



Word of CPAL - July 2023

THE NEW PROVINCE OF THE CARIBBEAN

July 31, 2023

A new province for the Caribbean area began since July 31st, 2023, for the CPAL and for the universal Society. It has been years since some dreamed of it and worked for its definition, and with the decree of Father General it has become a reality today.

In spite of the years of preparation and the search for adequate ways to carry out the union between the Province of the Antilles and the Region of Guyana-Jamaica, it is a new birth, which requires a joint construction of the apostolic unity.

It is a Province that is born, and as a newness, it still requires development in order to respond with generosity and creativity faithful to the mission of Reconciliation and Justice that is entrusted to it. The multicultural richness invites the whole apostolic body of the Society of Jesus to join in a celebration in which all those involved in this human, Christian, social, ecclesial and Jesuit exchange, should be enriched.

There are many orientations, documents and, suggestions to build an adequate apostolic plan that responds to the realities of each of the places involved in this new province, but as Father General insists, the fundamental thing is to seek the guidance of the Spirit, where the Spirit wants to lead us is the key of discernment that will allow us to make apostolic, personal and community decisions and act accordingly.

In the celebration of the announcement of this new province, we were able to hear in the Gospel (Lk. 14:25-33) two fundamental aspects: first, the radicalness of the call of Jesus, who invites us to be disciples, opening ourselves to his proposal and distancing ourselves from criteria and values that deny the universal fraternity of the sons and daughters of God, and which are sometimes imposed to us, in a cultural way, as absolutes. In this way, the creation of this new Province invites all of us in CPAL to heal the historical, personal, social, ecclesial, national and regional wounds, in order to look at our mission in the Latin American and Caribbean context, and thus listen freely to the voice of God in the midst of our realities.

The second aspect speaks about the necessary foresight to follow Jesus, the firm decision to put all our energies into it, to gain strength and to project our discipleship life. This reaffirms the way in which the universal Society wants to carry out its mission today, through discernment and planning, with Collaboration and networking as characteristics of that way.

While it is true that the emergence of the new Province is a response to the last General Congregations of the Society of Jesus and to the mandate they have given to the Fathers General regarding the revision of the mission and the organization of the government for it, the Caribbean Province has been trying to become a reality for years, we must recognize those who dreamed about it and those who have worked to make it a reality, who have made a noble and dedicated effort to

this configuration, and that there are still many more who will continue to join this effort from that generous perspective of service to the mission.

There are still some concrete issues regarding the linking of all the localities of this new province that continue to be a challenge, such as how to understand the relationship between the Caribbean islands and the Amazonian region of Guyana; but I am sure that along the way there will be light to continue, because the confidence that we are not alone and the openness to that presence promised by the Lord (Mt. 20:28) will make the mission to bear fruit.

I want to end by telling the members of the new Province that they can count on all of us, the CPAL, that they can count on the Apostolic Body in Latin America and the entire Caribbean, that we trust that their journey will help the rest of us to walk along paths of openness to the union of souls under the same mission, and that it will inspire us to increase the supra and interprovincial vision of the mission in our region.

P. Rafael Garrido, S.J.

CPAL President

