



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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MESSAGES OF HOPE FOR A NATION IN CRISIS

GOOD FRIDAY EDITION



The next issue of Pointe Xpress will be on Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

Relief for Hotel Workers

The Executive Director of the Antigua Hotels and Tourist Association (AHTA) has confirmed that the transaction for the first tranche of payment to hotel workers under the Thrift Fund was

completed on Thursday.

However, Patrice Simon said the posting of the monies to individual accounts is not expected before April 15th.

She pointed to the closure

of banks for almost a week under the State of Emergency for the delay, but gave the assurance that payments will be made next week.

To date, employees from nine hotels who have been

laid off have opted to access the funds.

The Thrift Fund was established in 2010 and currently has seventeen (17) Resorts on Antigua that are contributors. Both the ABHTA and the ABWU are Trustees of the Fund and have formed a joint agreement to release up to 50%, or a maximum of \$3,840, of available funds to qualifying employees within the respective resorts.

Employees will receive their monies via electronic funds transfer, EC\$640 fortnightly.

More than 3000 hotel workers are now faced with a loss of income.

Alton Forde Is Dead

Alton Forde, who served in several senior positions in the public sector has died.

Reports reaching PointeXpress Newspaper state that Forde died Thursday morning at the Mount St John's Medical Centre from what is believed to have been complications associated with Parkinson's disease.

The eldest of five children, Forde served as Deputy Chief Health Inspector at the central Board of Health for many years as well as General Manager of the National Solid Waste Management Authority. He also spent several years as the Master of the government-run Fiennes Institute and head of the



Clarevue Psychiatric Hospital.

Forde was reportedly in a care facility as the Parkinson's disease progressed.

DAY 4/10

Max UV Index: 12 Extreme
 Wind: SE at 15 km/h
 Wind Gusts: 20 km/h
 Probability of Precipitation: 1%
 Probability of Thunderstorms: 0%
 Precipitation: 0.0 mm
 Rain: 0.0 mm
 Snow: 0.0 cm
 Ice: 0.0 mm

31° Hi



Pleasant with plenty of sunshine

NIGHT 4/10

Wind: ESE at 9 km/h
 Wind Gusts: 17 km/h
 Probability of Precipitation: 1%
 Probability of Thunderstorms: 0%
 Precipitation: 0.0 mm
 Rain: 0.0 mm
 Snow: 0.0 cm
 Ice: 0.0 mm

23° Lo



Mainly clear

SUNRISE/SUNSET

Sunrise AST
 5:55AM

Sunset AST
 6:22PM



Duration
 12:27hr

MOONRISE/MOONSET

Moonrise AST
 9:17 PM

Moonset AST
 8:53AM



Duration
 11:36hr

Open letter from Prime Minister, the Hon. Gaston A. Browne



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Office of the Prime Minister

9th April, 2020



Dear Antiguan and Barbudans, Residents and Visitors:

This is a message from your humble servant Gaston Browne.

I am calling on everyone to continue to exercise personal responsibility to observe the curfew restrictions, enforce the social distancing protocol of six feet, continue to practice good personal hygiene etiquette and stay at home.

In the event you have to leave your home, wear a mask, even an improvised one using cloth. Those who have symptoms or exposure to anyone with COVID-19, should self-quarantine or isolate as appropriate. If symptoms persist, immediate medical attention should be sought. Please note, do not wait until you are critically ill to seek medical attention. It may be too late.

We are all susceptible to COVID-19 and therefore should be extremely vigilant.

Please be reminded that young and healthy people, though less susceptible are not immune from the consequences of COVID-19. COVID-19 is a potential death sentence for all of us, especially those who are negligent and indisciplined with underlying illnesses to include diabetes, hypertension, asthma and heart disease.

Let us work diligently and collectively by girding our loins and joining the battle to defeat COVID-19.

Much love and blessings.

Stay safe,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Browne'.

Gaston A. Browne
Prime Minister

Panic Shopping Hits St John's

Thousands of people descended on St John's on Thursday to visit banks, supermarkets and the public market as they feared the closure of the city for much of the long holiday weekend.

Reports are that from as early as seven o'clock in the

morning long lines formed at commercial banks, pharmacies and even longer than normal queues since the curfew formed at some popular supermarkets.

For example, at the Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank (ECAB) on Redcliffe Street, the line of

customers snaked its way back to St Mary's Street.

According to the reports... in many instances the new social distancing protocols were breached.

The reports also indicated that there was bumper to bumper traffic throughout the city with some streets blocked adding to the angst felt by motorists.

However, in a LIVE interview Point FM, Attorney General, Steadroy Benjamin, announced that the government has amended the regulations to allow for shopping on Easter Sunday and on Easter Monday as well.

The previous regulations had prohibited shopping on those two days.



Community Groups Joins Anti-COVID Fight



A community group in the village of Potters has joined the fight to end the spread of the dreaded COVID-19 virus in Antigua and Barbuda.

The group – Guys on the Block – has decided to mount several educational banners at strategic points in the village to encourage

residents to adhere to the protocols established by the Ministry of Health to combat the disease.

The message is for villagers of Potters and elsewhere to do their part in curbing the spread of the coronavirus in the country. Already, the country

cont'd on pg 5

CIBC FirstCaribbean Donates To MSJMC

CIBC First Caribbean is assisting the Mount St. John Medical Centre (MSJMC) to purchase much-needed medical supplies to be used in the care of COVID-19 patients.

The contribution is part of a larger programme announced by the bank's charitable arm, First Caribbean International ComTrust Foundation, which is donating US\$250,000 across the Caribbean where the bank operates.

Salma Crump, MSJMC, Head of Marketing and Communications applauded the bank's initiative.

"Individual action as a part of the

response to COVID-19 is absolutely needed but that alone will not add up to a sufficient response. We also need coordinated action/support from businesses like CIBC-First Caribbean combined with multi-stakeholder cooperation at exceptional scale and speed to minimize the impact on public health and limit the potential for further disruption to our lives and our economy."

She added, "When we say our hospital's focus is on safety. This does not only refer to the environment, it also involves ensuring that our care teams have the medical supplies and equip-

ment needed to support our patients. This donation assists in making this possible. We're profoundly grateful for this generous gift."

Meanwhile, the bank's Country Manager, Ladesa James-Williams noted, "We are all in the war against COVID-19 and as long as we all work together we will win."

She added that CIBC First Caribbean would continue to look for ways to assist clients, the government and the nation at large.

James-Williams is also a Director of the bank's ComTrust Foundation.

cont'd from pg 4

has recorded two deaths from the virus with nineteen people confirmed as positive.

The dead were part of the 19 confirmed cases.

Guys on the Block is a non-profit organisation group of men from Potters who started primary school together and whose friendship and cohesiveness have remained intact even now that they can be classified as 'middle-aged'.

In the past, their activities have largely been celebratory as they mark one milestone after another, but with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, they have decided to play their part in fighting this dreaded disease and to stop it in its tracks.

From their regular meeting place, Mamin Shop's (Helen Crump) steps, the members have planned and implemented several community-based projects.

To date, Guys on the Block has donated food packages to at least 30 elderly and disabled persons in the Potters community as well as supported the Potters Primary school in its fund-raising activities.

Although several of the members reside abroad, distance has not prevented them from sharing their ideas and suggestions.



Caribbean at risk as big powers delay action on COVID-19 global economic effects

(The writer is Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United States and the Organisation of American States. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London and at Massey College in the University of Toronto. The views expressed are entirely his own)

Despite a lofty statement on March 26, the world's richest nations, the G20, have responded poorly to the devastating effects that COVID-19 is having on the global economy, particularly small and vulnerable states.

The G20 pledged to "work swiftly and decisively with the front-line international organizations, notably the World Health Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, and multilateral and regional development banks to deploy a robust, coherent, coordinated, and rapid financial package and to address any gaps in their toolkit".

Yet, there is a marked absence of international consultation and global solidarity. Instead, wealthy

nations have retreated into nationalism, protectionism and isolationism. In the absence of a coherent international response, small and vulnerable states, especially those that are highly reliant on tourism, will be the worst victims. For at least two years after COVID-19 is brought under control, the economies of these countries, will languish in economic lassitude and regression, causing social discontent, disquiet and, maybe, even disorder.

The United States (US), which should be the leader of global action, has been prominent in its inaction. Preoccupied with Presidential elections in November and the rising number of deaths and the declining performance of the economy, the US government and the Congress are both focussed on "America first".

No one can blame them for attention to their country's needs, but the adverse effects of COVID-19 cannot be surmounted by "America only". The US relies on the rest of the world to be a vibrant market for its goods and services. When the economies of

these countries contract and their earnings decline, their capacity to buy from the US shrinks and so do their imports of US goods and services that maintain US employment and revenues. Apart from a statement on April 7 that the US had mobilised "US\$6 million to provide test kits to Barbados and more than 60 other countries to fight the spread of COVID-19" – about US\$10,000 per county – there has been no announcement by the US government of any initiative to provide funds that would help developing countries, especially those in its immediate neighbourhood, to cope with the grave blows to their economies.

It must be hoped that this is a delay and not a decision, and that US leadership that has, in the past, contributed to global recovery will emerge once again.

Similarly, while on April 8 the European Union (EU) announced that €918 million will be allocated "to support our partners in Latin America and the Caribbean", no details have been given of who will



Sir Ronald Sanders

be the beneficiaries and on what basis. On April 3, the EU announced a grant of US\$8.6 million to help the Caribbean fight the coronavirus outbreak. Roughly that sum works out to US\$57,000 each for 15 countries, while these countries have had to spend tens of millions. The EU failed to mobilise a plan for its own membership. Instead, member countries of the Community unilaterally imposed restrictions on each other, stopping transport links without co-ordination. Every country withdrew into its own cocoon.

Notwithstanding its medical supplies to some countries, China, too, has announced no proposals for a Fund of its own to help vulnerable developing countries to cope with the economic battering they are enduring.

China's response has not matched its economic and financial capacity. But it has the opportunity now to provide global leadership. There has never been any better or important time for China to give meaning to its often-stated commitment

Cont'd on pg 7

to South-South co-operation. It has a real chance to bolster its standing as well as to protect its loan investments in many of the affected countries. These countries, particularly the tourism dependent ones, have lost as much as 20% of their Gross Domestic Product in the first quarter of 2020, and the next two quarters will be no better. Their expenditures have spiked in the construction of quarantine facilities; purchases of emergency medical equipment and test kits; and management of the virus. Unbudgeted expenditure has also had to be made to cushion the shocks to the vulnerable who have been laid-off or had their incomes slashed as planes

stop flying, cruise ships stop docking, and hotels close.

Amid all this, government revenues have been drastically reduced. They simply cannot continue to service international debts, including loan repayments to China. This situation will get worse for many Caribbean countries whose economies rely heavily on tourism. The World Travel and Tourism Council has projected a global loss of 75 million jobs and \$2.1 trillion in revenue. As job losses reach stunning figures in the US, UK and EU, it will be close to two years, after shutdowns around the world are lifted, before tourism re-emerges as a major contributor to eco-

nomic growth.

Throughout that period, small and vulnerable economies will flounder irreparably unless there is international direct help – bilaterally and internationally. On March 30, Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister, Gaston Browne, wrote to the Heads of the IMF and the World Bank proposing measures to help small and vulnerable economies, including "suspension of per capita income as a criteria for concessional financing; debt relief including suspension of debt payments, write-offs of aged debt particularly by the Paris Club; and budgetary support through a mix of grants and low-cost loans on a country by country basis".

Such an effort needs the urgent support of the US, China and the EU – each of which, for different reasons, should have a vested interest in political stability and economic security in the Caribbean. The G20 countries stated that they "are injecting over \$5 trillion into the global economy, as part of targeted fiscal policy, economic measures, and guarantee schemes to counteract the social, economic and financial impacts of the pandemic". The rest of the world should be vocal in holding the G20 countries to their word.

Responses and previous commentaries: www.sir-ronaldsanders.com



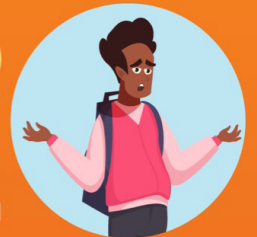
RE-OPENING NOTICE

The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) wishes to inform its valued customers that our Customer Service, Bill Payment Centers and inet Retail Stores will re-open to the public **on Wednesday April 15th, 2020 from 8:00am-12noon**. The locations which will be re-opened include Village Walk, South Mall, Old Parham Road and the APUA Business Center.

Please note that customers can continue to utilize our alternative payment options. For utility and inet home bill payments, these can be made through our banking partners (ACB, RBC, ECAB, CIBC FC, CFCCU, BNS) or utilizing our cheque drop box for cheque payments and PDV vouchers at the APUA Business Center on Independence Drive during the hours of 7:00AM - 12:00PM when essential services can be accessed. For inet mobile, postpaid bill payments and top-ups may be done via the Myinet App.

APUA would like to remind its customers to continue to adhere to the safety guidelines of sanitizing and social distancing at these locations to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

EXTENDED TEMPORARY CLOSURE



The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) would like to inform customers that its offices will re-open on **Wednesday April 15th, 2020**.

- Customers can continue to experience reliable, safe and efficient services from electricity, water, inet home, mobile and business.

**Please note that disconnections for inet services has been delayed to April 30th, 2020.*

- APUA advises that the 10% discount will be honoured for the duration of the month of April.

- The additional 10% will be automatically applied on electricity bills produced after April 1st, 2020.

We encourage our customers to spend wisely, exercise conscious and responsible usage of all services and be reminded that all outstanding balances remain payable.

APUA extends gratitude to its customers for their willingness to make payments. APUA relies on these remittances to meet its obligations that enable that efficient delivery of the services offered.

STAY SAFE!



Easy pickings is not the answer



By Colin James

In these globally-challenging and nationally-critical times, it is easy to pick holes into the government's preparedness and response to the Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic.

An unprecedented health scare of unmitigating consequences is wreaking havoc on all economies; medical institutions; people's mental state; forcing more than 200 countries to go on lockdown - that's today's reality.

China, where COVID-10 originated, never anticipated the widespread toll on lives and economy, however, scrambled (not panic) into action to first contain the spread while building hos-

pitals in record time to treat those affected while locking down cities affected. Today, they have managed to control the situation and have been providing assistance to other countries.

Italy, reputed to have the best state-of-the-art medical apparatus in Europe, found it difficult to cope with the outbreak. I watched a Sky News feature entitled: Into The Red Zone, which focused on Italy's response, and it was nothing short of a modern-day, horror epic movie. But they have galvanized all efforts and warned the world what to expect.

Britain or England in particular has not found it easy to cope with COVID-19. The hospitalisation of the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary coupled with the positive testing of Prince Charles clearly indicated that no one is immune. Health facilities are stretched; the country is lockdowned and the inadequacies have been exposed on all fronts: medical and economic. New York, now considered to be the epi-

centre of the pandemic, has had to resort to assistance from other US states as well as the military. Ventilators and masks are either in short supply or exhausted; field hospitals are being set up in parks; hospitals ships are supplementing overrun institutions; medical personnel are stretched to their limits; a friendly nation like Cuba is making doctors and nurses available to countries who have appealed for help.

Name one Caribbean country that has prepared sufficiently for the onslaught of the COVID-19.

Any government in Antigua & Barbuda - past or present - would find it challenging to cope with the status quo no matter how prepared and organised they may be. Our experiences with hurricanes for the past 25 should suffice.

Any government - past or present - will find it difficult to manage an ever-evolving crisis. But that's the crux of the matter: management.

It's a government's ability to manage this pandemic

that will judge its response and resolve to cope.

Just as China, Italy, England and New York have demonstrated, quick and decisive management is what is required and being done.

We can all say this should have happened; that should have been in place; resources (monetary and physical) should have been reserved; but it is what is being done in the particular moment to mitigate against the deadly virus that is important.

Let me take this opportunity to ask the people of Antigua & Barbuda to follow the government's advice with regard to social distancing and staying home. May I remind you that the doctors, nurses, EMS, caregivers are putting their lives on the line for you. Good economic times will return after this crisis. Let's work together as a nation to manage the present crisis to protect not ourselves, families and friends, but our country's future. A word to the wise is sufficient.

GOT NEWS

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From The Desk of the Chairman of the Ecclesiastical Commission

EASTER GREETINGS 2020

Greetings in Christ Jesus, the Risen Savior. It is a blessed honor to greet you and share a word of inspiration in this season and era that we live. as the impact of the coronavirus brushes over the globe, Easter is a time when we celebrate our risen Lord.

I must with confidence remind us that our God is not only one who will be our refuge in times of trouble or after a catastrophe, he is also a God who can send manner from heaven to feed, as he did with the Israelites and a God of instructions to guide the way we live on earth. This place we call home for which Jesus is familiar with. Jesus having entered as we all did, endure temptation and survived it, been betrayed hung on a cross between two thieves as if he was one.

A quick snapshot of the life of our Lord and Savior. In our blessed beautiful twin island state of Antigua and Barbuda I would like to encourage us to not lose focus. The winds are blowing, we are forced to shift our sails in the upwind of COVID-19. Our God is in our vessel and we will weather this storm.

Fellow believers my sincere prayer is that the merciful hand of our God will bring calm with the swift eradication of this disease over our nation and nations of the world.

Our God is still moving and working in and through his people in the earth. Following my appointment as Chairman, to this noble office and with the support of the Commission's Executive, our efforts have brought some historic achievements. We have assisted in the amendment of the Public Holidays ACT (Amendment 2019) to officially make Sundays an official Public Holiday with special conditions to treat employment and wages. The commission was also able to host a Chaplaincy Training Workshop where a total of forty (40) grandaunts are now License to function.

As we work towards impacting the society, the government, responding to COVID-19, called on the Church to pray for which we coordinated a National Day of Prayer and Fasting on Thursday 26th

March that was supplemented with 12-hrs non-stop Prayer Session on TV and Radio that was simulcast with ABS TV and most Radio Stations on Island.

As my closing words, I would leave you with this: Psalm 121 "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth." As we remember our Lord in this Easter season, lets us continue to look to him the only one to save and take safely through this season.

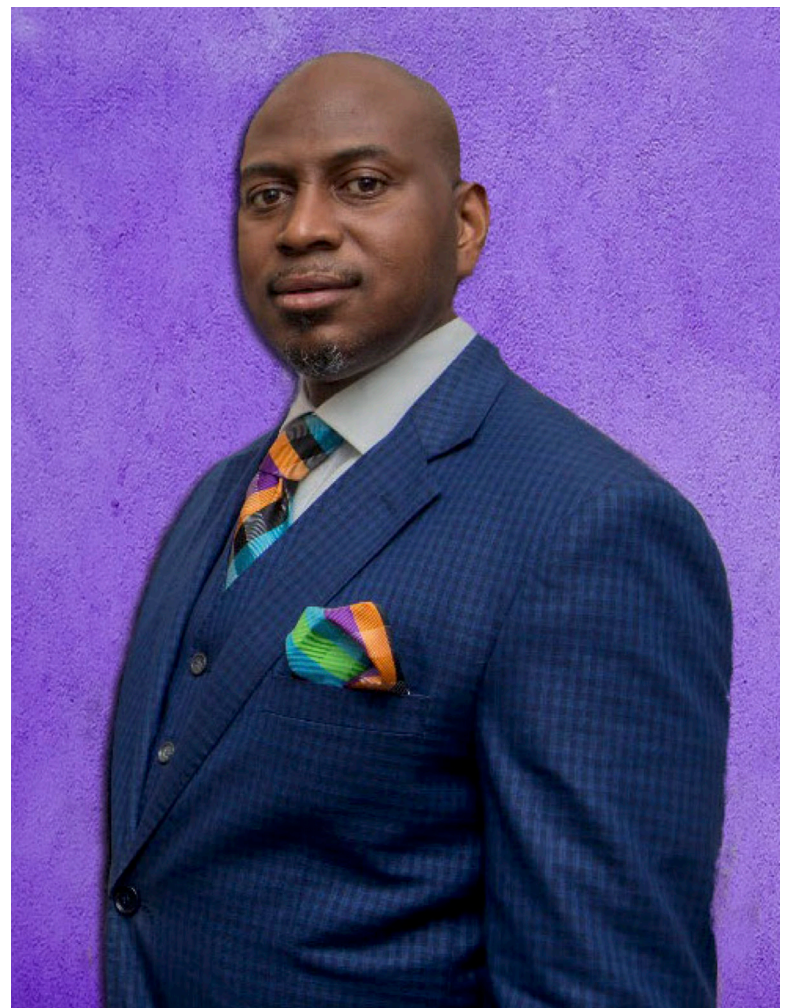
From the desk of the Chairman of the Ecclesiastical Commission I wish you all a blessed Easter! In the Vineyard, --- Min. William Dorsett, DDiv(h.c.), DipTh (FOIE)

Chairman

Ecclesiastical Commission of Antigua & Barbuda

Ministry of Social Transformation & Human Resource Development, Youth & Gender Affairs

Contact information: Ministry of Social Transformation & Human Resource Development, Youth & Gender Affairs Office of the Ecclesiastical Commission John Henry Building Popeshead & Dickerson Bay Streets St. John's, Antigua W.I. 268-562-3588(Office) 268-720-3120(Mobile) fax: 268-562-5369 eMail:William.dorsett@ab.gov.ag GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA & BARBUDA



Min. William Dorsett, DDiv(h.c.), DipTh (FOIE)



MAKING SENSE OF EASTER IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

BY DR CARSON L GREENE

Easter is a time when most Christians celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. One of the central teachings of Christianity is that Jesus, a member of the Godhead, became man and died on Calvary's cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. All four gospels detail the story of the crucifixion of Jesus, showing how he was crucified and was laid in a tomb Friday afternoon just before the set of sun.

Jesus' death must be viewed in the context of the plan of salvation. Old Testament scripture painted a picture of Jesus dying for the salvation of the human race. In Genesis 3:15, after Adam and Eve sinned, God declared that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent while the serpent would bruise the heel of the seed. Isaiah 53, one of the better-known Old Testament passages, highlights some of the sufferings of the Messiah. Verse four states: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." The most graphic and forceful description of the sacrifice of Jesus in the Old Testament though, is in the sacrificial system of the sanctuary services.

The Old Testament sanctuary services were specifically designed by God to demonstrate the fact that sin can only be forgiven through the sacrifice of blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission for sin (Hebrews 9:22). When an Israelite sinned and wanted forgiveness, he had to take an animal to the priest at the sanctuary, lay his hand on the head of the animal and confess his sins and then with his own hands, kill the animal. The Priest would then offer the animal as a sacrifice and take

some of the blood into the sanctuary to intercede on behalf of the sinner. That animal, often a lamb, represented Jesus. It was God's way of showing them that their sins would ultimately require the sacrifice of Jesus for forgiveness to be realized. Jesus is indeed the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. As significant as the death of Jesus is, the resurrection is equally important. A dead Jesus could not guarantee salvation. The book of Hebrews makes it clear that there is an aspect of the ministry of Jesus that takes place after the resurrection. Hebrews chapters eight and nine highlight the ministry of Jesus in the sanctuary in heaven. Jesus serves as intercessor in the sanctuary. It is for this reason that Heb 4:16 challenges us to "approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Effectively then, both the crucifixion and the resurrection, significant events in Christianity, are highlighted at Easter time. Traditionally, lots of Christians consider this time of the year to be especially dear to them and they look forward to going to church to "celebrate both events." This year though, Easter will be different. All Church buildings will be closed! The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated a change of behavior.

The current situation in the world may truly be described as unprecedented. This generation has not seen the likes of such before. Yes, we have witnessed devastation on a local and even national or regional scale that has disrupted operations temporarily but never on this magnitude. The believer in Christ must however recognize that there are important lessons that we can learn. I wish to highlight the following:

1. Salvation is first and foremost a personal relationship with Jesus. Scripture teaches that we must be willing to stand alone. (Matt 10:34-39) Many persons have come to believe that there is salvation in forms and ceremonies. The reality is, some persons hold on to rituals and believe that the practice of such guarantees salvation. Religious rituals in and of themselves mean little if the person is not fully surrendered to Jesus.

2. Church is not the building. We have come to use the word church and temple interchangeably. The word 'church' in the New Testament is the Greek word ecclesia and means the called-out ones. The reference is never to a building but always to people. Therefore, if the buildings are closed, it does not mean that the church is closed.

3. The eschatological (end-time) prophecies of the Bible point to a time when the Christian will not have the luxury of congregational worship. The Bible books of Daniel and Revelation speak of a time of trouble (Dan 12:1) and warfare (Rev 12:17). I am not suggesting that we have come to that time. I am simply saying that we can use these developments as a reminder that the comforts we are accustomed to will not last forever.

4. The principle of quarantine and responsible healthful living is biblical. Many today question if it is not faithlessness to follow regulations that call for social distancing. No it is not! Israel was a theocracy. That means that God was their leader and king. It is instructive to note that even with God as their leader, they still had laws that required those with contagious diseases to withdraw from the camp and stay in quarantine. Leviticus 13 and 14 serve as a good example of this. We must therefore act responsibly and recognize that the regulations that have been instituted are for the benefit of the entire community.

5.2 Timothy 3:1 tells us that in the last days perilous times will come. Undoubtedly, we are living in the last days. Verses two to four highlight a list of characteristics that mirror the conditions of today. If one takes a constructive look at the major cities of the world today, it becomes very clear that Christian virtues are being frowned upon. Creationism is considered archaic and unscientific. Secularism abounds and the biblical norms are considered inappropriate. Essentially, people have departed from the word of God. It seems to me that Christians should intercede on behalf of the nations of earth and ask God to extend his mercy. I suggest that as people reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus, we use the opportunity to engage in serious prayers of forgiveness for the departure from the word. 2 Chronicles 7:14 enjoins us to humble ourselves before God, pray and seek God's face. This Easter, why not turn to God like never before?



Rev Derek Browne

Having Journeyed throughout the Lenten Season with Jesus - and focusing on the "Journey to the Cross: utilizing Spiritual Disciplines to aid the journey - which by the way cultivates the PRESENCE of God": make NO mistake about it, there are factors which have affected the journey.

One may consider the present challenges regarding the Coronavirus - and the many strategies to mitigate against the spread of the Virus - including, but not limited to, a suspension of mass gathering to include gatherings for formal worship including funerals and weddings, the 24 hour curfew - extended to 7, 14 or even 21 days - through it ALL - we sought for a closer walk with God - and be that as it may - in the midst of what we never anticipated or expected - in the midst of "Corona - COVID-19" - tragedy / fear / social -distancing / uncertainty / lockdown / economic halt (for some) / death / quarantine / isolation / are just some of the words or feelings which grips people.

But our Christian journey - has taken the same roller-coaster ride with Jesus on his journey. From Palm Sunday - as he rode into Jerusalem on a Donkey (upon which none ever sat) - symbol of peace - carrying not only Jesus - BUT also it's cross (and yes, every donkey carries a cross). Jesus enters Jerusalem to shouts of - "Hosanna to the Son of David - Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Hosanna in the highest heaven! Save us, O, save now! Some of these shouts were the results of onlookers - who heard of Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the dead - after being 4 days in the tomb! Jesus was celebrated like a modern day

celebrity - with the "red carpet" treatment. There was NONE as VISIBLE as Jesus, NONE more talked about, NONE more despised either, NONE more hated by the Pharisees, Elders, Chief Priests - religious authorities.

To make matters worse - When Jesus stood up - as he entered the Temple - and saw all the injustices of the temple leaders against the Gentiles and the poor of society - he declared - "My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, BUT you have relegated it to a hideout for thieves and robbers" - and, being disappointed - he reprimanded those who used it for commercial purposes - over turning the tables and seats of those who sold and exchanged money. He cleansed the temple of it's 'fish-market' status - and ensured the Gentiles a place of quiet reflection and prayer. (Somehow, we can think of the 'Supermarket environment' - during COVID, or the environment of the Banks, or even some Churches - as they declare "Touch Not the Lord's Anointed" ! Maybe - it is time - along the journey - for all to BE STILL ... and Know that the LORD is GOD - That the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!

Of course, this didn't go down well with the authorities, and so every effort was made to have Jesus killed! After all, too many people were following him. And by the way, 'Standing for justice and righteousness' - will at times rub people the wrong way. It interfered with the 'BREAD and BUTTER' of the AUTHORITIES. As the week progressed - pressure was mounting - all systems were "a go"! Jesus amazingly cursed the fig-tree which withered and died; he taught using parables, as was his custom: - the two Sons, the wicked tenants in the vineyard, The Marriage supper, Ten Virgins, and also foretold the destruction of Jerusalem. He also spent time in Quietness - in meditation in Bethany, preparing himself for the ordeal that awaited him. He had supper at the home of Simon the leper - where he was ANOINTED by a woman with a very costly ointment - because of her love for him. A gesture which appeared to be an extravagant 'WASTE' to JUDAS - who could bear the thought or sight of money being 'wasted like this'.

Judas and the Chief Priests found 'common ground' - to betray Jesus for money! Can I tell somebody - that money isn't everything! IT ISN'T WORTH IT! What Judas did - wasn't worth it! It didn't bring him any satisfaction! It didn't force the hand of Jesus! Whatever he was hoping for - it didn't turn out the way he wanted! He was uneasy, unsettled, restless - in the end. Can I tell somebody - what you are contemplating, conspiring, planning - it isn't worth it! You will be restless until you find rest in God! "DON'T DO IT!"

Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver! For what, will you betray Jesus? At table, sharing the Passover meal / the LAST SUPPER with his disciples - Jesus put it out there - "One of you will betray me!" Yes, one of you who dips with me in the dish. They couldn't believe it! Not me, Lord? Even Judas, got into the discussion - you don't mean me, Lord? Jesus said to him - You said so! But woe to him, by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Having shared the meal, Jesus instituted the LORD'S SUPPER - This is My Body; this is My Blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many.

There were the other signs of betrayal - denial - abandonment - by those who were closest to Jesus. It's amazing that the people we tend to hurt the most are those who are closest to us! Peter would have died with Jesus before denying him - BUT - Words are what

they are - words until they are proven to be actions! Don't promise me anything - give it to me! Do what you say - you will do!

Jesus' journey took a stop in the Garden of Gethsemane. There he prayed, while his close circle of friends - Peter, James & John (the inner circle) were to watch, while he prayed! Jesus was deeply distressed and troubled! His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death! He prayed to the Father, if it be thy will - let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will but thine be done!"

He returned to the disciples - but they were sleeping. Peter, could you not watch one hour? Watch and Pray that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak!

Again, he went to pray and returned but they were sleeping again. The third time, they were sleeping again but he said - enough, the hour has come - Look the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners! What if the disciples had watched with Jesus? Would the outcome have been any different? Judas betrayed Jesus with a Kiss!

What a commotion that was, when they arrested Jesus with clubs and swords! Jesus' followers then abandoned him. We are told that Peter, the mouthy one, followed from a distance - denying that he ever knew Jesus! At the third denial, with the crowing of the cock again, and Peter's eyes meeting the eyes of Jesus, Peter's heart melted and he felt so bad. What he did not intend to do, happened! How bad he felt that he let down his Lord! Do you ever feel bad when you let down Jesus?

This was the beginning of a long night of trial, a bogus trial at that - because it was already pre-determined that Jesus would be found guilty! NO one seemed ready to MAN UP, and speak TRUTH - for Jesus! Right through the night - it was an all out - Trial - no rest for the weary - the abuse was torturous. Not only was it torturous - but for a close friend, Peter to deny knowing Jesus - that hurt! The mockery, the insults, the slaps, the punches, the crown of thorns, the lashes with the leather belts - accessorized with lead pellets and sharp bones, etc, which tore the flesh with every lash, reducing Jesus to mass of raw - torn - flesh. Jesus lost so much blood - he could hardly make it to take his cross - as they made the "guilty / convicted to travel the road that the most people would see - to the place of crucifixion - the place of the Skull - there he was crucified between two criminals.

Not withstanding, Jesus, though innocent of any crime, was condemned to death in the place of Barabbas a known condemned murderer who was released. Jesus was crucified - guilty only of love and compassion - and doing all manner of GOOD to human kind!

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquity and the chastisement of our peace was upon him - and with his stripes we are healed!"

It's amazing that, in spite of all that Jesus had been through, he was still able to say with whatever energy he had left, Seven words from the Cross.

The First Word ... St. Luke 23: 26-34 .. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do".

The Second Word ... St. Luke 23: 39-43 .. "Today you shall be with me in paradise"

The Third Word ... St. John 19: 25-27 .. "Woman, behold your Son! Behold thy mother!"

The Fourth Word ... St. Matthew 27: 43-49 .. "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

The Fifth Word ... St. John 19: 28-39 .. "I Thirst".

The Sixth Word ... St. John 19: 30 .. "It is finished".

and finally, The Seventh Word ... St. Luke 23: 44-49 ... "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

Jesus' death on the cross signaled - victory over sin and death. What appeared to be the premature end of Jesus' life of much promise - was just the beginning.

For the Chief Priests, Scribes and religious leaders, they were dancing the waltz in celebration that they had, at last, gotten rid of this Jesus! The time of Jesus on the cross was long and painful, even as this lockdown is for many, especially for the young and the restless. When many may see death and lost hope, and set back and obscure vision, seeing what came out of the death of Jesus, in that what was meant for evil turned out for good. One wonders what is God up to during this time of Coronavirus? When we never thought we would make it without being able to assemble, when we wouldn't make it without our Palm Sunday - palm waving, hosanna shouting - services; and we wouldn't make it without having our Holy Week Services and our Holy Thursday Night - solemn reflective service with Holy Communion or Love

Feast - and Foot Washing or 'Hand Washing' for that matter, and 'Lord, how are we going to make it to not gather for worship on Good Friday and have our annual marches, etc. God made it possible, to connect and share in meaningful ways. Two years ago I struggled as we gathered in the afternoon on Good Friday to share in a March of Witness and I was appalled at the level of "Noise" sound systems blaring through the afternoon atmosphere and I was troubled. I said, Lord, is this what Good Friday has come to?

I reflect, this year that there is peace and quiet - where all are locked in - and without choice, quieted before God! I trust we will hear in the midst of the quietness - what God is saying to us. When we refuse to quiet ourselves - there is a way that we are quieted. I do verily believe that this 'quietness' will benefit people more than they may ever know. When we come out of this time we will come out hopefully, changed and having had the RESET button pressed. What will life be like on the other side of COVID-19 with God? When all is said and done - for Jesus to be able to speak words - of peace & forgiveness - and to place all into the hands of God - whom he trusted from beginning to the very end, is hopefully an example to all of us, to remain faithful and trusting God in the face of uncertainly, doubt and fear.

Have a blessed, holy and peaceful day, as we commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus, who is the Christ. A bad Friday, which turned out to be a Good Friday. Thank you God for Jesus' death and resurrection which gives us new life!

A CHOICE OF CULTURE

"Man of Sorrows!" What a name for the Son of God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim!

Hallelujah what a Saviour!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood, Sealed my pardon with His blood; Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

There is essentially the greatest demand placed on a modern clergy to systematically teach and make disciples far removed from a Judeo-Christian culture, ethics, morals and more so, the teaching of salvation and the hope of Heaven. These truths will no longer be just accepted without debates and evidence of the power embodied in the gospel of Christ's death burial and resurrection.

Fifty years ago, there were cultural practices that pointed to the reality of the cross such as no work on Good Friday, no blood, no alcohol, no black pudding and only selected music was played in all households. These practices spoke to Holy week and more specifically to Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

There is no Easter Monday Beach abashment without the Good Friday death and burial. The Christian community holds fast that at such time the journey to Golgotha hill was made. How then should one understand and relate to Good Friday? In the gospel of Matthew 26:28 the scripture states, blood was shed for the remission of sins,



By: Elder Elton Williams

man's redemption was paid. The blood of Christ removes our soul from the sovereignty of evil and its ruler. For this very reason was the Son of man crucified that He may destroy the works of our enemy (flesh).

These words will not satisfy those preposterous (opposed) to biblical history but to those who desire revelation, they shall be blessed as the spirit of prophesy is revealed to them. Man is in need of a Redeemer and for his holy estate to be reestablished, the etymology of the term 'redemption' signifies repurchase. The price of redemption, reconciliation and recovery may lead to the loss of lives, relationships and power. In the ethical nature of God, a demand is placed on the penalty for evil. The horror of the cross became the ultimate price. Christ bore the torment of loneliness and abandonment when He cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachihani." He was forsaken, so we can be forgiven. There is a cancelling of all debts and reestablishment of the estranged relationship which existed between God and man on the account of sin. Sin's price was paid through the most gruesome torment – flogging of an innocent man and the brutal inhumane parading of our Lord followed by an execution uncommon to the Jewish customs. Note, the Jews stoned their prisoners, however, the guilty vacuous men hid behind foreign, Roman practices, but in so doing fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. It is imperative to note that borrowed culture is the greatest downfall to any nation because it undermines true identity. We ought not to be ashamed to be identified with the shed blood of Christ. The blood removes our soul from the sovereignty of evil and Satan. This blood is needed to revolutionize established damaged identities of rebellion, lawlessness, gender perversion and confusion and economic misappropriation. Romans 5: 10 – 11 shows that we can recover God's favour and reverse the curse of sin by the work of the cross and His atonement. We are called upon to take up our cross to transform nations. The values established by previous generations can now be referred to as crosses and must be borne by those who are willing to make the sacrifices. These are crosses of morality, integrity, sexual identity, humility, establishment of nuclear families and economic posterity.

Once again in the history of mankind, we seek answers that even the totality of man's wisdom leaves void to be filled but were answered through the cross over two thousand years ago. Let us embrace the work of the cross. God created humankind in His image, but mankind became determined to recreate God in his image. There can only be one God logically. So instead of God, we ended up with gods – imaginative mixtures, impulses of negative energies, dependence on fallen angels and the titillation of culture. When the carrying of the cross becomes entertainment for mocking spectators our corruption bedevils God. Man needs to turn from his carnality to embrace his spirituality. On that disgraced day, culture and identity pleaded for mercy and God answered by offering His son as a ransom. No longer must we allow false religious teachers and witless politicians to obfuscate the value of the cross and the price paid for man's redemption. Today the world seeks justice and peace through human efforts. However, man's justice will never be just, neither will world peace bring rest, for it is only in the cross of Calvary that hope is found. Crying for justice is excellent until God and life ask us to be just. Are we willing to change our ways as a people? God is absolute goodness, truth, beauty and justice. We might proclaim that we love all of these attributes but when we get close to them, they judge us. Are we being judged by the blood of the risen Lamb?

Today we are being evaluated by the customs and culture that we have established whether knowingly or unknowingly. Rebellion, anger, selfishness and revelry are a few of the new cultural norms. There is no more respect for holy days and religious mores. However, we are demanding of God to urgently respond to our present needs.

The time to turn is now. Let integrity and uprightness preserve our nation. In the midst of this pandemic, God is calling nations back to Godly mores. He awaits leaders whose agenda is guided by His Holy Spirit through His body the true bride of Christ – the true church. A God-filled Easter to all.

By J.E.W.

GOOD FRIDAY MEDITATION

Rev. Algernon Lewis – Moravian Church



"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

As we come to Good Friday 2020, those words from Dickens come to mind. We live in times that are strange, contrasting. We have wonderful technology that allows us to connect with people all over the world and determined mindsets that keep of from connecting with people in our own homes. Strange, isn't it

Good Friday has that same type of strangeness to it. We call it "good" now but there was nothing good about it on that

first Good Friday. For many denominations, the tradition is to strip the sanctuary of anything decorative or to use black as a sign of mourning, indicating that we are commemorating something really tragic that happened long ago.

In the Moravian tradition, on Good Friday, we read the biblical stories of the events of that day when a great miscarriage of justice took place and Jesus was crucified. We read of the trials, the mocking and scourging, the sentencing, the way to Calvary, Jesus on the cross, the watchers by the cross and the burial. There is very little in these stories that is affirming and positive. One of the most moving moments of the saga is when Jesus cried out "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" Which means, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" It gets me every time and

reminds me of some things about life.

First thing is that we live in a fallen world. Someone may ask, "What does that mean?" Well, it means essentially that when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden and sinned, God's good creation was broken. It means that anything is possible even for the best of us. It means that living in God's good creation is unsafe.

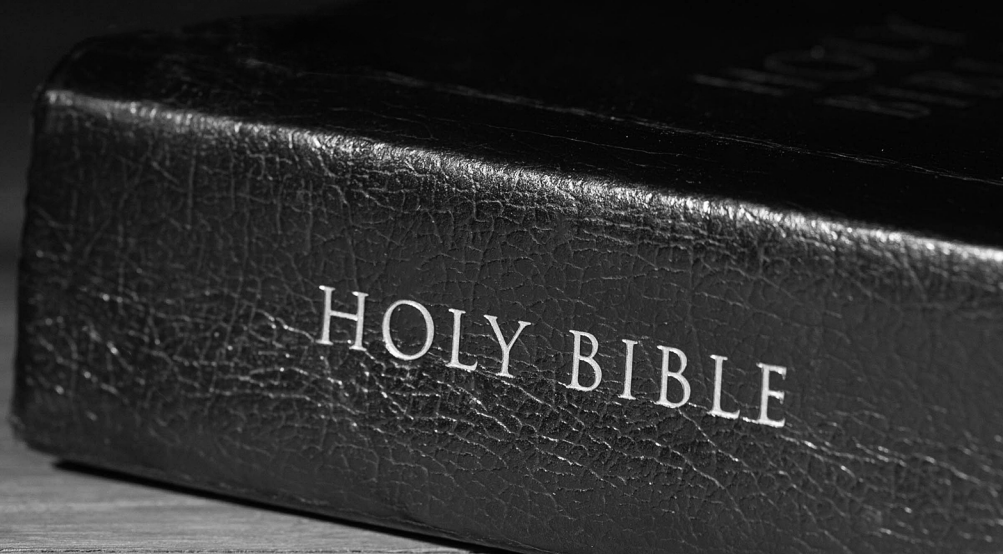
What did Jesus do to deserve the punishment meted out to him? Even Pilate found nothing wrong in him after the trial. Caesar lost interest when Jesus did not live up to his expectations of a real threat. The thief on the cross, of all people, remarked, "this man has done nothing wrong." Good Friday reminds all that punishment is not always the result of wrongdoing. Sometimes the system acts against the just and brings hardships and trials.

The world is engulfed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Maybe some saw it coming but I did not see this coming to me in my paradise. Each one of us now must deal with it whether we saw it or not. Embracing the fact that this is the nature of the world, help us to face the reality and keep walking. There is nothing anyone can do to "fix" this broken world. Sin damaged the world and none of us can fix it. We have to live in the danger and learn how to navigate in it. Job 14:1 says, "A mortal, born of woman, few of days and full of trouble..." None of us wants to hear that; but we cannot deny its truth. Covid-19 will do great damage to many things in the world and in some of our lives. The new normal will create additional stress for some persons who are already stressed. There are businesses that will not survive. There are people who will be advantaged by people with power under the guise of Covid-19. This is just the reality and we need to face it and accept that this world, as we currently live in it, is seriously broken and sometimes, we are part of that brokenness. Good Friday tells us powerfully that this world is broken.

Second thing, Good Friday also tells me that the trouble of the world does not have the final say. Jesus was on the cross enduring the pain of crucifixion and he came to the place where he said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." The reality is, we cannot face this world by ourselves. Jesus gave up and gave in. When he did, there was lightening, thunder, and an earthquake. The veil in the temple was ripped from the top which signified that it was not done by a human person. When Jesus gave up, God showed up. Jesus felt forsaken in the early stages of the process; but he knew that his Father was waiting for the right time to act. In this dangerous world, we need more than our wit and wisdom, our money and our manners, to face the brokenness. We need God in all of God's power.

This Good Friday, with covid-19 coming closer than we would like and impacting us in ways we have never been impacted before, the natural inclination is to be afraid. Fear does not help. Fear usually paralyses us causing us to do nothing. We need God! We need to do as Jesus did and call out to God and commit our issues into the hand of God. This may sound trite and utopian. It may seem out of date with the best of times that we are living in. Yet this singular fact enables the person with a living faith in God, to face the uncertainty with a measure of comfort that matters outside of their control can be committed to the sovereign God of all the earth. Even when we are faced with the worst of times and all hope seems to be lost, our God never runs out of options. The times do not affect God ability to act. God can allow a table to be spread even in the presence of our enemies or the presence of trouble. The uncertainty now is not an uncertainty about God. True, there are no guarantees anywhere in the earth. But the person of faith is assured that even in the brokenness of this world, there is God who make provision for us beyond this world.

As we observe Good Friday on lockdown, not able to do the usual trips for the traditional Good Friday services or Good



HOLY BIBLE

Peace in the midst of our Pandemic

John 20:19-23

The ancient patriarch, Job, during the throes of his pain and suffering, made a most poignant statement about our human condition. He said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). This conclusive remark was born out of experience – the experience of complete loss (loss of possessions, loss of children, and loss of health, the disdain of friends, and the discouragement of a wife (Job 1:1-2:13). Job's words are relatable, because words carry much weight when we too have been wounded. We all have our own story; our own pain, our own problems. Our individual stories have their own unique plot, their own unique players, and their own unique purpose. The path to conquering our problems is not the precision with which we compare them, but that particular cure we apply to them. During these past five months the world has been responding to a disease of pandemic impact. We have been particularly affected socially, medically, economically and even psychologically. Every country impacted by Covid-19 has been responding to this crisis with every available and affordable resource. We have adopted every prescribed protocol to prevent its spread. We have even make rules with legal and penal consequences should we be found guilty of a trespass. But these nec-

essary civic mandates, while they may impede our physical and social movements are incapable of calming our minds. We need that which is spiritual, that which is divine to irrefutably and permanently arrest our fears, calm our doubts, and conquer whatever threatens us.

Today's text is one of the many accounts the resurrection. Jesus' demonstrative power over the grave not only gives proof of His deity, but offers hope to those who are discouraged and feel a sense of dread by that which seemingly may destroy us. Jesus' appearance announced His presence, but also guarantees us His peace. It is impossible to separate His presence from His peace. As we address the subject of "Peace in the Midst of Our Pandemic" our focus is on the peace that is available, and that which must be appropriated if we are to achieve that place of calm and confidence.

The last few hours had been the endurance of immense confusion and fear for Jesus' disciples. They had observed His peculiar behavior in the upper room when He broke bread and offered wine as symbolic of His broken body and shed blood. It was there that He told them that the hour of His death had come (a subject which He had mentioned at different times). On one occasion Peter exclaimed that he would die with Him. In that same upper room Jesus had washed their feet and pronounced that one of them

would betray Him. They observed Him when He led them from the upper room to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, but their eyes failed them. Their confusion turned to immense fear when the temple guards authorized by the Sanhedrin Council arrested Jesus. From that moment most fled. Peter mustered some courage when he cut off the High Priest's servant's ear followed at a distance near the place where Jesus was being interrogated. But after the cock crowed following his thrice denial of Jesus he too disappeared. John was brave enough to witness the crucifixion and was given the responsibility of caring for Mary, Jesus' mother.

The day came. The women reported that they saw Jesus. The two disciples on Emmaus Road also reported their encounter with Christ. Yet, they remained in fear. It was while in that state of fear that Jesus appeared to grant them the Peace of Consolation (a) consolation to remove their confusion. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you" (John 20:19). The disciples were fearful that the elders of the Sanhedrin Council would arrest them too. There are times when the things that are dear to us, things we depend on, things we are attached to, things that should they



By Rev. Dr. Emanuel Elizée
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Presiding Elder:
Villa Baptist Church

be taken or removed would change our lives forever. We are fearful of such change. It is in moments like these that Jesus comes and pronounces His peace. Yes, we can possess His peace; His peace of consolation to remove our confusion.

Jesus personally chose twelve disciples. Judas betrayed Him as was prophesied. His action proved fatal – Judas hanged himself. The remaining eleven were hiding. They were assembled, but afraid (Verse 19). But Jesus' appearance granted them the Peace of Consolation (b) consolation to renew confidence. "And when He had so said, He shewed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord" (John 20:20). The spirit of disciples had been broken; they had lost their master, their teacher, their friend, their Saviour. The promise of a new kingdom was now null and void. However, But now their confidence is renewed.

Many of us have experienced disappointment and depression. We have bemoaned the death of a love

Cont'd on pg 17

The Assurances Of The Secret Place



Bishop Nigel Henry - Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies

Intro: In this Psalm, David relates the fact that he knows that he possesses the Lord already by faith, **v. 1**. This knowledge gave David much reassurance as he faced the various battles of life. He speaks of past victories the Lord had given in **v. 2**. He speaks of his faith of future victories in **v. 3**. David knew that, in his life, the only safe place in the world was to be in a place close to God, **v. 4**. He wanted to be in a place where he could see God, speak to God and to worship God. This was the all-consuming desire of his heart. These are special crisis times, but the crisis will pass, **Christ NEVER will**.

When a believer abides in that precious place close to the Lord, he/she abides, possesses some blessed assurances that the rest of the world knows nothing about. In these days, that is the kind

of assurance we need as we fight the battles of life with the world, the flesh and the devil. For, even when life is at its best and running smoothly, we are still in the midst of perilous times, **2 Tim. 3:1**. If you will abide, and that is the key word here, for those who abide enjoy God's best, are those who abide in the secret place with Him, **John 15:5**, there are certain assurances that you can enjoy. Allow me to share them with you today.

I. THERE IS THE ASSURANCE OF PERSONAL GUIDANCE

A. Please note the personal pronouns related to the activity of God in the believer's life. "**He will hide me in His pavilion**"; "**in the secret place of His tabernacle will He hide me**"; "**He shall set me upon a rock**". There are two things to notice about the activity going on in this verse:

B. The message here is simply this: The Lord is intensely interested in what is happening in your life and mine! We are reminded that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, **Heb. 4:15**. His eye is on every detail of life, **Heb. 4:13**. He is ever present, **Heb. 13:5**. May we also remember to look back over the landscape of

our pasts and see where the Lord has moved mountains, filled in valleys, and made a straight path for our feet. Praise God for the fact that He is intimately involved in the details of every one of our lives!

C. You and I may not understand the leadership of the Lord in our lives, but I can assure you, that if you are His, then He is working in your life day by day. He is guiding your steps, **Psa. 37:23**; **Pro. 16:9**. It may seem like life is out of control, and it is out of your control, but it is never out of His! In the end, you will end up exactly where you are supposed to be! (**Note:** You are precious to Him!)

II. THERE IS THE ASSURANCE OF POWERFUL GUARDIANSHIP

A. David tells us that the Lord will hide him in His pavilion. A king's pavilion was a tent that erected in the middle of the army's encampment. The tent was thus surrounded by an army of brave soldiers. With all the host of the army camped about, this was the safest place on the battlefield. Those who were fortunate enough to be allowed to enter the king's pavilion were protected by the soldiers and entertained by the king during

the battle! (**Note:** The word "**hide**" means "**to treasure away**.")

B. As the battles of life rage about us, we are safely tucked away in our King's pavilion. The Bible tells us that "**your life is hid with Christ in God**", **Col. 3:3**! Could there be a safer place in all the universe? Of course not! Those who have entered His pavilion are protected by Him and, even while the battles rage around them, they are entertained with the peace and joy of the King Himself. This is promised to those who will abide in that close place! No enemy could penetrate the defenses and enter this private place. It is protected from the enemy!

Conc: I urge everyone to abide in that secret place now more than ever before! Why? Because we need help! We need a protector. We need a provider! We need someone to put me in a place of safety, where we can see Him and experience His grace and glory. Let's praise His name that we can have that kind of relationship with Him in times like these! We don't have to outbid anyone; We just have to rest in the finished work of Jesus on the cross and abide in Him!

Cont'd from pg 16

one. Some are divorced or are going through a divorce. When life turns on us we become despondent and we drift. We lock ourselves behind closed doors. We hide from the world. But, it is in moments like these (moments of disappointment, depression, and defeat) Jesus comes to lift us up out of our doldrums, out of our slough of despond. Jesus rose from the grave to secure for us eternal life. He rose to give us abundant life. He lives so that we may never die. None of life's threats should shake us. Sin is the greatest pandemic that we face – not Corona virus. As believers, if we die from Covid-19 we will live

again. But an unbeliever who dies from the Corona virus will remain dead forever. Jesus has come to give us peace in the midst of our pandemic. Whatever the pain, the problem or the pandemic, trust your life to Christ. Although in a place of pain Job resolved to trust in his God. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). Jesus Himself said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried on Friday, but He rose on Sunday. He rose so we might have Peace in the Midst of Our Pandemic.

Ducana and Saltfish: A Good Friday Tradition

Everyone is home. Streets are empty. But on most back porches or front verandas we see coconut and sweet potatoes grating. Kitchen doors swung wide open with the rich aroma of saltfish cooking.

Though the stringent protocols under the 24-hour curfew procedure may have limited the ability of Antiguan and Barbudans spending the Easter weekend on the beach, rest assured, the traditional Good Friday and Easter Monday cook-up has taken full effect. For what is Good Friday without the traditional Ducana/ sweet potato dumplings, chop-up and saltfish?

This traditional dish is arguably the staple meal in most homes across the island today. However, if you quarantined at home, and misplaced those aged Antiguan recipes, here is a quick run-down of how to make your Easter Weekend, a food-filled one to remember.

Ducana

Ingredients:

- 2 cups grated coconut*
- 2 cups grated sweet potatoes
- 2 cups of sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp grated nutmeg
- 1 tbsp of vanilla extract
- 1 cup of raisins (optional)
- 1 ½ cups of flour

Directions:

1. Grate coconut and sweet potatoes in a blender. You will need some liquid to help the grating process, either use the coconut water, milk or just water, but no more than 1 1/2 cup of liquid.
2. Mix all the ingredients in a bowl in the order they appear in the ingredients.
3. Cut 10x12 pieces of foil paper or banana leaves to wrap the ducana.
4. Use a ladle or large spoon to scoop the batter into the center of the foil then fold the foil 2/3 of the way, covering the mixture.
5. Fold the batter and foil once more (or twice depending on the size of batter you scooped out) making sure to keep the ends pinned so the batter doesn't ooze out either side. The foil and batter should look like a flattened cylinder.
6. Fold in/ roll up each end of the foil to seal in the batter.
7. Place ducana in boiling water and cook for 30 minutes.
8. Remove them from the water and let them cool for



10 minutes before opening them.

Salt Fish

Ingredients:

- 1 pack of salted cod fish about a pound
- 1 Medium sized onion
- ½ of a green, red and yellow pepper
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 8oz can tomato sauce
- ½ cup vegetable or canola oil
- 1 tbsp butter
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 packs of Sazón seasoning

Directions:

1. Soak the fish in water for about 4 hours or overnight.
2. Boil fish in water for 45 minutes.
3. Drain off hot water and pour cold water on fish to cool them down, making sure they get to a comfortable enough temperature to handle.
4. Take out as many bones as possible. Break into bite size pieces and set aside.
5. Cut onion into rings
6. Cut peppers into strips length wise
7. Slice garlic thin.
8. Pour oil in frying pan and add the onion, peppers and garlic.
9. Stirring until vegetables are translucent.
10. Add tomato sauce, fish, vinegar, and butter to the pan then a sprinkle of black pepper.

You're done.

Serve with fresh steamed spinach seasoned with salt to taste. You can also use steamed cassi, and chop-up made from eggplant mix with the spinach and/or long squash or pumpkin. Now every year there is an argument as to whether raisins or carrots should go into the batter for Ducana. Let us just say, It is completely up to you! Happy Easter



CARICOM among international organizations collaborating to secure food systems, agriculture, trade during pandemic



Food and agriculture heads of international organizations for Latin America and the Caribbean agreed to work together in support of the agriculture and food systems.

Eleven international organizations agreed to pool their efforts to help Latin American and Caribbean countries

secure their food systems and maintain agriculture and food trade during the ongoing COVID-19 pan-

demic. The Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA, in Spanish), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Food Program (WFP) agreed on the following five major points.

Joint work: to coordinate their actions to better assist governments, the 11 agencies established a virtual communication and information platform. They agreed to meet every two weeks to review their work and plan for the future.

Advocacy: joint work in this regard will focus on keeping agri-food trade alive, the expansion of social protection schemes to ensure the food security of

the poor and vulnerable, common and science-based sanitary and phytosanitary standards, and increased intra-regional trade.

Analysis and technical assistance: the agencies will coordinate their analysis and technical assistance to support the design and implementation of measures to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on food and agriculture. This work will include options to accelerate the recovery of agriculture and food systems when the pandemic begins to recede.

Monitoring: the agencies agreed to share and coordinate the monitoring efforts being done by each one of them on different aspects of the COVID-19 effects on food and agriculture. This includes areas such as logistics (ports, wholesale markets, distribution chains), input supply production, food safety, food stocks and prices, as well as key social and economic variables (food insecurity, rural poverty).

Dialogue: the agencies will work together to promote public dialogue and exchange of good practices across countries and sectors, for example, through online webinars.

Canadians To Stay At Home For Months, No Normalcy Until Vaccine -Trudeau

TORONTO (AP) — Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Thursday Canadians will need to stay at home and practice physical distancing for months as the first wave of COVID-19 cases in the country won't end until the summer and Canada won't return to normal until there is a vaccine — which could take a year and a half.

Trudeau's starkest comments to date about the pandemic came as Canada's top public health officer predicted it could cost at least 4,500 lives and a government agency announced the Canadian economy lost 1,011,000 jobs in March.

Trudeau said the country is in the early stage of the outbreak because the virus came to Canada later than to some other nations and he said the first wave won't reach its peak until late spring.

Trudeau called it the "challenge of our generation."

"This is the new normal, until a vaccine is developed," Trudeau said. "It will take months of continued, determined effort. We'll need to keep practising physical distancing, staying home and washing our hands."

Once Canada gets through the first wave, some economic activity will start up again, he said.



Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addresses Canadians on the COVID-19 pandemic from Rideau Cottage in Ottawa, Ontario, on Thursday, April 9, 2020.

"It's important that people understand that we will have to be vigilant for a year or year and half. There will be things we are not able to do," Trudeau said.

He said that even after the first wave ends, smaller outbreaks are likely until there is a vaccine.

Canada had more than 19,774 confirmed cases and 461 deaths as of Thursday.

The country has conducted more than 373,000 tests.

Health officials said they

expected the number of Canadians killed by the disease to double over the next week said that without controls in place, models show as many as 80% of Canada's population could become infected, and as many as 350,000 could die.

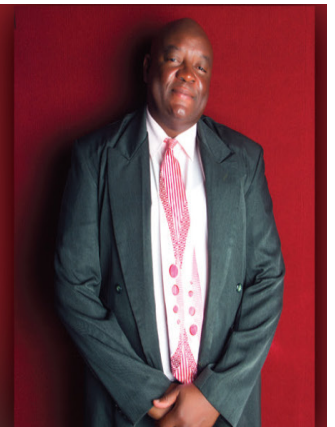
"These stark numbers tell us we must do everything we can now to remain in that best-case scenario," said Dr Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer.



REAL TALK SHOW

WITH DAVE "BEEF" JOSEPH
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DAILY HOROSCOPE



Aries

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

Today's the day to get real about your most important partnerships and how to leverage them in order to reach your common goals. This is an ideal time to improve your negotiation tactics to be more inclusive or to polish your powers of persuasion in an effort to gain support for your most cherished causes. People are willing to show up for you, as long as the guidelines are clear and the goals are achievable and beneficial for everyone involved. Consider the needs of the community and you'll be sure to achieve maximum results.



Gemini

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)

More social distractions than usual may pop up for you today, but the benefit is you can tap into the motivation and drive from the people in your spheres. The connections that offer you different points of view, practical advice, or help toward your endeavors are the ones to pay attention to. The early evening marks a move toward sorting through the ideas you gathered and discerning which ones will be most helpful in achieving your long-term goals. Use the collective momentum to anchor your deepest desires.



Leo

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

There's a productive pressure in the air today that fuels you as you tackle your to-do list. This momentum is strongest when buoyed by a solid foundation at home, such as having minimal distractions while you work. You may need to complete tasks you thought you could rely on others for, but it should be easy as you have the power necessary to make up for their shortcomings. Don't allow feelings of disappointment or resentment toward others to build. You won't have to handle everything on your own for much longer.



Libra

Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

You may feel stuck or like you're lacking inspiration today. In fact, it's possible you'll question how the path you've taken in life stacks up against the expectations you had for yourself in your youth. Whether you're feeling on track or have slightly lost your way, this evening offers a chance to dive into the activities that fill you up and help you reclaim your passion. Take one small step at a time toward your goals and create a routine that allows room to feed your soul. It's about the journey, not the destination.



Sagittarius

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

You may get a nudge toward making your financial dreams a reality today, but sometimes lucky breaks look more like motivation than magical saviors. It's up to you whether you allow your grandiose dreams to inundate or inspire you. To make money moves, you've got to have a practice that uplifts you, yet is also sustainable. The evening brings new perspective into where your subliminal fears may be holding you back from creating the exact reality you desire. Ease into sleep with a focus on what you want your existence to look like, not just the major wins.



Aquarius

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

Your alarm clock might sound more like your life's purpose calling; fortunately, you could have the vision and drive to answer today. Your subconscious motivations and external circumstances get a boost that can aid you in pushing through any fatigue you've been battling. Concentrate on what actions you can take right now and let what's lacking in your life take a back seat. The evening hours transition into practical solutions that help you get to your destination. Allow your earlier momentum to serve as a map that guides you toward constructive outcomes.



Taurus

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

The details of your daily duties loom large for you today, and the key is to keep taking practical, tangible steps toward your goals so you don't get overwhelmed by the full scope of what's on your plate. The evening offers a reprieve from the stresses of the day by shifting your attention to your relationships with others. You can't do it all alone and no one is asking you to. Take a cue from your closest confidantes and see what types of support, insights, or advice they may have to offer.



Cancer

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

Whether you're on the giving or receiving end, your shared commitments with others could hang over you today. Domestic matters call to you, and it's more evident than ever who is pulling their weight and how you'd like to achieve greater bliss. Remember, you get a hand in the contracts you create, as well as the enforcement of the rules. The evening offers a push to get clear about what you need from this situation. Now is your chance to renegotiate these agreements to be more favorable for you and everyone involved.



Virgo

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sept 22)

You'll propel yourself toward fulfillment today if you can take your everyday tasks and infuse them with a sense of higher purpose or creativity. It's easy to get lost in the details of everything you have to do, especially if these things are central to your feelings of accomplishment. The evening's energies will focus on the minutiae of it all, and you'll be glad you took the earlier part of the day to remind yourself of what's driving you forward. Any progress made now brings you closer to your end goal.



Scorpio

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

The structures you've built your life upon and the assumptions that drive your subconscious could both get a check-up now. Whether it's a message from your dream that sticks with you or an insight that adds a missing puzzle piece, your sense of understanding will be heightened in some way. The Moon moves into your sign today, offering a welcome reprieve from what has been draining you, as well as a chance to integrate the messages you've received. Growth comes from taking action, so consider the ways you can make these abstract realizations applicable to your reality.



Capricorn

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

You have extraordinary concentration today, perhaps out of stress, fear, or concerns about professional issues you're facing. If you find yourself getting frustrated, take a moment to refocus on your contributions and personal incentives for a job well done. By keeping your innermost motives in mind, it can help you continue putting one foot in front of the other as you make your way toward the overarching end goal. The evening brings some comfort via your social circle, so do what you need to do throughout the day. Relief is coming soon.



Pisces

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

Fears or doubts may be lurking beneath the surface today, seemingly without cause. This could especially be felt as it relates to your inner circle. These emotions stem from a desire to be supported, validated, and worthy of the company you keep. Perhaps you need to show up more for those who need you most, or it may be they don't show up enough for you. You are simply becoming aware of your dynamics, as well as your met or unmet needs. Try to remove the feelings of insecurity so you can see the truth of the matter.

Veteran broadcaster Talks Sports Broadcasting

Veteran Broadcaster Kenny Nibbs appeared on Point FM TIMEOUT Program Thursday talking about his introduction to Sports Broadcasting.

Nibbs said he was an avid cricket fans in the 1970's following legendary West Indies players, Sir Vivian Richards, Sir Andy Roberts, Gordon Greenidge, Desmond Haynes and others.

Nibbs, who said he has never missed a Test match in Antigua, talked about an approach by then secretary of the Antigua and Barbuda

Football Association, Paul "Chet" Greene, who asked him to pen and voice a commercial after hearing a cricket ad he had done.

Nibbs, who packed disco's across the island in the late 70's, 80, and 90's as a disc jockey said he traveled to Montserrat in 1988 to watch Antigua play at Salem Park where he developed a love for football.

In 1991 he produced his first football commercial which led to him traveling with the national team to many tournaments at the public relation officer.

Nibbs engaged TIMEOUT

Co-host Vernon 'Epilus' Edwards Jnr, who was a member of many of the teams with whom he traveled.

The discussion led to the broadcaster discussing funny moments on many tours with many talents sportsmen some of whom are widely recognized by aliases; these include Andreline, Reptile, Zazawaki, Prettyboy, Saxman, Sprocket and many lifelong friendships he forged with players such as Ivor Luke, Joey Christopher, and Quietin Clarke.

Also discussed were great performances by players like Sean Deterville, Derrick Pret-



tyboy Edwards, Ivor Luke, Dadi Greenaway, and a special performance by Zazawaki Green in St. Kitts that led to the fans lifting him off the field after a brilliant performance against the host.

Nibbs, who is employed as a broadcaster at the ABS Radio, noted that times have changed and he has not been to a game for over two years.

In Loving Memory of



Maudrey Veronica Quinlan

30th January 1936 - 10th April 2019

My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength
of my heart and my portion forever.
Psalm 73:26 KJV



I Thought of You Today

I thought of you today,
but that is nothing new.
I thought about you yesterday
and days before that too.
I think of you in silence
I have to speak your name.
All I have are memories
and your picture in a frame.
Your memory is a keepsake
and from which I'll never part.
God has you in his arms,
I have you in my heart.

Author Unknown

Fondly remembered by her
four loving children
Rald, George Jr., Benjamin and Charmain
grandchildren, great-grandchildren,
and other close family and friends.

Clubs need to be more organized

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Athletic Association Everton "Manu" Cornelius is urging local Clubs to be organized if they are to move forward with the improvement of athletics.

Cornelius says there are only four well structured Clubs locally and whenever there is an election pending people come out of the woodwork, register, vote, then disappear and that cannot be good for athletics.

"Certain protocols need to be followed for an organization to be recognized as a Club, there must be a constitution, president, treasurer, secretary and coach to meet the minimal criteria," the president articulated.

He said clubs also need to recognize that they must work in cohesion with the Association and not just do



their own thing. "There must be a master plan that everyone must follow for the overall improvement of the young athletes. Clubs cannot continue to be selfish in their approach to the sport," Cornelius added.

Cornelius said this year has been a quiet year because of the lack of a track which has led to most athletes moving on to other interests. But he noted the younger athletes from seven to twelve have remained in training but are not accustomed to train on grass so they too, have been affected.

The president said two en-

gineers were on island to lay the Mundo track at the YASCO Complex, but they decided to return to their homeland after the outbreak of the coronavirus in Antigua and Barbuda.

The former national sprinter is hoping the virus blows over and the track can be completed later this year or early 2021.

Cornelius also voiced his support for the re-scheduling of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics to 2021 by the International Olympic Committee calling it a progressive decision for all involved.

Cornelius is also hoping for a better line of communication between the association and local clubs as they plan for 2021.

Antigua and Barbuda Athletic Association election is slated for late 2021.

Gymnastics awaiting membership from the NOC

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Gymnastic Association Bridget Murphy is looking forward for assistance from the National Olympic Association to assist with the growth of the sport on the island and move the organization towards participating in more international events.

Murphy, who became involved in the sport at a young age in France, says the local association applied to the NOC for membership; the response was favourable and they are awaiting the guidelines to



become an official member.

She started the local movement of Gymnastic in 2001 after she moved to Antigua with her husband from Jamaica for job purposes.

The movement has led to between 150 to 200 young

athletes presently involved in the sport from age three to seventeen.

Most of what they do presently is recreational, but the association has recently opened up to schools in an effort to expose the sport locally to as many people as possible.

Most of their funding comes through fees paid by parents and sponsorship from local businesses.

A team travelled to Canada a few years ago, and twenty young ladies are presently being groomed for future Olympic participa-

tion.

COVID-19 has halted the program like every other sport worldwide, but the local body has been using the break to renovate its base located on LIAT Road, near the V.C Bird International Airport.

Murphy says equipment are expensive and acceptance to the NOC would go a long way in assisting them secure much needed equipments in executing their ten-year plan.

Anyone interested in joining the organization can contact 464-3111.

Williams: Associations and Ministry of Sports need to work together

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Tennis Federation, Cordell Williams, is expressed some of the sentiments being felt by residents of Antigua and Barbuda under the conditions of the state of emergency.

"I am bored and trying to find things to do during this stressful period of COVID-19 as all sporting activities have been brought to a halt in Antigua and Barbuda," Williams told PointExpress sports.

Williams said two weeks before the break, the top ten juniors were in intense training, but since the imposition of the curfew, things have

changed and he is hoping the players who he has not been in contact with during the break, are keeping themselves in shape.

The former national player said once the players have a wall at their disposal they can work on volleys, control and touch among other things. He added that there are several drills they can do at home.

Cordell said the International Tennis Federation has put out things on their website to assist their members with staying active during the break.

Williams is hoping that sporting organizations and the ministry of sports can foster a closer working relationship to help advance sports on the island. Cordell says most associations cannot afford coaches and there need to be a way to incorporate the coaches employed in the ministry of sports



with the associations.

There are five local players presently in University honing their craft and getting an education. The president noted that most players who have joined the organization with a vision of going to College have been successful.

I consider 2020 over based on most tournaments has been cancelled and the Federation is planning for 2021 Williams noted.



Olympian profile: Jalese Gordon

Antigua and Barbuda will be represented in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics in the field of sailing by 18-year old Jalese Gordon.

Gordon started her sporting career participating in swimming and tennis but she always had a love water sports, which eventually led to her being introduced to the legendary Carl James.

The 18 year who had a slow start to the sport eventually found her footing and has since represented the nation, traveling to China, Poland, Texas, and Guadeloupe.

The former Island Academy graduate says on her travels she has had a lot of explaining to do since most people are not aware of her small homeland, Antigua.

"I could not be where I am at today without the support of my parents who have been tremendous. My Mom provides emotional support



when I am down and my dad, who love sports, gives me the confidence to push on," she remarked.

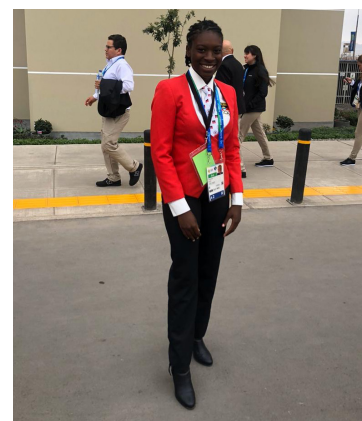
Gordon is encouraging more local athletes to gravitate to the sport. She says it has been challenging sometimes but she has managed to dig deep and continue to face the challenge.

Young Gordon explained that she learned about her participation in the Olympics through her dad who received a call from her coach, but it was not until Carl called her himself, that it sunk in, leading to an incredible feeling of joy.

"I have always dream since the age of ten of going to the Olympics," Gordon added.

Coach James said he is

proud of Gordon who is in a great position being so young, attending her first Olympics. In terms of expectation, James, an Olympian himself, noted that Gordon has the opportunity to get her feet wet and observed what is expected for



2024/25.

James added that there will be individuals there attending their fourth Olympics and never medaled so the young athlete is in a good place.

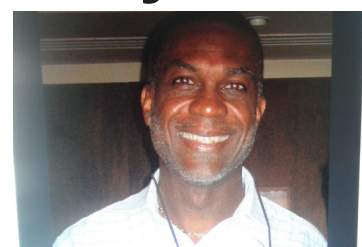
Gordon will carry the flag of Antigua and Barbuda in the Laser Radial event.

Holding: I had a bottle of wine with my wife

Former West Indies fast bowler Michael Holding said he had a bottle of wine with his wife when he learned Jamaican Dave Cameron had lost the CWI elections to Ricky Skerritt last year.

Speaking on the Mason and Friends program, Holding says he is happy with Skerritt and his executive's first year and the changes they have made introducing the different committees to steer the progress of the team.

The legendary fast bowler



and Sky Sports Cricket Analyst added that he is also happy with the many players including senior performers who are excited about representing the regional team.

Holding says he wishes Skerritt the best in his second year and he hopes that the platform they have set reaps success.

The Jamaican also hinted at retirement.



DEWS