



ANTILLES EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE

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December 29, 2025

A Call for a Caribbean Day of Prayer for Peace

Dear People of God of the Caribbean,

Since the AEC bishops' Statement in October 2025 on the growing military presence in the Southern Caribbean, the geopolitical landscape of our region has changed at an alarming pace. What was then a troubling build-up has now intensified into active military operations, tanker seizures, the expansion of naval assets, and airspace restrictions that affect the daily lives of our people. As bishops of the Caribbean flock, we cannot remain silent when developments threaten human dignity, regional stability, and the long-held vision of the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

We expressed deep concern that the Caribbean Sea home to fisherfolk, seafarers, coastal families, and migrants has become a theatre for confrontation not of our making. Recent lethal maritime incidents, the blockade of oil tankers, and increased surveillance activity elevate risks to innocent lives and aggravate humanitarian suffering, particularly in Venezuela. These actions also strain maritime commerce, tourism, and the welfare of thousands whose livelihoods depend on safe and open seas.

While we recognised the legitimate responsibility of states to address transnational crime and uphold international law, we reaffirm more urgently than before that militarisation is not the road to durable security. Heightened operations in our region, whether by global powers or regional actors, further entrench mistrust, disrupt economies, and endanger the most vulnerable. War, or the threat of war, is always a defeat for humanity.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Venezuela at this critical moment in their nation's history. Guided by the testimony of their own bishops and by conversations with regional Church leaders, we acknowledge the overwhelming desire of the Venezuelan people for democratic renewal and for leadership that restores justice, peace, and the integrity of their institutions. Their quest for a nation rebuilt on these foundations deserves the attention, respect, and solidarity of the Caribbean community.

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I, therefore, urge all governments with influence in the Caribbean basin including the United States, Venezuela, the nations of CARICOM, and our hemispheric partners to choose dialogue over force, diplomacy over intimidation, and cooperation over unilateral action.

In particular, I strongly support the call for CARICOM to meet urgently to address the raft of divisive geopolitical disputes straining regional unity, and I implore Caribbean leaders to speak with one voice on behalf of our peoples and to desist from publicly criticising one another, as this deepens fragmentation at a time when unity is essential. Pastorally, at this time when we Christians celebrate the Advent of Christ, the Prince of Peace, I appeal to the faithful to pray fervently for peace in our waters and for all affected: families mourning loved ones lost at sea; migrants fleeing hardship; workers in aviation, shipping, and tourism; and especially the poor, who will suffer most from instability and rising costs.

I invite all dioceses of the Antilles Episcopal Conference to celebrate the World Day of Peace on January 1, 2026, as a Caribbean Day of Prayer for Peace, entrusting our region to the mercy, justice, and guiding light of Christ.

As bishops, we remain committed to working with ecumenical partners, civic organisations, and regional leaders to safeguard the dignity of every person and to ensure that our Caribbean remains a space of hospitality, coexistence, and hope. May our nations choose the path of dialogue, justice, and fraternity, and may God grant peace to our beloved region.

With Gratitude,

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

Most Reverend Charles Jason Gordon
President
Antilles Episcopal Conference
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago