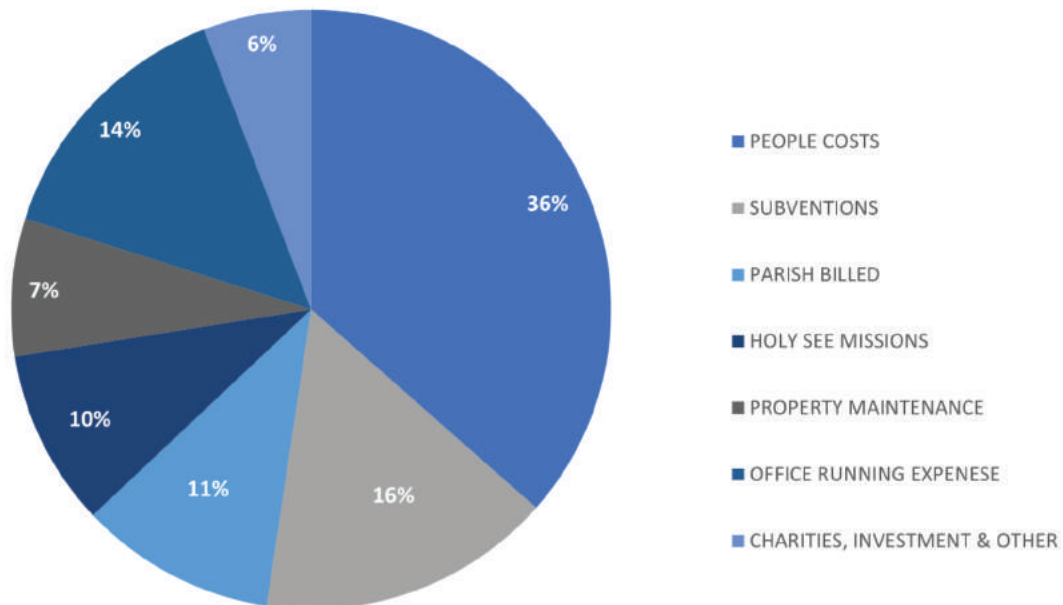
Source: Office of the Chancery: Finance Administration

Figures 5-6, reflect the Total Income of the Offices of the Chancery of \$18.6M with the largest contribution derived from Parish Assessments of \$7.9M or 43%.

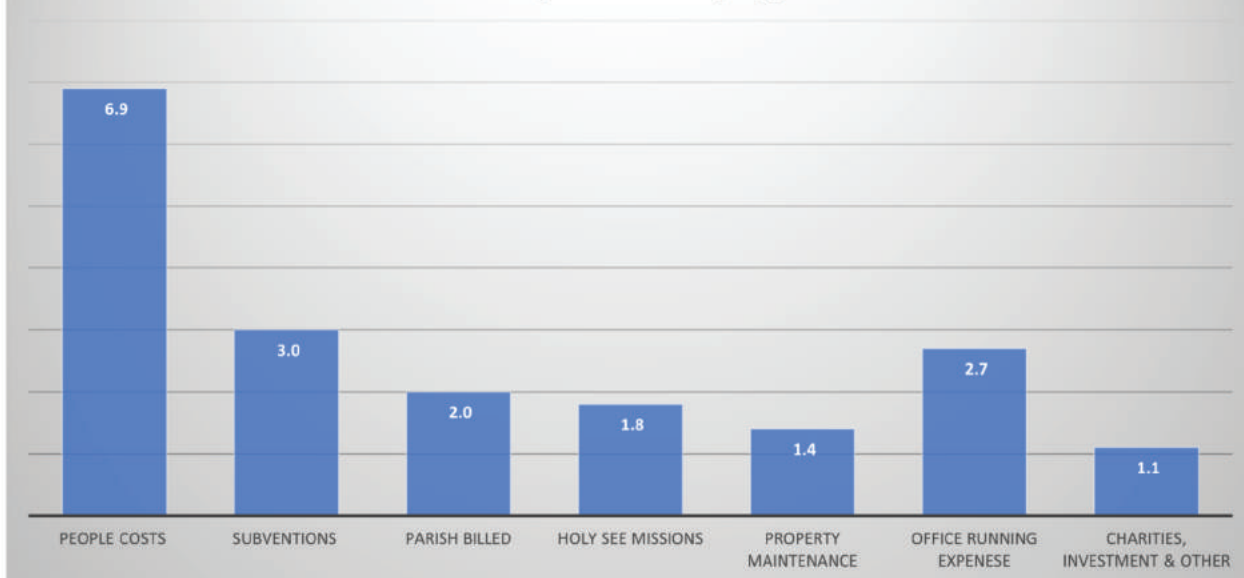
Long-term and short-term investments placed to provide ongoing cash flow for operating needs accounted for \$4.5M or 24%. Rental Income from properties amounted to \$3.3M or 18%.

Reimbursement of expenses on behalf of Parishes accounted for \$1.2M or 8%. The remaining income was derived from other Gifts & Donations as well as a Subsidy to support the mission of the Archdiocese from the Holy See.

**Figure 7: Office of the Chancery Administrative Offices
Total Expenditure - \$18.9M**



**Figure 8: Office of the Chancery Administrative Offices
Expenditure by Type - \$18.9M**



Source: Office of the Chancery: Finance Administration

The Offices of the Chancery incurred Total Expenditure of \$18.9M as shown in Figures 7-8, giving rise to a net deficit of \$0.3M. The most significant expenditure of the Administrative Offices is its People Costs accounting for \$6.9M or 36% for staff that supports the Curia as well as Archdiocesan Commissions & Departments including: -

- Archdiocesan Catechetical Office
- Family Life Commission
- Evangelization Commission
- Social Justice Commission
- Liturgical Commission
- Youth Commission
- Chaplaincy at UWI & UTT

Departments & Commissions also received \$3.0M in subventions from the Chancery in support of the overall Archdiocesan Mission.

In addition to those listed above, the following are also supported: -

- Catholic Education Board of Management (CEBM)
- Catholic Religious Education Development Institute (CREDI)
- Interdiocesan Eastern Tribunal Offices
- Pontifical Mission Society
- Mary Care Centre

Additional distributions included support of the Holy See's universal Church mission with remittances to the Holy See, \$1.8M or 10%.

Other general expenditure included reimbursement expenses for parishes, \$2.0M, maintenance expenses on properties, \$1.4M, office running costs, \$2.7M and charities, investment and other expenses, \$1.1M.

APPENDIX



Pastoral Letters by Archbishop
Charles Jason Gordon



Priesthood: A Most Precious Gift

*Written by
The Most Reverend Charles Jason Gordon
Archbishop of the The Roman Catholic Archdiocese
of Port of Spain*

27th December, 2017



FEAST AT THE REC. CLUB

Jackie Hinkson

Based on the story of the Last Supper:
Set in a typical Trinidadian "Recreation Club", this indoor scene shows the Christ figure surrounded by various everyday types.

Dear Brother,

We have been anointed with a most precious unction and share a most precious gift, the gift of priesthood. Indeed, Jesus conferred on his Apostles – on that night before he died – not one, but two gifts – priesthood and Eucharist. They are inseparable.

These gifts were given to the Apostles, not for their own sakes, or gain, or private devotion; they were given for the salvation of the world. Priesthood is a privilege given to us for the salvation of the world. We are the foremost witnesses of the radical extent to which Christ loves his Bride the Church, giving himself for her without reserve. Can we give any less? Can we witness in truth and at the same time, live mediocre lives? Or live lives of moral contradiction? Or live in disunity with each other?

We have been called to priesthood! We were called by God to leave other ways of living and to live, in a radical way, God's love for his Church. St Augustine saw priestly ministry as *amoris officium* – the task and duty of love: "Let it be the office of love to feed the Lord's flock..." (*Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus* (123,5). The task and duty of love! This is the inner meaning of our vocation: it is both a task and a duty, but it is always love; a love of Christ, first of all, that flows to love of

one another in the presbyterate and ultimately to the love of the Bride the Church. Our lives are offered as a vocation to the Lord, so that through us people may see he loves his Church in an unconditional way.

St Paul reminds us that without love we are nothing at all (1 Cor 13:2). He also reminds us that we are ambassadors of Christ: "*it is as if we appeal on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God*" (2 Cor 5:20). Dear Brothers, ours is the vocation that the world most needs in this time of materialism and violence. It is the eclipse or overshadowing of the Divine that has sent the world into madness. We are the witnesses entrusted with the message that God intended. We can only live our vocation if we are willing to become witnesses of love!

Why are we priests? To escape from the challenges of the world? To escape the rigour of intimacy and family life? Or to give ourselves generously as a gift to him who called us and graced us with this ministry? "*Jesus is the only true treasure to give to humanity that we possess. It is for him that the men and women of our time have a deep longing, even when they seem to ignore or to reject him. It is for him that the society in which we live ... and the whole world, has so great a need*" (Benedict XVI, May 2010).

As I begin ministry as the 11th Archbishop of Port of Spain, as your Shepherd, I ask that we all reflect again on the love that first called us to priesthood; that we bring once more to mind the early fire that consumed our imagination, that challenged us to leave other paths to make this journey of sacrifice, this journey of devotion, this journey of love.

OUR MISSION

Of all the things people expect of the priest, I wish to name three that, I believe, are particularly important today. The priest needs to be a missionary disciple, a mystagogue, and a friend and defender of the poor.

Missionary Disciple

Of what value is priesthood if it is not a witness of missionary discipleship? This term, which emerged in Aparecida and was made popular by Pope Francis in his *The Joy of the Gospel*, brings together two concepts. As disciples, we encounter the Lord and surrender to his call and vocation. As a missionary, we go out to the margins to proclaim the Good News. Missionary disciples both encounter and go out to proclaim.

Today, people no longer listen to authority. What they hear, what they want, is authenticity. Our lives must align with Christ's if people will hear us. If we want to speak about discipleship, we have to be disciples. To speak about forgiveness, we need to be men of forgiveness. To speak about trust and love, we need to be men of trust and love. We cannot bring our people to where we ourselves are not ready or willing to go. As Pope Paul VI said: *"Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses (Evangelii Nuntiandi, # 41).*

Each of us needs to reflect on the quality of our discipleship, on the areas where we are doing well and areas where growth is lacking. Likewise, we need to reflect on our missionary spirit. Do we go out to those who do not attend church, to our communities? I ask that together we explore what it will take for us as individuals and as a presbyterate to become missionary disciples.

We have all been hurt at some stage of our priesthood. Could we use this time, this new beginning, to engage with the difficult task of forgiveness? If any brother has hurt you, let us do the work of forgiveness. If I have hurt you, I ask your forgiveness. I ask, further, that you let me know so we can sit together as brothers seeking the mercy of our Father, God. Let us together take a new step to missionary discipleship.

Mystagogue

A mystagogue initiates others into the sacred mysteries. That is part of the mission entrusted to us by Christ. The early Church spoke of the mysteries. Later, when the Church turned to Latin as its official language, these became sacraments. One enters into mystery; the sacrament has become something we do. Herein lies the challenge.

As the author of the book of Hebrews says: *"Through the blood of Jesus Christ we have a right to enter the sanctuary, by a new way which he has opened for us, a living opening through the curtain, that is to say his body"* (10:19, 20). The translation in our lectionary says, "right to enter", other translations say "boldness" or "confidence" to enter. This notion is essential to the New Covenant. The priest of the Old Covenant could not enter. As an exception, once per year they were allowed to enter by lot after ritual purification. We, the priests of the New Covenant, have been given the right to enter the sanctuary, the holy of holies, with full confidence or boldness at any time. More so, all Christians share this right. We need to plumb the depth of what has been offered us in the New Covenant through the blood of Jesus Christ and initiate our people into the sacred mysteries.

In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus gives us one commandment: *"Love one another"*, as he loved us (Jn 13:34). He goes on to say that this love is the proof that we are his disciples (Jn 13:35). We, all of us, have to find a way to live this love. We have to recognise when we fall short and ask forgiveness. For this we must beg God's grace. We have to enter the sacred mystery to be transformed. Then, they will know we are his disciples. But Jesus asks more: he asks that we abide in him as he abides in us (Jn 15:4), that we make our home in him! This is the mystery we are called to live: that the same Love that created all that can be known to the senses makes his home in us, as we seek to make our home in him. For this we need prayer, as a fish needs water. But first, we need to be beneficiaries of the sacraments as we are its ministers. We need to recognise that the life of grace is the most precious gift we have ever received. You and I must spend our whole life disposing ourselves to this incredible gift.

Could we reconsider committing to a sabbath – a day of fast from technology and activity? It must be one spent entering into the sacred mystery that is God: not a day for errands or other business. This is a complete shutdown day where we dispose our self fully to God in prayer, reading scripture and good spiritual texts.

Please consider having a sabbath every week. Start with at least a half-day of rest and prayer, and once a month a complete 24-hour sabbath. Our hyperactivity is an obstacle to entering into the sacred mystery. We cannot lead others where we will not or cannot go.

Friend and Defender of the Poor (CCC 544, 1033)

Jesus is the poor one in our midst (Mt 25:31ff). You and I discover the face of Jesus, encounter him in the world, in the distressing disguise of the poor. We live in a time of great and growing disparity between rich and poor. Although we are a very blessed nation materially, many of our citizens live in dire poverty. Each cluster and parish has pockets of poverty. I ask that we get to know these neighbourhoods, that we visit these families. We need to enter those parts of our parishes on a regular basis. What I am asking is that we make friends with those who live on the existential margins of society, to use Pope Francis' words.

Jesus' mission, as written in the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, was "to bring good news to the poor" (Lk 4:18). We see in his ministry that he was available to both rich and poor. But his option was to those on the margins – the sick, the widows, the ostracised. We priests need to walk among them if we want to be faithful to him.

I have been conned by more incredible con artists than I want to recount. I pray each time that I may not fail to see the person in genuine need. The only way to avoid this is to treat each one as a face of Jesus.

Our country has over two thousand migrants and refugees. These are strangers who are in need of our love and care. Here, too, is the face of Jesus. Let us not pass by on the other side because of all the important things we have on our agenda. Let us befriend and defend the poor and vulnerable living in our midst. As Pope Francis has said so well, "*I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security*" (Pope Francis World Day for Peace Message, January 1, 2018).

Should we not consider at least once a week visiting parts of our community where people feel neglected and discarded? Could we become a Church that reaches out, befriends and defends the poor?

CONCLUSION

Priesthood is ever old and ever new. As we look at our history, we see the essentials of priesthood have remained much the same. At every turn, however, certain characteristics come to the fore while others

are obscured. In our time, we need to discover again, individually and as a presbyterate, diocesan and religious orders, the characteristics of priesthood that are essential for the Church to flourish in Trinidad and Tobago today.

I want to begin by listening to you and hearing your experience: your joys and hopes, grief and disappointments. Initially, I will do this through some structured listening at the level of the presbyterate. I intend to meet with each vicariate within the first six months. I also intend to meet with each of you individually. It is my hope that from these times when we are together I will get a deeper understanding of your concerns, as individuals and as a presbyterate, personal and pastoral, social and ecclesial. I urge you to pray about this, identifying your deepest concerns amongst all the many things clamouring for attention.

I am asking that we spend our first months together, discovering anew the vocation that the Good Lord gave to all of us, this precious gift of priesthood given for the sake of his people. It is my prayer and hope that if we listen deeply to God and each other, read and reflect on what the best of our tradition says about priesthood and dare to share with each other openly and honestly, we will find the path to live more fully the vocation we have all received. This would be an incredible foundation for all that God is calling us to do together as Church in Trinidad and Tobago.

I place each of you under the maternal protection of Our Lady, Mother of all priests. Let us turn to her, as the beloved disciple at the foot of the cross and heed the words of Jesus: "*Mother behold your son ... [Son] behold your mother*" (Jn 19:26-27). Let us, like the beloved disciple make a place for her in our "*home*".

Given on the twenty-seventh day of December, Feast of St John, Apostle and Evangelist, in the year 2017.



***The Most Rev. Charles Jason Gordon
Archbishop of Port of Spain***



PASTORAL LETTER

Most Reverend Charles Jason Gordon
Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese
January 02, 2018



MAYARO CALLING

Jackie Hinkson

Based on the story of Christ's calling upon fishermen to become fishers of men:
The scene is set on Mayaro beach on Trinidad's eastern Atlantic coast.

CALLED TO SERVE

CALLED TO SERVE

As part of the Archdiocesan Curia you are called to serve; called to mission and called to be co-responsible for the mission of the Church in Trinidad and Tobago. The Diocesan Curia is an extension of the mission and ministry of the Bishop. Its purpose is to assist the Bishop in the governance of the whole diocese, especially in guiding pastoral action, in caring for the administration of the diocese, and in exercising judicial power (Canon 469). In the Archdiocese of Port of Spain, the Curia comprises the Vicar General, the Judicial Vicar, the Regional and other Episcopal Vicars and delegates of all the Departments, Commissions, Councils and those working directly for the Archdiocese. You are a member of the Curia.

From this perspective, the Diocesan Curia is an extension of the office of the Bishop and derives its mandate and authority from the Bishop. The Curia is to act on behalf of the Bishop in matters both technical and pastoral according to the mandate received. (cc.469 - 494)

Ours is primarily a ministry in the service of communion. This is the first mandate and expectation of all staff of the Curia. Before our actual functional responsibilities, our first mandate and responsibility is to be in the service of communion. Communion is the unity of the disciples for the sake of the kingdom of God. This unity is so vital to ministry and mission that on the night before he died, Jesus prayed for the unity of the disciples (Jn 17: 21). His prayer goes further. He says that convincing the world that God sent Jesus requires the unity of the disciples, "...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in one with us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

The Catholic Church is a sacrament of communion. It is the outward manifestation that the inner grace of Christ is alive and well in our Church. This communion is a vital part of the mission and ministry of the Bishop. So as a member of the Diocesan Curia you have a primary obligation to actively build unity or communion among all staff and all those who visit our offices. This means we need to work in collaboration with each other towards achieving our mission. Everyone has a part to play: the gardener and the officers; the secretaries and administrators; all contribute to the overall mission of the Church which can be described as building a Civilization of Love in Trinidad and Tobago (Mission Statement of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain Synod, 2009). God is Love, and who abides in God abides in Love (1 Jn. 4:16). We are to make this love a visible active way of living—a civilization.

This is a true story: President John F. Kennedy was visiting NASA headquarters for the first time, in 1961. While touring the facility, he introduced himself to a janitor and asked him what he did at NASA. The janitor replied, "I'm helping put a man on the moon!"

If anyone ever asks you what you are doing, you can tell them, I am helping to build a Civilization of Love in Trinidad and Tobago. This is a mission to which our whole Church is called.

Servant Leadership

If this is what we do, then everyone who interacts with our office must experience this mission and the communion which animates it, from the first person they meet or speak with to the completion of his/her request for services. Whatever your role in the Curia, you need to know everyone working here and have some

CALLED TO SERVE

appreciation for their roles. If you are asked about land or finances or buildings etc., you must be able to put the person enquiring on to the right department and person. This is your job but it is also part of building communion. If you are the first person who is interacting with the enquirer, then you are responsible for ensuring that s/he gets what s/he came to us to receive.

Our first customers are our priests. They are an essential part of our family, the Church. They come to us to have simple or complex issues addressed. They come for advice and for services. Whenever a priest visits please ask: How are you; may I offer you something - water, coffee, tea? Our priests come from far and wide, from Cedros and Scarborough, Carenage and Toco. Hospitality needs to be our golden rule.

“How may I help you?” needs to be our mantra. We also need a common way of answering the phone: “Good morning (or good afternoon), this is the office of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain, how may I help you?” Every caller or visitor needs to experience overwhelming hospitality and service. Here, I want to build upon the legacy of my predecessor, Archbishop Emeritus Joseph Harris in his pastoral letter “Return to Hospitality”, (Lent, March 5th 2017).

When someone comes, calls or emails to make a request, we need to ensure it is answered in the shortest possible timeframe. If it can be done immediately, then do so. If this is not possible then give the person a time by which you will complete the task. If the date arrives and the task is not completed, contact the person and explain why and give a new date.

We need an electronic system to log and track all requests coming to us. I will work with ICT to ensure we implement this in a reasonable period of time, hopefully within two months. This will ensure we deliver on our promises on time. We all must work hard to ensure that no request falls through the cracks.

You were hired because of your competency in a specific area in order to provide a consistently high level of service, you need to be an ongoing learner in your field. Keep reading and thinking and learning more about your area of specialty. Keep updating yourself and this will contribute greatly to our mission and ministry. But, also keep learning and engaging opportunities for ongoing formation in the faith.

Co-Responsibility

In a key address to the Church in Rome, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI introduced three very important terms describing the Church and pastoral responsibility. The notion of the People of God which includes all members of the Church from the Pope to the most recent baptized. The notion of the Body of Christ which describes our truest and deepest identity. The notion of Co-responsibility for mission between priest and people. This latter is very important for understanding your role in the Curia. You are co-responsible with the clergy, the religious and with me for the mission of the Church in Trinidad and Tobago. (Church Membership and Pastoral Co-responsibility, Benedict XVI, 26th May, 2009)

Pope Benedict XVI said: *In the first place we must renew our efforts for a formation which is more attentive and focused on the vision of the Church, of which I spoke and this should be both on the part of priests as well*

CALLED TO SERVE

as of religious and lay people to understand ever better what this Church is, this People of God in the Body of Christ. At the same time, it is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as "collaborators" of the clergy but truly recognized as "co-responsible", for the Church's being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity. This common awareness of being Church of all the baptized in no way diminishes the responsibility of parish priests. (Church Membership and Pastoral Co-responsibility...)

Your participation in the mission of the church is vital. You bring to the Church and her mission, gifts and talents that we need to build the Civilization of Love. This participation will be fully expressed in true communion, which requires that we all work tirelessly to break down the silos and build networks that foster authentic collaboration. We need to learn to work across departments and disciplines, commissions and councils to ensure we bring all the resources we have to the urgent pastoral challenges of the day.

Ministry vs Job

While you are employed and have a contract and a job description, you are primarily a steward in God's kingdom. Working in our office is a vocation, a call from God to participate in building the Kingdom of God. While on earth, Jesus had different groups participating in his mission, the twelve we are familiar with, but he also called and sent the seventy-two (Lk 10:1-23). This is an extended group that he called to participate in his mission. All participated in his authority and acted as an extension of himself. You are an extension of the office of the Bishop and his mission. When you act, you represent me. You represent Christ. You represent the Church. Your life and your ministry need to be in harmony. The source of our ministry comes from the depth of our relationship with Christ. In every interaction it is Christ that we represent. We are His witnesses.

Because this is a ministry, prayer is vital! The chapel will be made available for anyone who wants to spend a quiet moment in prayer. Once a week we will have Mass for all working in our offices. I know there may be some of you who have not attended mass regularly, I invite you to participate. It is part of who we are and how we serve. We will arrange how to cover phones and visitors during this period.

Every day at 12:00 noon, I am asking that we all stop whatever we are doing. If you have someone from outside, explain to him or her what we are doing. Gather together in three or four common spaces throughout the building and let us pray the Angelus. The bell at 12:00 noon is a call to prayer. I am asking that we stop everything for the 1.5 minutes it will take. I am asking that we be consistent with this every day. The person in front of you is important, but God comes first.

I am asking you to use this Pastoral Letter to initiate discussion in your various departments on ways you can deepen collaboration; ways in which you can be more efficient in delivering upon the requests of those who seek our help; ways of deepening servant leadership in our church. We will have a suggestion box near to HR Department. You can anonymously put suggestions in the box if you like, or speak within your department or

CALLED TO SERVE

to a member of HR. You know more about the challenges and the solutions than I do. Your participation will assist us in improving efficiency and customer service. We will take all suggestions seriously.

Let us entrust this initiative into the hands of Mary, our Mother, the one who gave hospitality to God when she said “yes” and conceived the Son of God. Let us say “yes” to God who shines through the many faces that we meet every day. Let us, through her intercession, work together to build a culture of communion, service and dedication to God and God’s people.

Given on this feast of St Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen, January 02, 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Gordon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Most Reverend Charles Jason Gordon
Archbishop of Port of Spain



The Archdiocese of Port of Spain

