

Name	Ministry/Organisation	Role
LEELA RAMDEEN	Catholic Commission for Social Justice	Chair

1. Project Summary:

Production of Resources to promote Catholic Social Teaching.

Message: The Church needs people who will be advocates for social justice (SJ), but in order to be effective advocates, the Faithful/all people of good will must be au fait with the Church’s social doctrine and must view SJ as an integral part of the Gospel of Christ/the moral teaching of the Catholic Church. Sadly, Catholic Social Teaching continues to remain the Church’s best kept secret.

As the US Bishops stated in their 1998 document - *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*: “...many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of the Church is an essential part of Catholic faith. This poses a serious challenge for all Catholics, since it weakens our capacity to be a Church that is true to the demands of the Gospel. We need to do more to share the social mission and message of our Church...Because this commitment to social justice is at the heart of who we are and what we believe, it must be shared more effectively...

“The values of the Church's social teaching must not be treated as tangential or optional. They must be a core part of teaching and formation. Without our social teaching, schools, catechetical programs, and other formation programs would be offering an incomplete presentation of our Catholic tradition. This would fall short of our mission and would be a serious loss for those in our educational and catechetical programs...

“The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. It offers moral principles and coherent values that are badly needed in our time. In this time of widespread violence and diminished respect for human life and dignity in our country and around the world, the Gospel of life and the biblical call to justice need to be proclaimed and shared with new clarity, urgency, and energy.

“The Scriptures say, "Without a vision the people perish" (Prv 29:18). As Catholics, we have an inspiring vision in our social teaching. In a world that hungers for a sense of meaning and moral direction, this teaching offers ethical criteria for action. In a society of rapid change and often confused moral values, this teaching offers consistent moral guidance for the future... The test for our Church is not simply have we ‘kept the faith,’ but have we shared the faith.”

Being a Christian involves more than prayer. We are called to walk with the “two feet of Christian service.” Works of mercy/charity and works of social action. Remember the words of Pope Pius XI stated in *Divini Redemptoris* (1937):

“Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account...Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt themselves from the great duties imposed by justice.”

Although there is a relationship between charity and justice they are not the same. Working for justice involves changing systems, structures, institutions and public policies that are at the root cause of injustices such as poverty and social exclusion. It is important to understand the interplay and differences between the two approaches. Social ministry, in the Catholic tradition, is a "both/and" proposition. While we meet immediate needs today, we work for long-term changes that will create a more just tomorrow – for all.

The Commission’s challenge is to raise awareness of the meaning of true Discipleship/servant leadership in today's world. Christ’s mandate is clearly outlined in Luke 4:18: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.*”

The enormity of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us should send us from the images of Christ crucified on Calvary to the images of Christ crucified on the highways and byways of our country and in our world. It is because of the cross that we must continue to work tirelessly for social justice.

I was fortunate to have been present at the Vatican on 25 October 2004 when the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church was presented to the world by Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, the then President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. The document presents "in a complete and systematic manner, even if by means of an overview, the Church’s social teaching, which is the fruit of careful Magisterial reflection and an expression of the Church’s constant commitment in fidelity to the grace of salvation wrought in Christ and in loving concern for humanity’s destiny" (*Compendium*, 8)...

"The future of the Church's social doctrine in the modern world will depend on the continually renewed understanding of this social doctrine as being rooted in the mission proper to the Church; of how this doctrine is born from the Word of God and from the living faith of the Church; of how it is an expression of the Church's service to the world, in which the salvation of Christ is to be proclaimed in word and deed.

It depends on the renewed understanding, therefore, of how this doctrine is connected with all aspects of the Church's life and action: the sacraments, the liturgy, catechesis, and pastoral activity. The Church's social doctrine, which "is an essential part of the Christian message"(John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 5), must be known, propagated and lived. When, in any way whatsoever, one loses the keen awareness that this social doctrine belongs to the Church's mission, social doctrine itself is manipulated, falling prey to various forms of ambiguity and partisan application."

Catholics have a biblical mandate to build a just society. The Church's social teaching offers principles for reflection, criteria for judgment and **guidelines for action**.

Our scriptures are replete with examples of the need for us to build God's Kingdom of justice e.g.

"This is what the Lord asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8).

"... let justice flow like water, and integrity like an unfailing stream" (Amos 5:24).

"The Lord loves virtue and justice..." (Psalm 33:5) and see:

Psalms 82:3-4, 106:3 & 140:12; Proverbs 28:5 & 29:7; Deuteronomy 16:20 and 27:19; Job 37:23; Leviticus 19:15; Jeremiah 22:3; Isaiah 1:17, 10:1-2; 30:18; 51:4-5, 61:8; Ezekiel 34:15-16; Zechariah 7:9; Matthew 12:18, 23:23 & 25:45; Luke 10:30-37 & 11:42; and Acts 17:30-32.

Our mandate to build a just society comes not only from scripture but also from the Church's social doctrine/teaching, which, as the US Bishops remind us, "provides us with a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of our society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents."

As the Synod of Bishops 1971 document, *Justice in the World* (6) states: “Action on behalf of justice is a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel.” Since Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (On the condition of the working classes), our Popes have been urging us to act for justice.

Pope Francis continues the Church's tradition in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*. In it he said: “It is my hope that this Encyclical Letter, which is now added to the body of the Church’s social teaching, can help us to acknowledge the appeal, immensity and urgency of the challenge we face. (15)” His encyclical incorporates a number of key SJ themes.

The following are just a few quotations that help to root SJ as integral to the life of a Catholic:

- "Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice.

“It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came "to bring glad tidings to the poor . . . liberty to captives . . . recovery of sight to the blind"(Lk 4:18-19), and who identified himself with "the least of these," the hungry and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:45). Catholic social teaching is built on a commitment to the poor. This commitment arises from our experiences of Christ in the Eucharist...Because this commitment to social justice is at the heart of who we are and what we believe, it must be shared more effectively...The test for our Church is not simply have we "kept the faith," but have we shared the faith...Catholic educators and catechists can best share this message of hope and challenge for the future. We support and encourage them for this holy work.

“This is not a new mission. More than two thousand years ago, Jesus in his hometown synagogue read the words from Isaiah that outlined his work on earth, as well as the Church's mission through the centuries and the special tasks of Catholic educators and catechists today: (See Luke 4:18)...

Sharing our social tradition more fully and clearly is an essential way to bring good news, liberty, and new sight to a society and world in desperate need of God's justice and peace."

(US Bishops, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/sharing-catholic-social-teaching-challenges-and-directions.cfm>).

- **“With her social teaching the Church seeks to proclaim the Gospel and make it present in the complex network of social relations.”**

Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 40: AAS 58 (1966), 1057-1059.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, 14: AAS 71 (1979), 284.

- **“By means of her social doctrine, the Church takes on the task of proclaiming what the Lord has entrusted to her. She makes the message of the freedom and redemption wrought by Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, present in human history.”**

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2419.

John Paul II, Homily at Pentecost for the First Centenary of *Rerum Novarum* (19 May 1991): AAS 84 (1992), 282.

- **“With her social doctrine not only does the Church not stray from her mission but she is rigorously faithful to it.”**

Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 9, 30: AAS 68 (1976), 10-11.

John Paul II, *Address to the Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops*, Puebla, Mexico (28 January 1979), III/4-7: AAS 71 (1979), 199-204.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Libertatis Conscientia*, 64-64, 80: AAS 79 (1987), 581-582, 590-591.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, 8: AAS 71 (1979), 270.

- **“The Church’s social doctrine is an integral part of her evangelizing ministry.”**

Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 29: AAS 68 (1976), 25.

Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 31: AAS 68 (1976), 26.

- **“The Church’s social doctrine ‘is itself a valid instrument of evangelization’ and is born of the always new meeting of the Gospel message and social life.”**

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 54: AAS 83 (1991), 860.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 41: AAS 80 (1988), 570-572.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 5: AAS 83 (1991), 799.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 54: AAS 83 (1991), 860.

- **“The Church does not assume responsibility for every aspect of life in society, but speaks with the competence that is hers, which is that of proclaiming Christ the Redeemer.”**

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2420.

Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 42: AAS 58 (1966), 1060.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 41: AAS 80 (1988), 570-572.

- **“With her social doctrine, the Church aims ‘at helping man on the path of salvation.’”**

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 54: AAS 83 (1991), 860.

- **“The Church has the right to be a teacher for mankind, a teacher of the truth of faith: the truth not only of dogmas but also of the morals whose source lies in human nature itself and in the Gospel.”**

Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, 14: AAS 58 (1966), 940.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 27, 64, 110: AAS 85 (1993), 1154-1155, 1183-1184, 1219-1220.

- **“This right of the Church is at the same time a duty, because she cannot forsake this responsibility without denying herself and her fidelity to Christ.”**

John Paul II, *Message to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (2 December 1978): *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, I (1978), 261.

John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Centesimus Annus*, 5: AAS 83 (1991), 799.

- **“Because of the public relevance of the Gospel and faith, because of the corrupting effects of injustice, that is, of sin, the Church cannot remain indifferent to social matters.”**

Paul VI, *Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 34: AAS 68 (1976), 28.

Code of Canon Law, canon 747, § 2. (See "Catholic Social Thought": EVANGELIZATION AND SOCIAL DOCTRINE <https://avemarialaw.libguides.com/c.php?g=265761&p=1777400>)

Pope Benedict XVI reminded Catholics that the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice”. And more recently, Pope Francis said: "None of us can think we are exempt from concerns for the poor and for social justice.....Jesus tells us what the ‘protocol’ is, on which we will be judged. It is the one we read in chapter 25 of Matthew’s Gospel”

From all that I have said above, it is clear that social justice is an essential element of our faith. If we are to have a personal relationship with God; if we are to build the civilisation of love, if we are to promote authentic integral human development, then it is essential that we keep to the forefront of our minds the social doctrine of our Church and act to build his Kingdom of justice, peace, truth, love and freedom.

We are living in a time when social ills such as moral relativism, individualism, selfishness, social exclusion and economic injustice threaten our society/world and stand as obstacles to building the common good. Let us commit ourselves to walk with the two feet of Christian service – works of mercy and works of social action. There is much work to do in the Lord’s vineyard. CCSJ urges all parishes, schools, Archdiocesan Departments/organisations/businesses to raise their awareness of the following SJ principles that will enable us to live as authentic disciples of Christ:

Sanctity of Life & The Dignity of the Human Person

The Common Good

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Family & Community

Participation in the economic, political, social and cultural life of society

Rights and Responsibilities

Economic Justice

Environmental Stewardship – Care for God’s Creation

The role of Government & Subsidiarity

Global Solidarity & Development

The dignity of work and the Rights of Workers

Promotion of Peace and Disarmament

Universal Destination of Goods

See *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* to learn more about each of these principles:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

CCSJ ends this message with the words of Pope Francis who said to those gathered on July 25, 2013 in the soccer field of a Rio de Janeiro shanty town, during the 28th World Youth Day:

“I would like to make an appeal to those in possession of greater resources, to public authorities and to all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity! No-one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world! Everybody, according to his or her particular opportunities and responsibilities, should be

able to make a personal contribution to putting an end to so many social injustices. The culture of selfishness and individualism that often prevails in our society is ...not what builds up and leads to a more habitable world: rather, it is the culture of solidarity that does so; the culture of solidarity means seeing others not as rivals or statistics, but brothers and sisters. And we are all brothers and sisters!” (Pope Francis).

Funding/Budget: \$1,000.00. CCSJ’s publications are printed free of charge by a kind Catholic man who owns a printery.

Key stakeholders: All Catholics and people of good will - including Archdiocesan Departments and Organisations, Catholic Schools, Government, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, local, regional and international organisations, the Media.

Communication Tools used	Target Audience/Participants	Frequency
<p>a. CCSJ's Website, Facebook, Twitter</p>	<p>All those who use the world wide web/social media CCSJ’s Website includes pages on: Speeches & Presentations,Media Releases, AGM Reports, Commentaries, Special focus issues e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Trafficking in Persons</u> - <u>Health: Diabetes</u> - <u>Environment: Archdiocesan Policy</u> - <u>Capital Punishment</u> - <u>Restorative Justice and Parole</u> - <u>Social Justice: Laventille Devotions 2008</u> - <u>Family Life</u> - <u>Women</u> <p>CCSJ records its thanks to Jo Ann Smith who manages CCSJ’s Facebook page and keeps it up-to-date. CCSJ also owes an enormous debt of gratitude</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

	to Raymond Syms, who does an excellent job as the Commission's Webmaster.	
b.Articles	Catholic News (CN) readers & those who access the world wide web. Note also that the 3 main Newspapers in TT sometimes publish CCSJ's Chair's articles - thus widening the target audience.	Weekly articles- CN
c. SJ Quotations	Each week CCSJ's quotation on an SJ issue – usually taken from one of the Popes' Encyclicals, is published in CN to help raise awareness of the Magisterium's views on SJ issues	Weekly in CN
d.Newsletters	<p>Hard copies of '<i>Parish Link</i>' are distributed widely e.g. Clergy/Parishes, Departments, Catholic Organisations, Catholic Schools</p> <p>The Newsletters are also uploaded on CCSJ's Website giving access to a wider audience. Since Jan 2017, CCSJ has produced 5 Newsletters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jan 2017 - Pope Francis' Peace Message for 2017 - March - Pope Francis' 2017 Lenten Message - March - CCSJ's Lenten Reflections - June 2017 - key quotations from Blessed Pope Paul VI's 5th encyclical, <i>Populorum Progressio (The Development of Peoples)</i>: observing the 50th anniversary of this encyclical - Jan 2018: Pope's Peace Message for 2018 - Feb 2018: Pope's 2018 Lenten Message - CCSJ's 2018 Lenten Reflections 	3-4 times per year

<p>e. Ask Why TV programmes</p>	<p>“Research on mass communications suggests that public understanding of social justice issues can be significantly enhanced by the appropriate use of the media... Advocates for social justice need to become more media literate and active participants in these public agenda setting, opinion making, and policy formulation processes.” (See: Promoting Social Justice in Partnership with the Mass Media EDWARD ALLAN BRAWLEY Arizona State University West College of Human Services EMILIA E. MARTINEZ-BRAWLEY Arizona State University School of Social Work)</p> <p>CCSJ takes every opportunity to address SJ issues in the media.</p> <p>Thanks to Trinity Communications Network, CCSJ airs a monthly TV programme on TCN entitled: Ask Why where panellists discuss key SJ issues and viewers can call in to join in the discussion.</p> <p>Ask Why programmes for 2017 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-violence: A style of politics for peace (Focusing on Pope Francis’ Peace Message for 2017) - Archbishop Harris’ Pastoral Letter on Hospitality - Mary, Mirror of Justice - Populorum Progressio (The Development of Peoples: 50th Anniversary of Blessed Paul VI’s Encyclical) - Hearing the cry of the poor - The Church’s teaching on Democracy 	<p>Monthly</p>
--	--	----------------

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Catholic perspective on the Development of Peoples - The Church’s teaching on ‘The Common Good’ - Pope Francis’ Message: 51st World Day of Peace, 1 Jan 2018: <i>Migrants and refugees: men and women in search of peace</i> - Pope Francis’ 2018 Lenten Message: “<i>Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold</i>” (Mt 24: 12). 	
<p>f. Radio other TV programmes</p>	<p>As stated above, CCSJ uses various forms of ICT to promote SJ and to empower the Faithful/civil society.</p> <p>*On Wed 1 Feb 2017 CCSJ’s Chair participated as a panellist on Radio 98.1 together with Pastor Clive Dottin and an Evangelical Pastor, Joseph, on a programme entitled: <i>Finding Solutions</i>. The programme was supposed to have lasted for 1 hour (from 8pm to 9pm), but instead, it went on for more than 2 hours. Callers were ‘fired-up’ with the discussion. What was interesting was that panellists, host, and callers all seemed to have some excellent ‘solutions’. We all realize that the authorities as well as citizens need will-power/commitment to take serious action to address our many social ills, in particular, the crime situation in TT.</p> <p>*On Tues 21 Feb, at 6:00 a.m. I was interviewed on CNMG/TV6 on the issue of “Gangs in TT” On the previous weekend, the Anglican Church held a</p>	

	<p>Symposium at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, POS, on Crime and Gangs. The interview gave me an opportunity to share a Catholic perspective on this issue and to refer to solutions such as Restorative Justice, Rehabilitation and so on.</p> <p>*On Monday 30 October, CCSJ's Chair was interviewed by journalist, Andy Johnson, about the theme for JPCW, and in particular, the obstacles to integral human development. The half hour programme was taped by TCN and aired at a later date. It was also played on Power 102.1 (Radio) on Sun 5 Nov during Andy's weekly programme.</p>	
g. Take-a-Bite Series	<p>A few years ago CCSJ arranged for 5 DVDs to be produced on the following 5 themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Social Justice: Fr Jason Gordon (now Archbishop, Archdiocese of POS) • Human Life and Dignity: Sr Diane Jagdeo (now deceased) • Stewards of God's Creation: Dr. John Agard • Rights and Responsibilities: Leela Ramdeen • Global Solidarity: Fr Malcolm Rodrigues. <p>The DVDs were copied and circulated in packs of 5 to parishes as an educational tool. Further copies of the DVDs are available from CCSJ's Office.</p>	
h. Leaflets focusing on SJ themes	The 9 Leaflets are circulated at various CCSJ events	Ongoing
i. Media Releases	<p>Although some believe that media releases are outdated</p> <p>CCSJ agrees with Kait Fowlie that "the information in a press release is the sought-after material today's</p>	As necessary

	<p>reporters and media professionals seek when they need from-the-source information about a given story. Press releases allow an organization to convey their points of view with credibility and clarity, as the format requires information to be laid out in an organized way designed for easy reading and understanding.” (http://blog.marketwired.com)</p> <p>In 2017 CCSJ produced 3 Media Releases as follows: Dec 11 – Be Peacebuilders Nov 24 – CCSJ calls for community mobilization to end violence against women Apr 3 – Focus on human development, not hanging</p>	
j. Calendar	CCSJ’s 2017 Calendar was entitled: Responding to God’s call to holiness.It contained a quotation from Pope Francis on the Theme.	Annually
k. Lenten Reflections	CCSJ’s Reflections are aimed at raising awareness of SJ issues and of the role of the Faithful during Lent and, indeed, throughout the year to promote the social doctrine of the Church and to embrace this doctrine by the way we live our lives. They are circulated widely.	Annually
l. Posters	<p>*Each year CCSJ produces at least 1 poster for Justice, Peace and Community Week (JPCW). The Poster for 2017 was entitled: Together we can Promote integral human development – to support parishes, schools, Departments etc as they sought to observe JPCW on this theme.</p> <p>*On World Social Justice Day 2018 CCSJ member worked with students at Mayo RC to prepare SJ</p>	Annually

	prayer signs and posters for use at assembly. *Another member designed posters for the church -St Teresa's RC, Woodbrook	
m. Prayers	CCSJ members work in their own parishes and some work with schools to ensure that the Faithful include in their prayers an SJ perspective e.g. intercessory prayers at Maloney RC, morning prayers at assembly at Arima Girls RC, Mayo RC, St Teresa's RC, Woodbrook.	

Project achievements: CCSJ has produced a number of resources that can be used in educational institutions, parishes, etc. We will continue with this important initiative and encourage other Departments to ensure that their resources include a concern for the Church's Social Doctrine.

Challenges/Limitations: CCSJ members are aware that the process of 'conversion' may take a while. We will continue to find creative ways of seeking to change hearts and minds so that every Catholic/person of good will will embrace SJ principles/social doctrine of the Church.

Other comments: None.

2. Project Summary: Participation in/collaboration with other Archdiocesan Departments, NGOs, FBOs, and international Organisations.

Message:

The Church’s Social Doctrine makes it clear that everyone is responsible for promoting Social justice. We must develop a collective vision for promoting social justice. As Caritas Australia states: “Everyone has an obligation to promote the rights and development of all peoples across communities, nations, and the world, irrespective of national boundaries.” We must “expresses solidarity by reaching out to those who are most marginalised” and be “committed to long-term engagement and sustainability.”

CCSJ views collaboration with others as a key aspect of our work. We will attain our goals faster and optimize the use of limited resources if we collaborate rather than working in silos. The following are just some of the ways in which we seek to collaborate with others.

Funding/Budget:

\$37,000

Key stakeholders:

All Catholics and people of good will - including Archdiocesan Departments and Organisations, Catholic Schools, Government, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, local, regional and international organisations, the Media.

Communication Tools used

Target Audience/Participants

Frequency

Presentations/participation in events
by CCSJ members

Various – as stated hereunder

As stated hereunder

***NONVIOLENCE BEGINS WITH ME:** On Friday 3 March some CCSJ members attended the opening Mass for the **40 Hours and 40 Days of Prayer for Nonviolence** in TT. The Theme is: **Nonviolence begins with me.** His Grace was the chief celebrant at Mass at the Cathedral. I remained for part of the Vigil which followed.

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

***INTERFAITH SERVICE:** On Sat 4 March some CCSJ members attended the **Interfaith Service** and part of the Vigil held at Living Water Community as part of the 40 Hours of Prayer for Nonviolence in TT. This was aired live. It ended with Mass on Sunday morning with Archbishop Nicola Girasoli, Papal Nuncio, as the Chief Celebrant.

***PANEL DISCUSSION AT HOLY FAITH CONVENT, COUVA:**

On Sun 5 March CCSJ's Chair participated in a Panel Discussion at Holy Faith Convent (HFC) – organised by HFC's Past Pupils' Association. The theme was: ***Women who lead: The HFC Factor***. Lisa Ramsingh-Pollonais, top performer at the Guardian Group, was the other panellist. See CCSJ's Website for the presentation. The "Tips for Women" was published in Catholic News on Sun 12 March.

* **LUNCHEON AT AMBASSADOR OF CHILE'S RESIDENCE:** On Wednesday March 29th CCSJ's Chair attended a luncheon at the Ambassador of Chile H.E. Fernando Schmidt's residence in Ellerslie Park to share information about CCSJ's work with Mrs. Antonia Urrejola, a candidate to the Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organization of American States for the period 2018-2021. About 6 other representatives from certain NGOs were also invited e.g. Hazel Brown, Network of NGOs for the advancement of women; Colin Robinson, CAISO, Rochelle Nakhid, Living Water Community, and a representative from the Children's Authority.

* **RESPONDING TO THE CALL FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (TT):** Emotions are running high in TT because of "runaway crime," and once again TT finds itself in the throes of looking for ways in which to resume hanging. Yesterday in Parliament, AG, Hon Faris al Rawi, responded to a question on this issue by stating that at the moment there are 37 persons on death row, 12 of whom fall within the Pratt and Morgan JCPC's ruling. The Law Lords said that in any case in which execution is to take place more than 5 years after sentence, there will be strong

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

grounds for believing that the delay is such as to constitute “inhuman or degrading treatment” and therefore unconstitutional.

The effect of this case is that individuals who have spent more than 5 years on death row cannot be hanged and their sentences are likely to be commuted to life. The AG said that since 2015 8 new persons have been sentenced to death – this figure is included in the 37 above. Shortly after the People’s National Movement won the general election in Sept 2015, the Attorney-General established a “Tracking Committee” to look at cases that will warrant capital punishment, once all appeals are exhausted. The AG referred to this Tracking Committee in Parliament yesterday and stated that it is seeking to ensure that hanging can resume asap.

In July 2016, the AG had said there are 2,300 individuals incarcerated in remand, of whom 1,000 are facing murder charges. Due to delays in the criminal justice system many have been waiting on their trial for years. TT’s detection rate is less than 10 per cent and there are other serious deficiencies in the various branches of the criminal justice system. While CCSJ continues to condemn the rise of violent crime in the region and expresses solidarity with victims, we, in keeping with Pope Francis’ teaching on this issue, reject the notion that capital punishment will act as a deterrent in fostering respect for life in our communities. We believe that society has a right to protect itself from persons who commit heinous crimes and offenders must be held accountable. However, we hold fast to the belief that non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect society from offenders.

The mandatory death penalty remains the law in only 2 countries in the Greater Caribbean region, namely the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (TT) and Barbados. However, in order to comply with the Inter-American Court’s decisions, in 2009 Barbados pledged to and is in the process of removing the mandatory death penalty from its Statute. In 2009 Barbados’ Prime Minister, Hon

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

Freundel Stuart, the then Attorney-General, said in an interview that the country was moving to abolish the mandatory death penalty. To date the law has not been changed.

Section 4 of TT's Offences Against the Persons Act (Ch. 11:08) states: "Every person convicted of murder shall suffer death." Judges in both TT and Barbados have no discretion. They cannot take mitigating factors into account. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC) has ruled that TT's existing constitutional arrangements permits the imposition of the death penalty. The 'Savings Clause' now contained in section 6(1) of the 1976 Constitution saves the death penalty from being struck down by any court on the grounds that it is unconstitutional.

However, the last hanging took place on 28 July 1999 (Andrew Briggs). Hanging is not being implemented in TT because of the JCPC's ruling in the case of Pratt and Morgan v AG of Jamaica (1994). The paradox of the retentionist countries in the English-speaking Caribbean is that since 19 December 2008, when Charles Laplace of St Kitts and Nevis was hanged, there have been no other executions in the region, yet, a core of countries strongly oppose abolition and some, including TT, continue to hand down death sentences to those convicted of murder.

Also, the English-speaking Caribbean countries have consistently voted against the UN General Assembly resolutions on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty and have signed the Note Verbale, dissociating them from the moratorium. TT's Chief Justice Ivor Archie is on record as saying: "Social scientists...suggest that the certainty of conviction, and within a reasonably quick time, is a more potent factor" than executions. However, this has not prevented the Government from seeking to resume hanging.

At a media conference on Monday 31 January 2017, Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, TT's Opposition Leader, spoke to the media and also issued a media release which suggested that

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

there should be an extraordinary sitting of the Parliament to discuss issues relating to crime, and in particular the ‘spike’ in homicides.

She also suggested that The Constitution Amendment (Capital Offences) Bill, known as the hanging bill, which was brought by her Government in 2011 should be brought back to Parliament for possible amendments and agreement to assist in the resumption of capital punishment for convicted murders. Initially, the bill proposed to amend the Constitution to introduce different categories of murder. Only for the most serious murders would hanging be mandatory.

She noted that at that time the People’s National Movement (PNM), which was then in Opposition and which is currently in Office, voted against the said Bill with a vote of 29 for and 11 against. The Bill needed to have been passed in both Upper and Lower Houses with a special three-fifths majority. Although the PNM voted against the Bill, they favour hanging. The then Opposition Chief Whip, Hon. Marlene Mc Donald, made it clear that the PNM supported hanging. She said on February 18, 2011: “I want to state categorically, we the Opposition support the law of the land. We say together: hang them high. This is exactly what the population would like to see.”

However, as journalist, Andre Badoo said in TT’s Newsday on January 29, 2012: “Though both Government and Opposition politicians assert that the people want hanging, very seldom have they produced any statistical evidence to actually show this.”

When the Bill was put forward again in 2015, Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley wrote to the then Attorney- General that the PNM would not support the legislation since, he said, the ‘fault’ is not the Constitution but a commitment by the then Administration to implement the law of the land. He believed that the proposed Bill “will only create new avenues of appeal for convicted

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

murderers.” While emotions continue to run high and politicians continue to whip up support for the “return of the hangman”, the root causes of crime and violence are not being addressed. These include poverty and social exclusion; deficiencies in family life, the education system, and in other key institutions in the country.

During a post-Cabinet media briefing on 6 March 2017, Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley said he was “a firm believer in capital punishment” and that those who have chosen crime as a way of life should pay the ultimate penalty. He said that his Administration is working towards having it implemented. He has recruited the support of former Attorney General Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj, who has offered his services pro bono to build the necessary pathway for executions to be carried out. It was during Maharaj’s term as Attorney General in 1999, that Dole Chadee (Nankissoon Boodram) and 8 members of his gang were executed in TT after being convicted on murder charges.

On 19 March 2017, TT’s Guardian newspaper published an article entitled “*AG aiming for swift justice as T&T moves to resume hangings*”. In it, the AG stated that “hanging will be a deterrent to those who want to commit crimes”. On that very day as Chair of the Greater Caribbean for Life, I issued the following Media Statement which was published in TT’s Express – see link: <http://www.trinidadexpress.com/20170322/news/hangings-will-not-stop-crime>. I share this as it has implications for CCSJ’s work also. I also wrote an article on this issue in CCSJ’s column in Catholic News. See link: <http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/2017/04/03/focus-on-human-development-not-hanging/>

*** AEC BISHOPS’ DOCUMENT ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT:** As part of WDADP, CCSJ’s Chair addressed an education discussion group on the AEC (Antilles Episcopal Conference) Bishops’ document on Capital Punishment: Human Life is Gift from God: During 2016 CCSJ’s Chair was invited by the Bishops of the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) to

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

prepare a draft document, drawing on 2 of their previous Pastoral Letters on the issue of the Death Penalty/Capital Punishment: *Jubilee Year 2000, Antilles Episcopal Conference Pastoral Letter on Capital Punishment*, and *We are called to proclaim, celebrate and serve The Gift of Life, Pastoral Letter of the Antilles Episcopal Conference, Rome, 29 March 2008*.

Following her presentation of a draft document at the 60th Annual Plenary Meeting of the Bishops of the AEC held in Trinidad in April 2016, the Bishops asked her to draft 2 statements on this issue – a short version and a longer version. She complied with their request and following amendments to the documents by the Bishops, the Statements were released in two formats. The short Statement (Part A) was issued on 4 July, 2016 and the long Statement (Part B) was issued on 21 September 2016. Part B contains more technical language for policy makers and all those who can influence change in the laws in our Region. One of the main aims was to sensitize the faithful and policy makers in the Region of the importance of ending the Death Penalty in our Region.

During the Jubilee Year of Mercy, CCSJ's Chair arranged with the Commission's generous printer to print the 2 statements in a booklet entitled: *Human Life is Gift from God*. It was published as a Statement on Capital Punishment by the Bishops and copies were sent to all AEC Bishops. Copies were also distributed to all parishes/Departments/Catholic organisations in TT.

The booklet provides a Catholic perspective on the on-going debate on this important issue in the Region and globally. Readers can access the booklet via the following link: <http://www.rcsocialjusticett.org/downloads/capitalpunishmentbooklet.pdf>

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

*** VISIT OF HON. MARK PRITCHARD, MP AND CO-CHAIR OF THE UK'S ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY:** On Monday 3 April 2017, CCSJ's Chair met with Hon. Mark Pritchard, Member of Parliament and Co-Chair of the UK's All- Party Parliamentary Group on the abolition of the death penalty. He was visiting TT for a few days to discuss a number of issues, including the death penalty. While in TT he held discussions with Government Officials, NGOs and others.

In attendance at this meeting were David Robinson, Criminal Justice Advisor at the British HC and Maia Hibben, Executive Officer to the Criminal Justice Advisor. Had invited Archbishop Joseph Harris to join us and he attended part of the meeting. He was able to express the Church's opposition to the death penalty. CCSJ's Chair also shared with the visitors the 2016 Pastoral Letter on Capital Punishment published by the Catholic Bishops of the Antilles Episcopal Conference in the Caribbean region in September 2016 (see: <http://www.rcsocialjusticett.org/downloads/capitalpunishmentbooklet.pdf>), as well as Media reports of statements made by Archbishop Harris in relation to recent statements by Government Officials and others on the death penalty. It should be noted that the Catholic Church remains among the few religious faiths in TT that oppose the death penalty.

The meeting with Hon. Mark Pritchard and his team was fruitful and facilitated the sharing of useful strategies for the way forward. Hon. Pritchard is sensitive to the fact that he cannot be seen to be 'telling' TT what to do.

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

* **PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE DEATH PENALTY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS, TT:** CCSJ's Chair attended and contributed to a **Panel discussion** on Tues April 4th 2017 at the Faculty of Law, UWI, entitled: *Perspectives on the Death Penalty: Sorting Fact from Fiction*. It was organised by The Faculty of Law, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, in collaboration with the British High Commission and the European Union. It was one of the actions under the European Union Funded Faculty of Law, UWI Project entitled: "Growing Capacity for Elevating Human Rights in Trinidad and Tobago to International Standards."

The discussion was Chaired by Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine is Dean of the Faculty of Law, UWI, and former President of the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights. Panellists were: Mr. Douglas Mendes SC, President elect of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago; Hon. Mark Pritchard, UK MP and Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the abolition of the death penalty; and Ms. Jadia Jn. Pierre, Student, Faculty of Law. In his contribution, Senior Counsel, Douglas Mendes stated that TT is the only country in the Commonwealth Caribbean still adhering to the cyclical, political debate on the death penalty. Inter alia, he said: "The death penalty talk is cyclical and comes around every five years, and those are the facts...The death penalty should not be on the books."

Hon. Mark Pritchard introduced himself as a "Commonwealth cousin" and warned against using the death penalty as a "quick fix to crime and violence." He said he would "prefer to see an informed debate before any fast-tracking or changes in the law takes place and to see what is the latest data and statistical and academic analysis globally so that at least any changes or any fast-tracking is done in an informed way." Media reports on the Panel Discussion can be accessed via the following links: <http://www.newspaper.com.tt/news/0,241929.html>
<http://www.trinidadexpress.com/20170405/news/8216death-penalty-talk-happens-every-five-years8217>

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

* **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS FORUM:** On Saturday April 22, CCSJ's Chair Chaired a **Forum on Domestic Violence (DV)** - held at Holy Trinity RC Pastoral Centre and organised by Hazel Thompson-Ahye, Attorney-at-Law, mediator and child rights advocate. Fr Dexter Brereton, Parish Priest, opened the session with prayer. Speakers at the Forum were: Ms Thompson-Ahye; Anna Maria Mora, Educator and Counselling Psychologist; Mme Justice Halcyon Yorke-Young, temporary Judge of the Family Court of TT; and Corporal Curtis Price, Community Police Officer. In 2004 Dianne Mahabir Wyatt, Chair of the Coalition against DV, said that "TT is regarded as the domestic violence capital in the region." My article in Catholic News on 7 May will focus on this issue and on the Forum held on Saturday.

* **PEACE RALLY AND CONCERT:** On Sunday April 16, Easter Monday, some of CCSJ members attended the **Peace Rally and concert** at the Queens Park Savannah, from 2-5 p.m. It was organised by *The Non-Violence Begins With Me Movement*, a not-for-profit, non-denominational and non-political group. Everyone was encouraged to wear blue for non-violence. The Rally was the culmination of the Movement which began on 3 March with 40 days of prayer, followed by 40 days of action. The 40 days included candlelight memorials in communities across the country for victims of violence, daily non-violence awareness podcasts, and sessions with young people and other groups. The 40 days were preceded by 40 hours of prayer (March 3-5), which featured an interfaith service at Living Water Community. I had attended that event.

The feature speaker at the Rally was American peace activist, trainer and author "Kit" Evans-Ford, who survived a violent assault, she told her story and gave advice on how to live a non-violent life. The event took place on the eastern side of the Savannah, under a samaan tree selected by producer Brian MacFarlane as a natural canopy for the stage. There was a good turnout at the event which was also described as a Family Lime. People brought their chairs,

mats, lunch etc. There were a few tents and some seating for the elderly.

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

At the rally, representatives of various faith groups intermittently delivered brief messages. The concert included: songs, instrumentals, dance and spoken word, as well as some well-known performers, such as: Mungal Patasar, The Love Movement, Wendell Constantine, Marcia Miranda, Wendy Sheppard, Joel “Positive” Murray, Johann Chuckaree, Nigel Rojas, Stefan Roach, Karene Ashe, Pratibha Arts Dance Co, Richard “Solman” Solis, The Cartars, T&T Steel and Brass Symphonic Orchestra and Two Cents Movement.

***YOUTH COMMISSION’S STAKEHOLDER’S MEETING:** On Sat July 1st CCSJ’s Chair attended the Youth Commission’s Stakeholders’ Meeting at Tunapuna RC Church Hall. Winston Garcia, YC’s Chair, introduced Msgr Christian Pereira, who was the main speaker. He focused on the Preparatory Document for the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held in October 2018. The theme will be: *Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment*. The document is available online. The Archdiocese is currently gathering information to assist with the preparation of the Synod. A Youth Synod Survey is being conducted and information gleaned from the responses will be forwarded to Rome.

The 6th AEC Youth Assembly (open to participants ages 16-35) will be held in Martinique from July 10th – 23rd, 2018. 85 spaces have been allotted to our Archdiocese. Each Diocese is encouraged to include one young married couple.

World Youth Day will be held in Panama in Jan 2019. The AEC Vocations Conference will be held at Emmaus Retreat Centre from July 21st to 23rd. The theme will be: Creating a culture of vocations in the region.

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

A Catholic Youth Caravan is being planned to take place before the end of the year. Youth Expo 2018 is being planned to take place on April 21st 2018 at the Centre of Excellence. It was noted that responsibility for Young Adult Ministry is being transferred to Family Life Commission.

***DOCUMENTARY- WAREHOUSED:** On Sat July 8th CCSJ's Chair attended the screening of the Documentary: *Warehoused*. It was organised by the UN Information Centre (UNIC) and Living Water Community at the UNIC in Victoria St., POS. His Excellency Fernando Schmidt, Ambassador of Chile delivered the Opening address.

About the Documentary: "Over 12 million people worldwide live in refugee camps with less than 0.1% resettled, repatriated or integrated into mainstream society each year. The feature-length documentary *Warehoused* highlights the plight of long-term refugees over the course of history, culminating in today's refugee crisis. The term 'warehoused' refers to asylum seekers, trapped in border camps for five years or more, without the right to work, generate income, move freely or choose their place of residence.

"*Warehoused* sheds light on the seemingly insurmountable challenges facing refugees across the globe through an intimate glimpse into daily life at Dadaab, Kenya -- the world's largest refugee camp. We see the camp's inner workings through the refugees' personal stories, most notably Liban and his perseverance to provide for and reunite with his family. Featuring commentary by the UN Refugee Agency workers who courageously provide desperately needed aid during the protracted crisis; "*Warehoused*" reveals the increasingly vital roles which relief agency organizations, host countries and permanent asylum nations have in the lives of millions of people struggling to find a place they can call home." See further information via this link: <https://warehousedthemovie.com/about#about-lead>

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

***INTERFAITH GATHERING:** On Sun 1 October, CCSJ's Chair was asked by Living Water Community to stand in for Deacon Derek Walcott who was unable to represent the Catholic Community at an **Interfaith Gathering** in support of the UN International Day of Non-Violence (02 Oct) at LWC on sun 1 Oct, 2017. The theme was: *Be Light*. Representatives from various Faith Communities participated in the Service, together with a number of performers. CCSJ's Chair's 5 minute presentation has been uploaded on the Commission's Website.

*** WORLD DAY AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY (WDADP):** On 10 October, CCSJ partnered with Amnesty International and the TT NGO, RED Initiatives, to host the **Screening of the film, *Songs of Redemption*** to mark World Day against the Death Penalty. The event took place at Alliance Francaise, 17 Alcazar St., St Clair, POS from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The theme for World Day this year is: *Poverty & Justice, a deadly mix*. The film, *Songs of Redemption*, is filmed in a Jamaican prison and focuses not only on the impact of poverty on the lives of inmates, but on their rehabilitation.

The Director of the film, Miquel Galofre, was in TT and he joined the Panel Discussion after the film was screened. Also on the panel was: Former Commissioner of Prisons, Mr John Rougier, and Mr Gordon Husbands, who retired in 2007 as the Chief Prisons Welfare Officer. In 2007, he assumed the position of Director of a Penal Reform and Transformation Unit at the Ministry of National Security. He has served on the boards of many NGOs involved in corrections, prisoner/deportee reform and re-entry, restorative justice prison programmes and the spiritual and family life of inmates and ex-inmates. Mr Rougier is now a Trustee of Vision on Mission (VOM) and Mr Husbands is a Director of VOM.

The event was well attended and participants contributed well to the discussion. Such events are helpful in raising awareness of the lack of meaningful support for victims of crime; the inhumane conditions of our prison systems in the region; and of the inhumanity of the death penalty.

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

***JUSTICE, PEACE AND COMMUNITY WEEK:** This year, Justice, Peace and Community Week (JPCW) ran from Saturday, October 21 to Saturday, October 28. The theme was: A Catholic perspective on the Development of Peoples – in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Blessed Paul VI's encyclical: Populorum Progressio, On the Development of Peoples. Since this item is on the Agenda, I will simply list some of the activities organised by CCSJ during the week:

a. Fr Roger Paponette, Msgr Julien Kabore', chargé d'affaires at the Nunciature, and Rachel Nakhid, LWC (Refugee 'Desk') joined members of CCSJ to launch the Week at St Dominic's Pastoral Centre, at St Finbar's. The launch also included the screening of the film: Warehoused, about the plight of refugees at the Refugee Camp in Dadaab, Kenya. Sadly, once again, in spite of publicity, attendance at the event was poor.

b. On Monday 23 Oct CCSJ's Chair addressed the Eternal Light Community (ELC) gathering at St Charles, Tunapuna, to raise awareness of the theme and of JPCW. Deborah de Rosia always makes 'space' for me to address ELC members during JPCW. Since this was ELC's healing service, attendance was very good.

c. CCSJ's Ask Why TV programme on Tues 24 Oct focused on the theme. Panellists were: Rhonda Maingot (LWC) and Rheema Farrell (Catholic Voices). Nadine and CCSJ's Chair were Co-Moderators.

d. On Thurs 26 Oct CCSJ's Chair attended the Vigil organised by Emmanuel Community. The theme was: "Human development begins from conception and ends at natural death."

e. On Friday 27 Oct, CCSJ's Chair joined Winston Garcia, Episcopal Delegate for Youth, at TCN for our jointly organised 3rd Annual Spoken Word Competition on the theme for the week.

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

It was open to students in our schools and to the Faithful in general – Ages 16-25 yrs. The 2 hour programme was aired live on TCN and repeated on a couple of other occasions. Winston and I thank Kyle de Gannes, Mark Howell-Paul, Fidelis Iwueke, Serapion Jones, Michael Logie, Ngozi Lucas, Paige McCarthy, Naiyla Nakhid, and Leeum Quan Kep for their powerful poems. Naiyla, Leeum and Kyle won 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize respectively. These 3 poems were printed in CN subsequently.

*On Wed 8 November Dianne Wells, Mei-ling Homer (YC) and I met to conduct a “**post-mortem**” on the **Spoken Word Competition**, 2017. The meeting was helpful as we were able to identify issues that, if addressed effectively, will enable us to improve the production of the event in future.

***TRAINING ON CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING:** On Wed 15 November, CCSJ’s Chair attended Holy Faith Convent, Couva to speak to 6th Form Students about key social justice principles. There were about 140 students present. From the questions that some students raised with CCSJ’s Chair “privately” afterwards, it is clear that there are a number of justice issues that affect our students.

* **PARTICIPATION IN SESSION ON COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM:** On Friday 17 Nov., CCSJ’s Chair represented the Archdiocese and participated in a session at the US Embassy’s Public Affairs Section, Briar Place, Sweet Briar Road, St Clair, on the theme: “*A community approach to countering violent extremism.*” US Expert, Mr Mohammed Fraser-Rahim, addressed the IRO members who were present. The session was Chaired by Michael Barrera, Asst. Public Affairs Officer at the Embassy.

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

The Embassy had arranged similar meetings with various groups. IRO members had been invited to the meeting at which I was present. Sadly, there were only 2 members present – including me. Fr Martin Sirju, the then Catholic representative on the IRO was unable to attend. His Grace asked CCSJ's Chair to represent the Archdiocese at the event. The main concern expressed at the meeting related to fears of violent action that may be taken by ISIS "returnees".

***DAY OF CARING:** On Saturday 18 Nov., CCSJ held its Day of Caring at the Church of the Incarnation, Maloney Gardens - the day before Pope Francis' first World Day of the Poor. Dianne Wells played a major role in organising the Day. It was supposed to have taken place on Sun 28 Oct – during Justice, Peace and Community Week. However, Dianne fell ill and so it was postponed until Sat 18 Nov. Another CCSJ member, Joseph Timothy also participated in the event. When Joe saw that only a few persons were trickling in to take advantage of what was on offer, he took some flyers and went to the nearby Mall to distribute them and to encourage people to attend the event.

The following agencies partnered with CCSJ to engage in outreach work in the community: Lions Club - Vision Testing; Ministry of Community Development - sharing information about the various services/courses that are available free of charge; TTARP - encouraging persons who are 50 - years or over to take advantage of e.g. social activities, health benefits, discounts at over 300 merchants ; NALIS - raising awareness of Computer Literacy Classes for Seniors at the local library; Diabetes Association - Managing Lifestyle diseases; CCSJ - raising awareness about the Church's Social Justice Teaching.

It was fortuitous that the event was held the day before the first World Day of the Poor. At the end of the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis initiated the World Day of the Poor. The theme for this first year is: "Let us love, not with words but with deeds" (1 Jn 3:18). Let us take his advice,

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

open our hearts and share "with the poor through concrete signs of solidarity and fraternity...At the heart of all the many concrete initiatives carried out on this day should always be prayer...This new World Day, therefore, should become a powerful appeal to our consciences as believers, allowing us to grow in the conviction that sharing with the poor enables us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel. The poor are not a problem: they are a resource from which to draw as we strive to accept and practise in our lives the essence of the Gospel."

***CONVERSATION ON GENDER EQUALITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:**

Since CCSJ's Chair was unable to attend an event entitled: *Let's Talk TT: a Conversation on Gender Equality and Violence against Women* on Thurs 30 Nov 2017 at the residence of the British High Commissioner - organised by The British High Commissioner, H.E. Tim Stew, and the Ambassador of the European Union to Trinidad and Tobago, H.E. Arend Biesebroek, she sent to the organisers before the event, articles which she had written on the theme - from a Catholic perspective.

***WORKSHOP IN TOBAGO:** CCSJ's Chair attended a Workshop in Tobago from 19-22 Jan 2018. It was entitled: SafeCommunitiTT. It was organised by the TT Publishers & Broadcasters Association; the US Embassy, POS; and the US Department of State's Global Engagement Centre. All expenses were paid for by the Organisers. 30 organisations and 9 organisers participated in the event.

The main purpose of the Workshop was to assist key organisations in TT to develop strategies that will dissuade individuals or groups who are vulnerable to recruitment by a violent extremist organisation not to join. Exercises included:

- Identifying key drivers to radicalization – push and pull factors, contextual factors;
- Identifying your target audience e.g. General Public, Sympathisers of VE, Justifiers of VE, Perpetrators of VE.;

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

- Identifying your campaign's objective; Considering examples of Strategic Communications Campaigns e.g. from Columbia when strategies used were successful re ending the 50 years of war with 35,000 armed guerillas – FARC, who controlled territory the size of Switzerland. The war displaced approx 6 million people and killed over 220,000 people – Operation Christmas and Rivers of Light;
- Determining best messengers and methods of communication;
- Creating a campaign message.

One of the key objectives was to assist key TT organisations to be able to counter violent extremism (VE). The definition of VE used during the session is as follows: “VE refers to the beliefs and actions of people who support or use ideologically motivated violence to achieve radical ideological, religious or political views. Violent extremist can be exhibited along a range of issues, including politics, religion and gender relations.

Countering strategies will involve: a. Inoculating: vaccinating individuals so that they will not be susceptible to join extremist organisations; b. Preventing: engaging individuals that are ‘at risk’ or susceptible to joining a terrorist organisation;

- c. Intervening: In situations where persons are actively supporting a terrorist organisation;
- d. Operationalising: Dealing with foreign fighters or those actively engaging in a terrorist act - Law Enforcement activity.

Inter alia, the group considered ways of addressing violent extremism, e.g. prevention and intervention; strategies for developing a strategic communications campaign; being aware of the drivers of radicalization – push and pull factors, the narratives that are used to recruit e.g. religious, ideological, political, social, psychological and economic; how to develop a campaign to address this issue – including a communications campaign and a monitoring and evaluation plan

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

***CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATION BY EU DELEGATION TO TT:** On Wednesday, 24th January 2018 CCSJ's Chair attended a Civil Society Consultation organised by the EU Delegation to Trinidad & Tobago. It was held at 10.00 in the EU Delegation's premises, POS. The event was organised in the context of the EU's Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy Implementation Report 2017. Before the event CCSJ's Chair had completed and submitted a questionnaire on HR issues sent to her by the EU Delegation to TT. The Agenda for the event was: 1. Overview of the HRDCS; 2. Discussion on main common challenges and how to address them; 3. Identification of realistic and concrete Human Rights objectives for 2018.

***TRAINING SESSION FOR LWC TEAM ASSISTING REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS:** On Thurs 25 Jan CCSJ's Chair ran a session at LWC on the Church's key social justice principles - at the request of Rochelle Nakhid, Programme Coordinator at the LWC for refugees and asylum-seekers. About 20 members of staff from this programme were present. Since most of them are non-Catholics, the session was important to raise their awareness of the Church's social doctrine.

***HUMAN TRAFFICKING:** On Monday 29 Jan, CCSJ's Chair attended the screening of the film: **SOLD** at Movie Towne, POS. I also participated in the discussion following the screening. The film was shown as part of Human Trafficking Awareness Month, 2018. It was created to spread awareness about human trafficking and protect children from being trafficked. It is directed by Academy Award Winner Jeffrey Brown and adapted from the internationally acclaimed novel by Patricia McCormick.

***YOUTH ASSEMBLY:** On Sun 4 Feb CCSJ's Chair participated as a Panellist at the Suburban Vicariate's Youth Assembly entitled: "Tell It Like It Is". The aim was "to review and strengthen the way in which the Church supports and meets the needs of our young adults at this important stage in their life... The data gathered from this assembly will assist in identifying the strengths,

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

weaknesses, opportunities and threats, in our support and care for our young adults in our communities and establish priorities to meet their needs at this stage.” The event was held from 9:30 am to 3 p.m. at the Mt. Lambert Parish Hall in Mt. Lambert. Archbishop Jason Gordon joined the session before lunch and responded to some ‘challenging’ questions by youth. The discussion was followed by a carnival event.

***WORLD SOCIAL JUSTICE DAY (WSJD):** On World Social Justice Day, Tues 20 Feb, CCSJ’s Chair attended Vision on Mission’s (VOM – Wayne Chance and his team) Preparation for release launch 2018, entitled: *Changing the Criminal Thinking* - held at the Maximum Security Prison in Arouca (See Catholic News 4 March for CCSJ’s article on this event). After the event CCSJ’s Chair held a small **prayer meeting** to mark WSJD. The Theme for the day was: *Workers on the Move: the Quest for Social Justice*.

*** YOUTH RALLY IN PENAL:** On Sunday 25th Feb a member of CCSJ’s Executive facilitated a session on Physical rest and relaxation at a Youth Rally in Penal. The theme of the Rally was: 'Authentic Integral Human Development'.

*** PROJECTS IN PARISHES:** During the year members of CCSJ have initiated/ been involved in a number of Projects in their respective parishes e.g.

- a. The SJ Group at St Teresa’s Woodbrook - led by a member of CCSJ’s Executive:
 - assisted low income students in Haiti attend a camp;
 - assisted Dominica in rebuilding the country/lives after Hurricane Maria;
 - conducted survey to discern needs and skills in the parish;
 - organised a Karaoke evening to facilitate the building of an inclusive community;

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

- designed posters for the Church and distributed leaflets on the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

b. Another member of CCSJ Executive:

- is currently conducting an 'Anger Awareness Project' with standards 1 and 2 for five weeks - once a week, at South Oropouche Government School;

- has run an Anger Management Workshop with a group of students at Fyzabad Community Center;

- has conducted a 3-week Parenting programme at South Oropouche Government School, raising parents' awareness of their role as parents;

- has conducted a session with a small group of teenagers in San Fernando – examining with them their use of social media, discussing the dangers of social media and encouraging them to embrace its proper use “in accordance with God's design”;

- Showed Human Rights videos to Standard 5 students at St Peter's Private Primary School, Pointe-a-Pierre.

c. Another member of CCSJ's Executive:

- brings to bear SJ principles in the work of an Intervention Team that has been established in Maloney – Church of the Incarnation. The Team, which brings together persons from various parish Ministries, addresses social justice issues within the community and partner with the Ministry of Social Development to secure additional support for some families;

Communication Tools used Target Audience/Participants

- prepared intercessory prayers for use at Mass on World Social Justice Day;
- included these prayers at morning Assembly at Arima Girls RC School;
- engaged with students of Mayo RC School in making SJ Prayer Posters for use at Assembly;
- distributed Posters on Catholic Social Teaching and CCSJ's Lenten Reflection Booklets at these sessions.

***CONTACT WITH INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS:** CCSJ continues to respond to the needs of persons who seek advice on a range of social justice issues.

*** INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD) (8 MARCH) :** From Mon 5 – Fri 9 March, CCSJ's Chair will participate in a series of local and national events related to IWD – to share a Catholic perspective on the issues.

Project achievements: The Project continues to have positive results in some areas. However, see below.

Challenges/Limitations: Given the fact that CCSJ no longer has Parish Link Coordinators in post, and only a few parishes have social justice teams in place, it is often difficult to mobilise support at parish level. CCSJ members seek to promote the Commission's goals in their respective parishes and take advantage of invitations to work in other parishes, schools, and with other Departments and organisations. The Church's Social Doctrine should be an integral part of the work of everyone in the Archdiocese since it is an essential element of our Catholic Faith.

CCSJ encourages all Archdiocesan Departments/the Faithful to partner with CCSJ to work to incorporate an SJ perspective in your work. Let the Church's social doctrine guide our path. An integral part of our Ministry is a commitment to promote justice: "The

teaching and spreading of her social doctrine are part of the Church's evangelizing mission. Since it is a doctrine aimed at guiding people's behaviour, it consequently gives rise to a 'commitment to justice,' according to each individual's role, vocation, and circumstances." (The Social Concern of the Church, n.41, Blessed John Paul II).

We will achieve our mission if we all work together diligently to:

- protect and promote the sanctity of life and the dignity of each human person;
- promote integral human development (the development of all dimensions of a person and of each person);
- act as advocates for the poor and vulnerable, including our children, the differently -abled, and senior citizens;
- strengthen family life, build community and the common good; - promote human rights and meet our responsibilities;
- promote economic justice e.g. by ensuring that the economy works for the people;
- promote participation in the economic, political, social and cultural life of society;
- be good stewards of God's creation by promoting environmental/ecological justice
- recognising that the gifts of the earth that God has given to us is for all to share – including future generations;
- build a nation/world in which truth, justice, love, freedom and forgiveness – the pillars of peace, become a reality.

The many social ills in TT/the world remain a concern to CCSJ. All Catholics have a duty to continue to raise awareness of the social doctrine of the Church, in the hope that one day more ears will hear, more eyes will see, more voices will speak out and more people will take action to promote justice.

It is hoped that with limited resources, Departments within the Archdiocese will strive to optimize the use of our resources by finding more creative ways of working together.

Other comments: None

3. Project Summary: Council for Responsible Political Behaviour:

CCSJ acts as the Secretariat of the Council and CCSJ's Chair is the Secretary of the Council. It was established to monitor and evaluate adherence to the Code of Ethical Political Conduct by the Political Parties and their Candidates. The Council, which was launched at the Hilton Trinidad Conference Centre on 25 March 2015, seeks to encourage moral, lawful and responsible conduct during elections. The Code was conceptualised by Archbishop Joseph Harris and was drafted with input from other religious leaders including Anglican Bishop Claude Berkley and civil society organisations, including Transparency International and the Network of Non-Governmental (NGOs), along with FITUN and the Chamber of Commerce.

Signatories to the Code include the Inter Religious Organisation (IRO), Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha, the Anjuman Sunnat ul Jamaat Association (ASJA), T&T Chamber of Industry and Commerce, T&T Transparency Institute, Women's Network of NGOs, the T&T Publishers and Broadcasters Association and the Communication Workers' Union.

Message: The code is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- Fostering of democracy through peaceful, free and fair elections, conducted at regular intervals in which voters are permitted to cast their ballots freely, without interference, fear, intimidation or bribery.
- Promotion of respect for human rights, the pursuit of civil and political liberties, the tolerance of divergent opinions, full and active participation of all in the political process.
- Encouraging participation in the electoral process by the People and to uphold their right to make political choices.
- Promoting an election process free from violence. The Council is a separate entity which was born out of the code. See the following link for a Media Release from the Council, outlining Methods for managing complaints and reporting thereof: http://www.rcsocialjusticett.org/downloads/coepccouncil_100415.pdf

Funding/Budget: In 2016 the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Port of Spain offered to give a grant to the Council for the sum of **\$50,000** – to support expenses for the administration of the Council. This sum was deposited into the Council's Bank Account on Oct 18, 2016. The Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha (SDMS) also made a pledge of **\$25,000** to be used for the administration of the Council.

The SDMS contribution was deposited into the Council’s Bank Account on Jan 4, 2017. Bank balance as at February 28, 2017 was \$76,354.43. Funding of the Council’s Administrative expenses are to be addressed.

Key stakeholders: Politicians and Citizens of T&T

<u>Communication Tools used</u>	<u>Target Audience/Participants</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Meetings, Media Releases, Website, Facebook, E-mail Printed material e.g. booklet, posters	Politicians, Media, Members of the public, Religious Organisations	As necessary

Project achievements:

The Council’s work continued after the General Elections up to and beyond Local Government Elections. The Council was incorporated as a not for profit Company on Dec 15, 2015.

Since its inception in 2015, the following have been achievements of the Council:

- Held the Launch of the Council on March 25, 2015 with sponsorship from Republic Bank Limited and Massy Group.
- Printed copies of the Code booklet, Council banner, podium pendant,
- Activated a webpage and email address
- Meetings of the Council were held fortnightly – up to the end of 2016. Only 1 meeting was held in 2017 and none so far in 2018
- Deliberated on several complaints from the general public and political party representatives utilizing the judgment of Council members to formulate responses sent out via media statements and letters.
- Issued seven (7) media releases over the period April to October 2015.

For example, in one media release chairman of the council, Dr Bishnu Ragoonath, emphasised that in becoming signatories to the code they committed themselves to:

1. Maintain the highest moral principles and ethical standards with respect to their conduct during the campaign, the elections and the post-election period.

2. Promote and enforce respect, tolerance, harmony and peace among their supporters and the general public during the campaign, the elections and in the post-election period by being positive role models.
3. Refrain from practices that promote divisiveness in the society and commit to the removal of any structures (behavioural, cultural, social or organisational) which reinforce divisiveness.
4. Confine their criticism of other political parties to policies and programmes, past record and work.
5. Not make false or defamatory allegations in print or speech in connection with an election in respect of a party, its candidates, representatives or members.
6. Not use language or act in a way that may –a) Provoke violence; b) Intimidate candidates, members of parties, representatives or supporters of parties or candidates, or voters; c) Invite, encourage or foster hatred, resentment or any form of violence.
7. Not seek to assassinate the character of or make defamatory comments about any individual, family, professional group or section of the community.
8. Not indulge in negative campaigning or advertising or any action which would bring the political process into disrepute.

Ragoonath said the council was also calling on members of the public to report any such breaches of the code that they may observe.

Examples of the Council's impact included:

- that a political party candidate publicly stated that they were cited by the Council of a breach of the Code
- the media houses allowed representatives of the Council to appear for interviews
- the entire Code document was published by the print media
- calls from the general public went to the media houses asking for adherence to the Code by politicians
- all the Council's media releases were published or included in the newscasts, achieving the publicity that was expected. As a result, the Council will continue to use moral suasion to achieve the objectives with which it has been charged.

The Council comprises representatives of Political Parties and non-aligned individuals. By March 2015 all five political parties had signed the code. The council currently comprises: Chair - Dr Bishnu Ragoonath, Vice-chair - Bishop Clive Abdulah, Secretary is Catholic Commission for Social Justice's representative, Leela Ramdeen (CCSJ acts as the Secretariat of the Council), former IRO head and Muslim representative, Bro. Noble Khan and Hindu representative, Ramjit Maharaj. Also on the Council are representatives from five political parties including Ferdie Ferreira (PNM) and Denisia Forbes (UNC), Lisa Henzell (Congress of the People)

alderman Sunil Ramjitsingh (ILP) and Gregory Fernandez (MSJ). Since the resignation of Reginald Dumas in 2015, there remains a vacancy for a person who is not aligned to any political party.

A meeting of the Founding Organizations was held on Jun 13 2016. There was also one joint meeting of the Founding Organizations and the Code Council - held on May 16 2016. CCSJ continues to function as the Secretariat of the Council and CCSJ's Chair continues in the role of Secretary, with Jo Anne Lodge as Recording Secretary. CCSJ's Chair informed members of the Council that due to budgetary constraints in 2016, CCSJ would no longer be able to meet the cost of the stipend paid to Jo Anne Lodge, the Council's Recording Secretary. CCSJ had paid the sum of \$2,000 per month to her for her services from Jan 2015 to Nov 2015. The Council undertook to seek to raise funds to pay her and she has committed to continue performing her duties pro bono until the funds are identified.

THE COUNCIL'S PLANNED ACTIVITIES – The next scheduled elections will be as follows:

-Local Government Elections – 2019

-Tobago House of Assembly Elections – 2020

-General Elections – 2020

The Council therefore has 1 year prior to the next scheduled elections.

The following activities are proposed by the Chair for the interim period:

-A secondary school education programme targeting sixth formers. The area(s) is to be selected.

-A meeting with the current Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) with respect to proposals made by the former EBC Chairman. The meeting will discuss the progress made with these proposals.

-Obtain feedback from the Government on planned legislation for campaign financing reform. This includes feedback on progress made since the Government's conference on that topic in May 2016.

-Revisit the decision on legalization of the Code and the Council via an Act of Parliament.

Challenges/Limitations: The Council has no power to impose sanctions. Also, it is not codified in law. In line with the thinking of the Members of the Council, the then Chairman of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC) Dr Herbert Masson, has stated that the Code of Ethical Political Conduct should be codified in law. (See Express Sept 8, 2015).

The Express' report in March 2015 is instructive: "Asked if the council has the power to impose sanctions, Harris said: 'We have no power to penalise anyone. The council will monitor and evaluate what politicians and parties are doing. People can complain to the council and they will be well within the law. We are evaluating the person or party based on the principles kept. We have no powers to do anything. It has to work through the moral and spiritual suasion of the electorate. The electorate has to ensure the politicians are keeping their word.'

"Harris said they will be embarking upon an education programme for the nation. He said: 'The citizenry can determine if the parties are being true. It is not a religious instrument. It has a lot of civil society groups. The code was intended to stop the downward slide of politics and politicians on the hustings.'

"In a previous interview, Harris had said the code was intended to encourage politicians to behave responsibly and refrain from mauvais langue and non-charitable remarks on political platforms and even during Parliamentary sessions. Harris also said they should discuss national issues and not focus on the individual.

Asked to share his sentiments on the Council, Dr Ragoonath said: "At this point in time, we have no power and we have no sanctions. All we could do is utilise moral suasion. We take it to the media and the party that has not been adhering to the Code will be exposed. The individual will also be exposed to the public."

Dr Ragoonath said the code's tenets focus on the need to uphold the Constitution, moral principles and ethical standards, promote and enforce tolerance, respect, harmony and peace, and to refrain from practices that promote divisiveness, especially racist remarks."

Other comments: CONCLUSION OF CCSJ'S REPORT

CCSJ continues to play its part in sharing what some believe to be the Church's "best kept secret" - Catholic Social Teaching. We must all be committed to do what Pope St. John Paul II asked and be "communicators of hope." CCSJ members agree with Thomas Massaro who said in his book: *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, "Catholic Social Teaching can serve as a unifying force, a banner under which believers may rally..."

It is our sincere hope that the Faithful will rally under this banner. And as we on CCSJ continue to promote the social mission of our Church, let us spread the Good News with credibility and integrity as we act on the words in Micah 6:8.

Dear friends,

Further to the lengthy report which I sent to you earlier today (Fri 2 Mar 2018), pl. note some areas of work that were undertaken specifically on Archbishop Harris' Pastoral Letter on Hospitality by CCSJ, including:

1. An Ask Why TV programme
2. Articles in CCSJ's weekly column in Catholic News: see links below

Showing hospitality to widows

Posted by Web administrator on June 25th, 2017

Practise hospitality this Holy Week

Posted by Web administrator on April 9th, 2017

Return to Hospitality

Posted by Web administrator on March 3rd, 2017

Be peacebuilders

Posted by Web administrator on December 11th, 2017

3. A focus on the Pastoral Letter at a meeting of CCSJ members.
4. A focus on the Pastoral letter in parishes/schools by members of CCSJ

5. Over the years, CCSJ has responsibility for showing hospitality to those persons who come to Archbishop's House and are in need. More recently, although our Admin Asst. remains the first point of contact, those in need are referred to another person, Elizabeth, who operates from an office at Emmanuel Community. She has greater access to funds than we do.

6. Day of Caring in Maloney.