

Grenada welcomes their new bishop

The time has come for the church in Grenada to “change gear” and recharge the battery for action, so said Archbishop Robert Rivas of Castries, the homilist at the ordination of new Bishop Clyde Harvey on Saturday at Spice Basket Theatre, Beaulieu, St George’s, Grenada.

“Recharge your batteries for action and if they can’t be recharged throw them out and get new batteries but charge up because it’s time for new action; the long awaited day has come,” he said, calling the ordination, “a moment of opportunity for the Church in Grenada, a kairos moment”.

Principal consecrator for the ordination was Archbishop Nicola Girasoli, Apostolic Nuncio to the Antilles; Co-consecrators were Archbishop Joseph Harris of Port of Spain and the much-loved emeritus Bishop Sydney Charles of St George’s, who attended in a wheelchair.

There was an atmosphere of joyful anticipation and large gathering to witness the ordination of the fifth bishop for the Diocese of St George’s- in-Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique.

Also in attendance were Cardinal Kelvin Felix and bishops of the Antilles Episcopal Conference led by President Bishop Gabriel Malzaire of Roseau; clergy from across the region; the Governor General Cécile La Grenade; Gregory Bowen representing Prime Minister Keith Mitchell, government ministers, and members of the bishop’s family.

“Your bishop is coming to you with loving kindness, meet him with loving kindness,” Archbishop Rivas said. He added the words “loving kindness” must be part of their “living vocabulary” during the episcopate of Bishop Harvey. The new bishop’s coat of arms has the words “Lovingkindness”; his motto is “To make known to Grenada and all creation the LOVING KINDNESS of the heart of our God”. Archbishop Rivas said a bishop’s chosen motto describes what he stands for and what will be at the core of his ministry; Bishop Harvey was “coming to build the church in Grenada on loving kindness, loving kindness of the heart of our God”.

Highlighting the role which the people must play in supporting their bishop he admonished that Bishop Harvey's success will happen only in communion with them. "He will need you loving support and collaboration. In the time ahead, your bishop will confirm you in the faith, affirm your strengths, work with you to heal wounds, build bridges of reconciliation and enhance communion at every level of the church," Archbishop Rivas said.

Despite recent health challenges, Bishop Charles, 91, attended in a wheelchair to fulfill his role as co-consecrator. He was given a standing ovation when he arrived before the liturgy began. Archbishop Rivas said he was deeply touched to see "Bishop Syd" present and asked the people to love their new bishop as they loved Bishop Syd.

Acknowledging the Church had been waiting for a successor since Bishop Darius' passing April 2016, he instructed the people to wipe away their tears and be joyful. He said they had received a good leader who was "strong, courageous and virtuous; a theologian and a good shepherd who cares for the little people". He continued, "Embrace your shepherd. Welcome him with open arms. Bring your resilience into effect in moving forward."

Archbishop Nicola Girasoli said Pope Francis had appointed a "great priest and great man to all people of the Church". He thanked Fr Clifton Harris OP who served as diocesan administrator during the vacancy in the diocese. On a personal note, Archbishop Girasoli said he was very blessed to conclude his mission as Apostolic Nuncio to the Antilles with the ordination of Bishop Harvey.

After the Prayer of Consecration the ordination was complete. The new bishop received the symbols of his office – a ring, mitre and crozier (pastoral staff) – which was greeted with loud applause from the congregation. He was then shown to his cathedra (bishop's seat).

During the Rite of Ordination, Bishop Harvey washed the feet of eight pre-selected members of the congregation as a symbolic gesture of service. Later, children from Catholic primary and secondary schools processed to the stage with the national flag and led the singing of the national anthem. Bishop Harvey then made a personal pledge to the nation while holding the end of the flag. Fr Hugh Logan,

who explained key aspects of the liturgy, said that the new bishop was not only for the local church but for all of Grenada.

Giving his remarks before the final blessing, Bishop Harvey drew attention to the composite image on the cover of the ordination programme distributed which had the title “From the market to the Cathedral and back”. He invited all to remember the importance of the market in the history of Grenada, and as a place of assembly.

As the faithful traversed the hill to the Cathedral he exhorted them not to stay but “come down to the market place again” and to join him in doing this every day.

Bishop Harvey emphasised, “Holiness and sanctity in my view is not about prayers you say but the extent to which you allow Christ to do his work in you.”