

Highest-ranking Vatican official to ever visit Guyana due April 20



Cardinal Claudio Hummes

The highest-ranking Vatican official ever to visit Guyana will arrive here on April 20th for a three day visit. Cardinal Claudio Hummes from Brazil is a former archbishop of Sao Paulo and is currently the president of the Commission for Amazonia of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil.

Cardinals are the most senior clergymen in the Catholic Church below the Pope in the hierarchy. They are Bishops of important 'sees' (dioceses) and come from around the world reflecting the Catholic Church's diversity. Some Cardinals may head departments of the Vatican. The title of Cardinal is given by the Pope as a personal decision.

The main purpose of the Cardinal's visit to Guyana is to present the vision of REPAM, which is the Amazonian Church Network formed in 2014. This also includes discussing the relevance of Pope Francis' recent encyclical *Laudato Si* (Praise Be To You) to conserving the Amazon and helping the poor in the area.

The encyclical which has the subtitle 'On care for our common home', is considered to be of great importance in clarifying the mission of the [\(please turn to page 2\)](#)

Tragedy of the Cross still with us today, Bp Francis tells hundreds at Black Bush Pilgrimage



Berbice Catholics reenact the Way of the Cross [\[please see article on page 2\]](#) (Romeo Abrams photo)

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Bishop's Engagements

- Sunday 20th March**
PALM SUNDAY
07:30 hrs Blessing of Palms and Mass at Cathedral
- Tuesday 22nd March**
17:00 hrs Chrism Mass at Cathedral
- Thursday 24th March**
SACRED TRIDUUM BEGINS
17:00 hrs Mass of the Lord's Supper at Cathedral
- Friday 25th March**
GOOD FRIDAY
09:00 hrs Stations of the Cross at Cathedral
15:00 hrs Commemoration of the Lord's Passion
- Saturday 26th March**
23:00 hrs Easter Vigil at Cathedral
- Sunday 27th March**
EASTER SUNDAY
17:00 hrs Solemn Mass at Cathedral



✠ Francis Alleyne OSB

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EDITORIAL

Take Up My Cross?

By James Martin, SJ, a Jesuit priest and culture editor of America

Palm Sunday raises at least two important spiritual questions for Christians: What does it mean to be like Jesus? And what does it mean to take up our crosses, just like he did?

First, you don't need to go looking for your cross. Life gives them to you. Whether it's an illness or a tough family relationship or trouble in school or problems on the job. The real cross is the one that you don't want.

Because it's hardly a cross if you want it.

Just like it was for Jesus.

Second, we are asked by Jesus to accept our crosses.

Now, what does that mean? Well, first it means accepting that suffering is a reality in your life, and being honest about it. Perhaps more importantly, it means not passing along the bitterness that you feel. That doesn't mean that when you're with friends or family members or counselors, you can't talk about it or complain about it or even cry about it. That's both healthy and natural.

But it does mean that if you're angry about your boss or about school or about your family, you don't pass along that anger or bitterness or meanness to others. If you have a lousy boss, does that mean that you should be mean to your family? If you have a difficult family situation, does that mean that you should be angry with your co-workers? If you are having problems at school, does that mean that you should be cruel to your family?

Your cross is your cross. It shouldn't become someone else's.

Third, wait for the resurrection. Because in every cross there will be some invitation to new life, to a new way of relating to God, and often in a way that may not be immediately apparent.

In other words, where is the new life that God is holding out for you? And how will it come? Is it in forgiving someone in your family? Moving away from an unhealthy work environment? Letting go of something that prevented you from being more loving? Trusting in yourself a little more?

Surrendering yourself to the future that God has in store for you?

God's gift of resurrection is usually a complete surprise, just like it was for the Apostles. And just as the Apostles discovered on Easter Sunday, the resurrection does not come when you expect it. It sometimes takes a long time to come at all.

And when it does come, it's often not what you would expect it to look like.

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Highest-ranking Vatican official to ever visit Guyana due April (From Front Page)

Church in response to ecological challenges. However the Pope's encyclical is about far more than climate change and the environment. It is also an appeal to hear the cry of the poor. It ties environmental degradation directly to poverty and says the continued abuse of the natural world has the greatest effect on residents of the developing world and serves to keep them at a disadvantage.

The Amazonian Church Network is an attempt to bring together the work of the Catholic Church throughout the Amazonian Region. The network is made up of the nine countries that share part of the Amazon forest. Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana are three out of those nine and as yet are not really "on board" because of the lack of a common language with the other countries of South America. It is expected that the Cardinal's visit will begin a dialogue to explore how the Church in these three countries can recognize the important contribution we can make to this collaborative mission.

The Amazon territory is the largest tropical forest in the world. It covers six million square kilometres and includes the territories of Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru and Brazil. It is home to 2,779,478 indigenous people, comprising 390 indigenous tribes and 137 isolated (uncontacted) peoples with their valuable ancestral cultures, and 240 spoken languages belonging to 49 linguistic families.

At the launch of REPAM Peruvian Archbishop Pedro Ricardo Barreto Jimeno, S.J., who is also President of the Department of Justice and Solidarity of the Latin American Episcopal Council, explained that the Amazon is "a territory that is devastated and threatened by the concessions made by States to transnational corporations. Large-scale mining projects, monoculture and climate change place its lands and natural environment at great risk", leading to the destruction of cultures, undermining the self-determination of peoples and above all affronting Christ incarnate in the people who live there (indigenous and riparian peoples, peasant farm-

ers, afro-descendants and urban populations). REPAM was founded as "God's answer to this heartfelt and urgent need to care for the life of people so they are able to live in harmony with nature, starting from the widespread and varied presence of members and structures of the Church in Pan-Amazonia".

Described by many as the Pope's greatest friend and the most influential cardinal, Cardinal Hummes was sitting next to Pope Francis in the Sistine Chapel when he was elected in 2013. He whispered to the newly-elected Pope "Don't forget the poor!" and Pope Francis said that immediately he remembered St. Francis of Assisi and "the name Francis came into my heart". When the newly-elected Pope Francis appeared on the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica that same night shortly after his election, Cardinal Hummes was among the cardinals who accompanied the new pope and stood beside him at his immediate left on the balcony.

Planning is being done to work out the details of the Cardinal's visit to Guyana. ❖

Black Bush Pilgrimage (From Front Page)

By Leon Suseran

His Lordship Bishop Francis Alleyne OSB reminded scores of Catholics from across the Berbice parishes on Sunday that the tragedy of the cross is still with us even today. He was the Chief Celebrant of the Mass at the Annual Lenten Pilgrimage to Black Bush Polder on the Corentyne. The Mass was said at the Holy Name R.C. Parish Church, Mibikuri. "And so, the tragedy of the cross is still with us and as we continue our prayer today, this special day of pilgrimage and reflection, let us put our thoughts and minds to be aware of this, allowing it to soak in, allowing it to percolate within, the passion of our Lord is still with us today!"

He noted that His mercy is also with us today, even in the midst of profound suffering.

Bishop Francis posited that whenever we pray the Stations of the Cross, "we get closer to the footsteps of Jesus."

He thanked the many persons who made the activity "authentic" for those who watched, observed and attended the re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross along the roadway. "Acting it out gives much deeper appreciation," he said.

The Roman Catholic leader also reminded those present of the "need to take note of the terrible damage to society caused by fear." Reflecting on the Gospel reading for that Sunday, Bishop Francis

explained the story of the woman caught in the act of adultery and brought to Jesus by the authorities. The Gospel story the woman who broke the Law and had to be stoned to death was an attempt to put Jesus on the spot, the bishop stated. He pointed out that for one to have committed adultery, one first had to be married. "But it's not about the act, but the terrible act of betrayal, he said, for example, a parent abandoning a child. He noted also that amidst all the confusion, Christ does not compromise and does not become one with the crowd. He counseled that we radiate Christ's example to the world."

The Bishop also spoke about the necessity to vote in the upcoming Local Government Elections (LGE). "Every Christian has a duty-- a responsibility to go to the polls," he said. He noted that just about eight persons attended the recent LGE Meeting open to all stakeholders at the Marian Academy in Georgetown. If you don't vote, then don't complain afterwards, Bishop Francis cautioned. "It's very irresponsible to stand (or) sit on the sidelines and to point fingers. ... Those who take up seats of responsibility should not do it for power but in service," he reminded the faithful.

The pilgrimage involved the re-enactment of the stations of the cross by the youths from the parishes of Port Mourant and Springlands. The scenes attracted scores of curious onlookers who

lined the roadway along the route, which led into the compound of Holy Name Church, where a large wooden cross was used to hold aloft the body of Jesus. Realistic costumes were used.

Special thanks to Fr. Ramesh Vanan, SJ and the teams from Port Mourant and Springlands for putting on a re-enactment of such very high quality. Cell phone cameras were busy snapping as pivotal scenes such as the stripping of Jesus, whipping and especially the hoisting of the laden cross into the air by the Roman soldiers.

After the concelebrated Eucharist by Fathers Mark Lakra, Ramesh Vanan, Joachim DeMello, Mike Traher and Bishop Francis, a scrumptious lunch of cook-up and fruits was served.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal group from Campbellville, Georgetown also held a Penance Service after the lunch break.

The priests were also available to listen to confessions.

Many thanks to the Black Bush parish for pulling off this event now in its fifth year. It was truly a success.

Kudos to the BBP NDC, the police, and Bro Dhanpat, President of the Parish Council and all the members for planning and coordinating the event. The pilgrimage this year was the biggest ever, and we are certainly looking forward to another successful event next year. ❖