

THE DIOCESE OF THE BAHAMAS AND THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS



**THE BISHOP'S CHARGE TO THE
ONE-HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SECOND SESSION
OF SYNOD
ON
TUESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER 2025
HOLY TRINITY ACTIVITIES CENTRE
STAPLEDON GARDENS**

PART 11

My sisters and brothers of the Houses of Clergy and Laity in this 122nd Session of Synod, I wish to address you further.

**A Response to the Announcement by
the Global Fellowship of
Confessing Anglicans (GAFCON)
that it will sever ties
with the Worldwide
Anglican Communion**

By Bishop Laish Boyd

**For the 122nd Session of the
Synod of the Diocese of The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands, in
anticipation
of an Official statement of
The Rt. Rev. Phillip Wright,
Bishop of Belize and Senior Bishop of the Church in the Province of the West Indies
on behalf of the Province**

On Thursday of last week, 16th October, GAFCON voted to leave the Anglican Communion and form an alternate network. This is a rejection of the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, and the Primates Meeting, principal Instruments of Unity for the Worldwide Anglican Communion to which we belong. This Action reorders the Anglican Communion as we know it by splitting it into two.

The Church in the Province of the West Indies, of which The Diocese of the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands is a part, has no Archbishop presently. We will elect one, God-willing, at Provincial Synod next month. Our Senior Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Philip Wright, Bishop of Belize, will issue a statement on behalf of the Province in due course, However, for the benefit of the synod and the local church, I felt it necessary to offer some guiding thoughts, since we are all together in synod session.

Firstly, let me say that I am opposed to the split and consider it to be an unwise, unhealthy and un-Anglican course of action. I would venture to say that a majority of the Anglican Communion feels the same way. Anglicanism is a spectrum of beliefs and practices and has always been characterized by diversity, e.g., despite the difference between high church and low church practice, which has sparked controversy and even division throughout the course of history, we have remained one communion.

Over the last 30 years, because of the controversy that arose across the world over same sex marriage and the ordaining of homosexual clergy, the challenge has been once again

to stay together. Our own Archbishop Drexel Gomez, of blessed memory, was at the forefront of discussions for us to find a common way forward.

But let us pause a moment and explain what GAFCON is. It is a movement that began with a Global Anglican Future Conference in 2008 in Jerusalem, and continuing thereafter, bringing together bishops from Africa (which form the majority of the membership), Asia, South and North America. They were concerned about the acceptance of same-sex marriage and openly homosexual clergy in parts of the Anglican Communion. The network also refers to itself by another version of the acronym, The Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans. It comprises about 50% of practicing Anglicans worldwide and is comprised principally of African Anglicans, Africa being the largest and fastest growing part of the Anglican Church. Though comprised of about 50% numerically that does not mean 50% of the major leaders, dioceses nor provinces of the Communion.

The announcement by GAFCON came shortly after the announcement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Sarah Mullally - but has been in the making for some time.

We must recognize the fact that in Anglicanism, every Province throughout the worldwide Communion is autonomous. No province can dictate to another, and no province is bound to follow the practices or decisions of another. There has never been one central person who, or a central body which act as a magisterium to dictate the way forward for the rest of the Communion.

From its earliest days we have always maintained that Scripture, Tradition and Reason have been the foundational legs of our faith, and this has been maintained by most of the churches which make up our diverse family as Anglicans. As long as we stand on Scripture, Reason and Tradition we are well within the belt of Anglicanism. Regardless of differences in opinions, we have tried, in our varied ways, to maintain ***“the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace”*** (Ephesians 4:3). The last few centuries have been difficult with a number of controversial issues which have led to strong disagreements and even to some persons or groups breaking away, but they have never led to a complete breakdown or a total dissolving of the relationships with all churches that make up our Communion.

On the same aforementioned Thursday, 16th October, we celebrated The Oxford Martyrs Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer, who gave their lives to give us a faith that was reformed and which has existed throughout these many centuries despite the challenges which have come our way.

I respect the fact that persons and groups may have differences in opinion and even differing deep convictions. History and life itself are full of examples. We must agree with the Secretary General of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, Bishop Anthony Poggio, who, quoting the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order

(IASCUFO), wrote that there are even times when, because of our strong views on issues ***“members of the Body need to walk at a distance from one another.”*** However, he says, it is at times like these ***“that we must summon up patience and love... in order to better seek and serve the truth and unity of our shared vocation.”***

Bishop Poggo concludes: ***“Theological uniformity cannot be demanded or expected without the hard work of discernment over time. Doctrinal, geographical and regional groupings of churches (for example... GAFCON, and others) can help us reform and renew our life together.”*** In other words, such groups need to build in spite of... and not divide.

Before we decide to reject the veracity of other ministers, because of differing views or beliefs, and to get rid of the Instruments of Unity (the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, The Anglican Consultative Council, and the Primates Meeting) it would be wise to seriously consider doing what the Oxford Martyrs did, and that is reforming what we have rather than running the risk of opening the door for an endless series of ruptures and divisions to the detriment of the entire Communion. Such rifts in the Communion have not fostered the love and the reconciling power of Christ, but have created more divisions in Christendom, fostering bitterness and mistrust, rather than uniting a family in need of healing graces.

As Anglicans we have always followed the suggestion of The Thirty-nine Articles which reminds us that the efficacious working of the Sacraments is not inhibited nor corrupted by the unworthiness of the minister. So how could we justify rejecting the ministry of key officers and integral instruments of leadership because of differing views.

This past week, we lost one of the champions of our Anglican Communion, the Most Reverend Drexel Wellington Gomez, aforementioned, who tried his best through dialogue, written materials and meetings to keep us together. He believed in a Communion that could find its way by ***“mending the net”*** rather than by ripping and discarding parts of the church. There are some solutions that seem simple and efficacious for here and now but are detrimental to our future as a church. Even St. Paul, struggling with the Church in Corinth, made it clear that there are bound to be differences but called that same Church at Corinth ***“to pursue the things that make for peace and build up the common life”*** (Romans 14:19). The greatest challenge for our generation is to look back at the efforts of those who have championed the cause of the Communion, and to move our imperfect family to a greater way forward.

The present situation calls us to meaningful dialogue, and not to self-inflicted injury that will only harm the cause of Christ and bring further bitterness and resentment between those who make up the Body of Christ. There are multiplicities of ways and options open for the church to move us forward, rather than simply writing off persons who differ from us.

Maybe it is time for us to go back to some serious studies on what we really believe, and what we affirm, and affirm the diversity which has always been present in our Anglican Communion.

I call us to pray for our worldwide Anglican Communion and to work where we are planted to build unity and understanding.

Theme 2026

In 2026 we will continue with 2025 theme, “**Family Matters**”. This is a timely theme and relevant to the overall challenges we face in our 2 societies and in our world. We are grateful to Fr. Kirkland Russell and the Theme Committee for their monthly material and look forward to their work and innovation in the new year.

Funeral of Archbishop Drexel Gomez

The funeral for Archbishop Drexel Gomez is set for Thursday 6th November at Christ Church Cathedral. Further information will be shared in due course.

The Ordination to the Diaconate

The Ordination of Jamal Turnquest was set for 6th November the Feast of St. Leonard, Hermit. It has been rescheduled to Tuesday 4th June, the day in 1861 when their diocese was founded.

Blood Drive

Please support the Blood Drive advertised in my Charge last night. The staff of the Princess Margaret Hospital’s Blood Bank will be set up in the balcony from 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

I am grateful to Fr. Jude Edomwonyi, Hospital and Prison Chaplain, who has organized this initiative on our behalf. He has a sign-up sheet upon which 12 persons have already put their names. Please see him and sign up. Please make the sacrifice to give blood.

Provincial Synod 2025

Provincial Synod is set for 8 – 13 November 2025 at Super Club Breezes. The Committee is Chaired by Archdeacon Dwight Rolle and Co-chaired by Fr. DeAngelo Bowe. At the Synod the new Archbishop will be elected.

Thank you for your attention.