

CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Lady of Fatima Church Hall,
Bushe Street, Curepe

Saturday 25 June 2005

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm

REPORT:

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(23.6.05)

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A. THE CHAIR'S REPORT

1) INTRODUCTION

We hope that this report paints a picture of the nature and extent of CCSJ's work. It is intended also to record faithfully the hard work of many individuals and groups in our Archdiocese.

As more and more people come on board to support CCSJ's work, particularly through our Parish LINK programme, we realize that God's Spirit is at work and that the Church is truly alive and present in our land.

Over the past year CCSJ has faced numerous challenges in a country/world in which injustices remain a reality. The task of building a society/world in which justice, peace, love, truth and freedom reigns, as divinely ordained by God, is a challenge for all Catholics and for all people of goodwill.

The social teaching of the Catholic Church provides an excellent framework to help us to achieve this objective. CCSJ will continue to play its part in sharing this framework with others to develop the knowledge, skills and ability of our people to meet the challenge.

I thank His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert C.Ss.R, for the opportunity that he has given to us to serve our Church and the wider community. Thanks also to members of CCSJ, our Standing Committees and LINK persons/groups for your commitment, energy, enthusiasm and shared sense of purpose. As we grow and develop our vision and mission must be protected.

Inevitably, because of other commitments, a number of CCSJ members have resigned from the Commission and its Standing Committees while we have welcomed a number of new members.

CCSJ welcomes Fr Malcolm Rodrigues SJ who was appointed as Spiritual Director to CCSJ in May 2004. It is important that as members engage in the important work of the Commission we develop our own spirituality to nourish us on our journey.

We also welcome Fr Pat Bascio C.S.Sp. who has also obtained permission from his Superior, Fr Herbert Charles, Spiritan Community, to support CCSJ e.g. by working with us to organize a series of lectures on global social justice issues such as stem cell research, the politics of oil and so on. The first lecture was organized recently at Holy Trinity Church, Arouca in June 2005 and it was well attended.

Some of those who have resigned from CCSJ continue to support our work as Resource Persons. Sadly, CCSJ's Secretary, Mrs. Wilma Coryat, a retired economist who has been with the Commission since its inception, will be leaving us at the end of July 2005. We thank her for her unstinting support and devotion to duty. We know that she will continue to support the Commission in a variety of ways.

It is essential that CCSJ has adequate Secretarial support in order to facilitate its work. CCSJ is grateful to the Archdiocesan Communications Commission for 'sharing' its secretaries with this Commission. We thank both Angela Joseph and Cheryl Mohammed for their dedication and commitment. We welcome Miss Kimberly Smith who will replace Mrs. Coryat. Kimberly comes to us highly recommended and is particularly interested in assisting the Youth Standing Committee. We thank most sincerely those who have resigned for their service to CCSJ and to the wider community.

A list of CCSJ's aims, objectives and core values and a list of current members are attached in **Appendices 1 & 2**. I urge all of you to work diligently to bring more workers into God's Vineyard so that together we will realise our vision. There have been many positive initiatives during this past year and we need to build on these.

CCSJ welcomes the comments made during the mini-synods (**Appendix 3**) and during the second session of the Archdiocesan Synod. The voices of the faithful are important as part of our evaluation process. Future CCSJ priorities and goals have been informed by these suggestions.

2) INCORPORATION OF CCSJ:

On 2 September 2004 CCSJ was incorporated as a non-profit making Company. This will facilitate the Commission's work in a variety of ways, for example, in its fund-raising ventures. The Company Seal is kept at CCSJ's Office at Archbishop's House. CCSJ would like to express its sincere thanks to M. Hamel-Smith & Co. for their generosity in undertaking the necessary legal work pro-bono.

3) FIRST WORLD CONGRESS FOR ECCLESIAL ORGANISATIONS WORKING FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE: Rome 26 – 30 Oct. 2004

The Chair of CCSJ was invited by Archbishop Kelvin Felix, President of the AEC Commission for Justice and Peace, to accompany him to attend the above Congress in Rome from 26 – 30 October 2004. They both represented the AEC. This provided CCSJ with an invaluable opportunity to meet/listen to/forgo links with others working to promote Justice and Peace around the world.

The deliberations and papers obtained during the Congress have informed CCSJ's work. A copy of an article written by CCSJ's Chair following the Congress was published in the Guardian and in the Catholic News. It is available on CCSJ's website.

4) COMPENDIUM ON THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

During the Congress mentioned in '3' above, the Chair of CCSJ purchased a copy of the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church which was published last year. It went out of print very quickly at that time. Cardinal Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace which produced the Compendium, rightly stated that the 525-page volume is not a "catechism" that sets forth a fixed body of doctrine; rather, it is a systematic synthesis of documents on social issues, produced by the Church magisterium.

The *Compendium* represents the culmination of a 5-year project for the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. In his 1997 apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II gave the Pontifical Council a mandate to produce a summary volume on Catholic social teaching. Work on the project began under the late Cardinal Francis-Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, the former president of the Council.

Cardinal Martino states that the *Compendium* , is a resource "without precedent in the history of the Church." It surveys Catholic social teachings from the pontificate of Pope Leo XIII to the current day and is "concise but complete," (Cardinal Martino).

In addition to such traditional Catholic concerns as the living wage and the principle of subsidiarity, the *Compendium* covers issues that figure prominently in current political debates, such as terrorism, justice in warfare, and same-sex unions. The *Compendium* also notes that social teaching can be a useful instrument in ecumenical dialogue, and in dialogue between the Church and the civil world. It recommends that the social message of the Gospel be a guide in the mission of the New Evangelization.

The *Compendium* is divided into three parts, and further broken down into 582 separate points. To increase its value as a reference work, the book contains a 192-page index. The volume begins with an introductory section on integral humanism and solidarity, which sets out the main themes of Catholic social doctrine. The second part--the bulk of the text, including 7 chapters-- elaborates on these themes, applying them to a wide variety of social issues.

The final part, consisting of a single chapter, offers suggestions for the practical application of Catholic social teaching in the lives of the faithful-- particularly the laity, who have a vital role in spreading the social teaching, starting with "an exemplary witness of life rooted in Christ and lived in temporal realities"(543).

Because of the importance of the *Compendium*, CCSJ is publishing in the Catholic News on a weekly basis, a systematic analysis of the document as part of our strategy to educate Catholics about the social teaching of the Church. Since the circulation of the Catholic News is limited, CCSJ will produce a Newsletter every quarter in which the articles published in the Catholic News will be incorporated so that they could be circulated more widely in parishes through the Newsletter. The articles will also be available on CCSJ's website for easy access to those who have this facility. The contents of the *Compendium*

will inform the work of all of CCSJ's Standing Committees, Projects and the LINK programme.

5) THE PASSING OF POPE JOHN PAUL 11, THE ELECTION OF POPE BENEDICT XVI & LETTER FROM CARDINAL MARTINO

Like billions of people around the world, CCSJ members watched/listened to news of and prayed for our beloved late Pontiff who suffered and died on 2 April 2005. We have learned so much from him. Indeed, even in his final moments he taught us how to suffer with dignity. We pray for the repose of his soul and feel certain that he will be canonised as a saint in the near future, God willing.

CCSJ sent words of congratulations to our new Pope Benedict XVI on 27th April to an e-mail address that was widely publicised for such best wishes to be sent. On 10th May CCSJ received a reply from Cardinal Martino (**Appendix 4**). It is worth noting that in CCSJ's last AGM Report a letter was included which CCSJ had received on 28th February, 2004 from His Eminence, Cardinal Martino, after he had visited the Commission's Website. In that letter he had commended CCSJ on its work. In his recent letter he states that he continues to pray for us.

6) MINI-SYNODS

On 27 November 2004 the Archdiocese held mini-Synods in each Vicariate prior to the second session of the Archdiocesan Synod which was held on January 14 – 15, 2005. The report of these mini-Synods was circulated to parishes, Commissions etc. A copy is available for reference at CCSJ's Justice Desk. The main comments relating to Social Justice are appended (**Appendix 3**).

As requested, CCSJ used these comments to inform its presentation at the second session of the Archdiocesan Synod in January.

7) SECOND SESSION OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN SYNOD, JANUARY 14 – 15, 2005

A copy of the *Official Text of the Resolutions passed at the second session of Synod* is available for reference at CCSJ's Justice Desk. His Grace's '*Decree of Approval*' and the Resolutions relating to 'Social Justice' are attached for ease of reference (**Appendix 5 & 6**).

I am sure that all those who were present at this second session of Synod will agree that the Catholic Church in TT has come a long way since our first session of Synod in 2003. As His Grace stated in his *Decree of Approval*, the mini-Synods helped to sharpen the dialogue at the Synod. He also remarked that "the energy present at the Synod and the growth in the comfort level of the Synod delegates with process, as compared with the first session of the Synod in 2003, was quite remarkable."

The recent Eucharistic Symposium for the laity on 28 May 2005 and 4 June 2005 is another indicator of the growth/development of our local Church. We are not all reading from the same page as yet but we will get there. What is clear is that CCSJ needs to step up its

efforts to educate Catholics about the Church's social teaching if we are to address the social ills of our nation/world more effectively. We must adopt a multi-faceted approach as part of our education programme as no one method will suffice. CCSJ's Standing Committees, Projects, LINK Programme etc. must view this as a priority.

8) REVIEW OF CCSJ'S WORK IN LIGHT OF THE SYNOD

Following the second session of Synod and as a result of its own review of its work at its meetings on 26 February 2005 and 30th April 2005, CCSJ has adjusted its work in a number of ways. For example, it has been decided that CCSJ will focus on a smaller number of Standing Committees (SCs) and issues and concentrate on those SCs that are working well or where it is essential that CCSJ should focus e.g. *Communications, Education, Families and Communities, Poverty and social exclusion, Prayer, Restorative Justice and Post Prison Support, Youth, Youth at Risk*. It was agreed that **ALL** members will 'throw their weight' behind every CCSJ project – even if this only means lending moral support to each project. This will help to build TEAM spirit which is essential for our work.

It was agreed that the following Projects would take priority:

- i) The Parish LINK Programme
- ii) World Youth Day, August 2005
- iii) The Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre (T&T's Reintegration Foundation)
- iv) Education SC's booklet providing units/modules for use in schools, parishes etc on social justice issues
- v) The Gonzales Project
- vi) The Family Mentoring Project planned for Gonzales
- vii) Developing a Spirituality of Justice in the Archdiocese
- viii) Supporting the CCSJ team in Tobago

It must be noted that CCSJ's research work has been affected by the loss of funding for the post of Research Assistant. Funding expired in June 2004. The Commission would like to record its thanks to First Citizens Bank for sponsoring this post for one year. CCSJ also thanks Taresa Best for devoting her gap year to undertake the roles and responsibilities of Research Assistant and wishes her well in her studies at UWI. Taresa has retained her post as Secretary to CCSJ. CCSJ has not been able to attract funds for this post since Taresa's departure.

In light of His Grace's instructions to all Commissions etc., CCSJ has appointed an Editorial Board that will deal with all public statements that the Commission wishes to issue. The Board comprises: The Chair of CCSJ, Mr. Clive Belgrave, Fr Malcolm Rodrigues, Fr Jason Gordon and Mr. Andre des Vignes. The new procedure for issuing public statements has been discussed by CCSJ and is being adhered to.

9) The Year of the Eucharist

CCSJ is involved in the Archdiocesan activities during this Year of the Eucharist e.g.

- Participated in planning for the Eucharistic Symposium for Priests and Religious held at Mount St Benedict: 19 – 21 April 2004.

- Participated in the Eucharistic Symposium for the faithful on 28 May and 4 June 2005 held at UWI's JFK Auditorium.

- Planning a seminar on 2 July 2005 at Our Lady of Fatima Church Hall, Bushe Street, on the theme: "The Eucharist and Social Justice." Members of the Panel are: His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert, Fr Henry Charles, Fr Jason Gordon, Fr Malcolm Rodrigues SJ.

- Involved in planning for events at Parish, Vicariate and Archdiocesan levels in October 2005. Inter alia, CCSJ has accepted responsibility to prepare a 30 minute video tape on its work for distribution to parishes for use during one of the 4 evenings of parish activities. This will assist the Commission in sharing information with the Catholic community and is also intended to motivate the faithful to consider the social implications of our participation in the Eucharistic feast and to BE the body of Christ in our society/world by DOING Justice.

- CCSJ will submit an article on The 'Eucharist and Social Justice' for publication in the Catholic News in a September 2005 edition in line with a request made by the Archdiocesan Planning Group for The Year of The Eucharist.

CCSJ urges Catholics to read Church documents issued by the Vatican to support initiatives and reflections during this Year of the Eucharist. Also, documents such as Lineamenta (2001) addresses important issues relating to the social implications of the Eucharist.

As CCSJ stated in its advertisement inviting parishioners to its forthcoming Seminar on 2 July on The Eucharist and Social Justice, to be a true disciple of Christ we must take seriously what He took seriously. Therefore, we must remember the social implications of our participation in the Eucharistic feast.

When we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist we must become the 'Body of Christ' in the world. Our sacramental practice should not be disconnected from the reality of our lives. Christ, whom we encounter in the Eucharist, meets us daily in our communities, in our social, economic and political relationships.

If we are to integrate the Eucharist into the reality of our daily lives, if we are truly to be God's prophetic and priestly people, then our Eucharistic celebrations must overflow with a passion for justice – from the altar to the world.

The Eucharist nourishes us so that we can carry out the Church's mission in the world. Our liturgy must be used to DO justice in a world in which injustice is an ever present reality. The Eucharist challenges the authenticity of our commitment to social justice. The late Pope John Paul II spoke of the Eucharist as "a project of solidarity."

How can we move from celebrating the Eucharist to living a Eucharistic life? Let us come together in solidarity and share ways of building a Eucharistic community that is both reflective and action-orientated. Together we can develop a spirituality of justice.

10) CCSJ Statements:

Press Statements were issued on the following issues:

- i) Lack of vision in allocation of Radio Licences – 9 July 2004
- ii) Say No to Abortion – 30 May 2004
- iii) Hurricane Relief for Grenada – 9 September 2004
- iv) Identifying the victims of HIV/AIDS – 4 October 2004
- v) CCSJ supports the change of name of the Trinity Cross – 19 November 2004
- vi) Stemming an unseemly conflict (the CJ issue) – 11 February 2005
- vii) Hanging is not the answer – 9 June 2005.

Because of the importance of CCSJ's last statement (9 June 2005), the Commission wishes to share the following information which was outlined by CCSJ's Chair during TV and radio interviews recently.

Recent statements by the Government of its intention to enforce the law on capital punishment have led to the baying for 'blood' by a large proportion of T&T's citizens, including some Catholics. This response may very well be influenced by fear, desperation and frustration by a society that feels that it is under siege as a result of the high levels of violent crimes. CCSJ believes that hanging is not the answer. It will not help us to build a just and peaceful society or to address crime and violence effectively. It will not provide solutions to the many complex problems that we face in T&T today.

It is worth noting the following statement by the US Bishops – entitled: *Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice (2000)*:

“As Catholic bishops, our response to crime in the United States is a moral test for our nation and a challenge for our Church...Putting more people in prison and, sadly, more people to death has not given Americans the security we seek. It is time for a new national dialogue on crime and corrections, justice and mercy, responsibility and treatment. As Catholics, we need to ask the following: How can we restore our respect for law and life? How can we protect and rebuild communities, confront crime without vengeance, and defend life without taking life? These questions challenge us as pastors and as teachers of the Gospel.

Our tasks are to restore a sense of civility and responsibility to everyday life, and promote crime prevention and genuine rehabilitation. The common good is undermined by criminal behavior that threatens the lives and dignity of others and by policies that seem to give up on those who have broken the law (offering too little treatment and too few alternatives to either years in prison or the execution of those who have been convicted of terrible crimes)...

A Catholic approach begins with the recognition that the dignity of the human person applies to both victim and offender. As bishops, we believe that the current trend of more prisons and more executions, with too little education and drug treatment, does not truly reflect Christian values and will not really leave our communities safer. We are convinced

that our tradition and our faith offer better alternatives that can hold offenders accountable and challenge them to change their lives; reach out to victims and reject vengeance; restore a sense of community and resist the violence that has engulfed so much of our culture.”

Because crime has many causes, it must be addressed in a co-ordinated manner as part of the overall priorities of our Government in T&T. Crime reduction strategies require a rigorous and responsible process that incorporates problem-solving partnerships at all levels. We need to tackle the factors that can lead to crime and those crimes that cause most damage to society, in particular drug/gun related and violent crimes.

As His Grace had stated at the pro-life Symposium organised jointly with Human Life International last year, Catholics cannot be anti-abortion and pro-hanging. All life issues are interrelated. The encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life) calls us to reject the culture of death that pervades society/our world and to build a culture of life that respects, affirms, enhances and promotes the dignity, worth and potential of every human person from conception to natural death. Catholics are called to defend life at all stages and in all circumstances. Our vision for T&T must be one that is concerned to build a culture of life and a civilisation of love.

In June 2005 His Grace approved CCSJ’s press statement opposing hanging (see CCSJ’s website) and calling for more humane ways of dealing with offenders. The Church does not deny its traditional position that the State has the right to employ capital punishment. However, as the late Pope John Paul II stated in *Evangelium Vitae*, and as is stated in our Catechism (para 2267), in today’s modern world “as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offence incapable of doing harm – without definitely taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself – the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity “are very rare, if not practically nonexistent.”

There are a number of issues relating to offenders that CCSJ continues to address e.g. chronic overcrowding in our prisons. CCSJ have been liaising with the Cmr. Of Prisons regarding concerns about overcrowding at the POS prison which was originally built in the 19th Century to house 350 persons. At one stage over the past couple of years there were over 1,100 persons ‘housed’ there. CCSJ has also written an article on this issue and has raised the issue in various fora.

The Cmr of Prisons has informed CCSJ that a number of persons have been moved from the POS prison to the Arouca maximum security prison which is much larger. There are now 600 persons at the POS prison. CCSJ understands that money has been allocated to install a new sewerage system at Arouca as the current system will not cater for the needs of a larger prison population. There are major human rights issues relating to the conditions in our prisons. These have been raised by Amnesty International and by local Attorneys-at-Law etc.

Prof. Deosaran’s research (Centre for Criminology) highlights the fact that our prisons are overflowing with mainly poor, uneducated males of African origin. While poverty should not be an excuse for an individual engaging in criminal activity, it is important to remember that most of those in our prisons are not those who have brought drugs and guns into our country and communities. Why is it that only one ‘class’ of offenders are languishing in our prisons? When will action be taken against the drug/gun lords

There are a number of positive strategies that our Government is adopting and the public should rally behind these. Among them are plans to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Police Service. A modern and effective police service lies at the heart of crime reduction. The Chair of CCSJ is a member of the Police Service Commission and is aware of some of the positive strategies that are being employed with regard to enhancing the performance etc. of the Police service.

However, crime reduction strategies must incorporate an holistic approach to human, social and economic development. This requires crime plans that address issues relating to urban and rural regeneration, poverty and social exclusion, employment and training, housing, education, access to basic amenities etc.

A key crime reduction strategy is the improvement of our detection, arrest and conviction rates. Between January and 20 June 2005, 164 murders were committed (compared to 104 last year over the same period), of which only 29 have been solved. There were 6 gang-related murders last year. So far this year there have been 31. Last year there were 4 drug-related murders. By 20 June 2004 there were 8 such murders.

We must standardise the collection, dissemination and analysis of intelligence, enabling the police to proactively target criminal activity. We need a co-ordinated multifaceted strategy that aims to draw resources and skills for local/national crime prevention from a variety of stakeholders/role-players e.g. the judiciary, the Police Service, the Probation Service, the Prison Service, the Defence Force, the various Government Departments, the business community, trade unions, NGOs, CBOs, faith-based communities etc.

Partnership is at the heart of delivery. A clear understanding of the interdependence of the various services/stakeholders is critical if we are to focus our resources more effectively and ensure that everyone is reading from the same page. CCSJ's project in Gonzales, led by Fr Jason Gordon (see later in this report) is a model of effective collaboration between various stakeholders to reduce crime and to regenerate/renew communities.

We need a community policing model and if we are to enhance police performance we need to ensure that the police are given the support they need. The Police Service itself needs to embrace urgently effective performance-management systems, agree on clear benchmarks and targets for the Service. We will improve police operational effectiveness through development and implementation of scientific and technological support, up-to-date equipment, adequate numbers of well-maintained vehicles etc.

Enhancing the administration of justice system will go some way to address 'runaway' crime in T&T. It is difficult to understand why technology has not caught up with our Court system. Why do our Judges and Magistrates still have to record notes by hand? This adds an inordinate amount of time to the justice process. No wonder Magistrates' lists are so long. We must use technology and devise strategies that will enable T&T to deal with cases more expeditiously. Action must be taken to ensure that Computer Aided Transcription (CAT) machines are widely available in courts.

The time has come for us to change our current system whereby we employ the services of police as prosecutors. This is currently done for all cases in Magistrates' Courts, except in Preliminary Inquiries where the charge is for murder. Attorneys-at-Law should be employed as prosecutors. Systems such as the Crown Prosecution Service in the UK can be drawn on and adapted to meet our local needs.

We also need a framework of legislation that will support the criminal justice system. For example, the proclamation of DNA legislation will improve our detection and clear-up rates. If we need more trained staff at our Forensic Science Centre, then we must prioritise this so that we can make better use of forensic science. The memory of little Akiel Chambers should spur us to action in this area.

Another key area for action to facilitate crime reduction lies in the Probation Service. It is worrying to find that our Probation Service comprise of only a few individuals who have an extensive workload. It therefore takes an inordinate amount of time for Judges and Magistrates to receive Probation Reports that will assist them in arriving at decisions and for sentencing purposes.

Sadly, because our system is such that cases are not dealt with expeditiously, many offenders are out on bail terrorising communities and committing more and more serious crimes. And those offenders who can afford to pay for trained, experienced lawyers often win their cases since the Prosecution is often led by inexperienced Police men and Police women. This statement is not intended to undermine those hard-working members of the Police Service, it is simply to state a fact that exists because of our archaic system.

Early years interventions are also critical. We must try harder to reduce the risk of people turning to crime and divert those young people and adults most at risk of offending away from crime. The Education System cannot do this alone. Civil society, including religious groups, must play their part. We must also do more to support the victims of crime, the families of the perpetrators of crime and families in need generally. How can we build communities that care? There is also a need for more effective national structures to deal with alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, incest etc.

The treatment of prisoners and the rehabilitation of offenders must also be addressed (see Report of Standing Committee on Restorative Justice and Post-Prison Support in this report). We must attempt to shut the revolving door where over 60% of ex-offenders reoffend. A major challenge is to reduce organised and international crime and gang-related violence which also threaten national security. Each of us must strive to develop a culture of respect and adherence to laws. We need to promote better co-operation between all tiers of Government and civil society to reject the culture of violence that pervades our land and embrace a culture of peace. It is the only way to save T&T.

B. TREASURER'S REPORT (SEE ATTACHED)

C. REPORTS: STANDING COMMITTEES

At one stage over the past 2 years, there were 15 CCSJ Standing Committees. However, a number of these have not been functioning – mainly because some Chairpersons have resigned due to other commitments e.g. Health, Consumer Rights and Protection, Environment/Ecology, Human Development. There is a danger that CCSJ could spread itself too thinly. There is much to do, but it is impossible for the Commission to address all issues. The review conducted by the Commission after the second session of Synod facilitated the process of prioritization.

The review led to a decision that the Commission should maintain only those SCs that are operating successfully and that all members of the Commission should ‘throw’ their weight behind all CCSJ’s projects rather than simply working with one or other SC. With fewer SCs this should be possible.

1. STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS

CCSJ owes a great debt of gratitude to Mr. Clive Belgrave for his work in this area. Mr. Belgrave is Chair of this SC as well as being Ag. Episcopal Delegate for the Archdiocesan Communications Commission. Since CCSJ’s inception he has ‘come up trumps’ each time he has been asked to locate firms that would print most of CCSJ’s material without cost to the Commission. The quality of the material is always of high quality.

To date he has arranged for free printing of CCSJ’s newsletter, booklet, prayer cards, posters, flyers, banners, bookmarks etc. and has secured many free advertisements for the Commission. We thank him most sincerely for his dedication and commitment to task. His support enables the Commission to utilize its funds for other important projects.

2. EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE (ESC)

Sr Roberta O’Flaherty, Chair of the ESC, is abroad on Sabbatical until the latter part of this year. She has left a structure in place so that the work continues. Ms Rhonda Earle, a member of the ESC attends CCSJ monthly meetings in Sr Roberta’s absence.

Last year the ESC organised a Social Justice Poster Competition for Forms 1 – 4 in Catholic Schools. Material was sent to all schools outlining the objectives and raising students’/teachers awareness of the Church’s social teaching. The themes for the competition were: Life and dignity of the human person, Preferential love for the poor, Care of God’s creation, Promotion of the common good, and Building Peace.

About 118 posters were received from various Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools in the Archdiocese. Teachers’ notes were sent to schools to support teachers in raising awareness of their students of social justice issues and to facilitate their entries for the competition. Most of the 118 entries focused on works of mercy while very few represented social action.

The challenge for CCSJ is to educate Catholics about the biblical concept of social justice and of the Church’s social teaching – remembering that Catholics are called to walk with the two feet of Justice – charity and social action. As 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.*”

The competition was judged by 3 independent judges. On 1 July 2004 His Grace received the first, second and third prize winners and their teachers and families at Archbishop’s House and presented them with their prizes. Light refreshments were served and the event was publicised in the Catholic News. An exhibition of the entries was mounted in the corridors at Archbishops House and the winners’ entries were displayed in various venues by members of the ESC.

Members of the ESC conducted 2 workshops in March 2005 on the theme: “*Catholic teachers: Challenged by the Eucharist*” and another workshop on 21 May at Emmaus Centre focusing on: “*Reflections on Social Justice, Biblical Foundations, Pastoral Circle.*” Further workshops will be organised in parishes in each Vicariate on social justice issues.

Members met with the National LINK Coordinator, Ms Maureen Arneaud, and have been exploring together the idea of producing a learning programme that would make learning about the social teaching of the Church easily accessible, exportable and applicable to a broad range of study scenarios.

They are considering the idea of identifying a limited number of social justice themes and developing a range of ‘product offerings’ under each theme e.g. producing a half-hour briefing, a one hour briefing, a 3 hour briefing, a full day programme and a 2-day series. To accompany these a Train-the-Trainer programme would be developed. The goal would be to equip each Vicariate with a cadre of trainers who could facilitate the range of programmes that would be produced.

The videos from CCSJ’s *Ask Why?* TV programmes would provide themes and video clips that can be used. Additionally, ‘street life’ video footage will be shot and worksheets prepared. A leader’s guide would help to guide the facilitator through each type of session. This suggestion was agreed to in principle and members of the ESC will consider it shortly.

This SC also provides weekly quotations on social justice issues for publication in the Catholic News. The quotations are also uploaded on CCSJ’s website.

3. FAMILY LIFE AND COMMUNITIES

The Chair of this SC, Mr Eldon Warner, and its members have been engaged in a variety of activities e.g.

- a) This SC collaborated with the Archdiocesan Commission for Communication and the Archdiocesan Family Life Commission to mark International Day of the Family by organising a Seminar on *Strengthening T&T’s capacity to support families* on Friday 14 May 2004 at St Mary’s College, POS. Dr Inyang-Ebong Harstrup, UN Regional Representative was the keynote speaker. The panel of speakers also included His Grace; Merle Hodge from the Network of NGOs; Eunice Gittens, Director of the Family Services Division, Ministry of Social Services Development; Fr Farfan representing the AFLC; and Mr. Acharaya Kermananda, a representative of the IRO;
- b) A booklet of the proceedings was produced and circulated widely as part of CCSJ’s awareness-raising programme;
- c) A meeting was organised by this SC with the Adoption Board of T&T (ABTT). This SC also invited to this meeting representatives from Emmanuel Community, Mary Care, and Living Water Community. CCSJ’s Chair also attended the meeting. The aim was to enter into dialogue with members of the Adoption Board, to share perceptions about the adoption process – including related legislation, to promote collaboration and to explore together ways of speeding up the Adoption process.

There are only 4 members of staff to deal with adoption issues across T&T. In order to speed up the process it is clear that staffing will need to be increased. The Chair of CCSJ wrote to the line Minister making a plea for her to include in the budget-making process a request for funds to enhance ABTT's staffing;

- d) This SC explored the possibility of establishing a pilot programme on mentoring in a few schools. The Chair, Mr. Warner, has been in contact with the President of KIDS HOPE, USA, an organisation that has an excellent mentoring programme there. They have granted permission for CCSJ to use the framework on which their programme is based.

At the moment this project has been placed on the 'back-burner' since a decision was made to re-prioritise work to support the Gonzales Project, led by Fr Jason Gordon. There is a need for Mentoring programmes in T&T schools and this is an issue that the Commission will seek to pursue in the future;

This SC is in the process of planning with Fr Jason Gordon a family mentoring/intervention programme in the parish of Gonzales. Initially this will be on a pilot basis. The SC will learn from this process before members seek to introduce this strategy in other parishes. At a future date, therefore, the SC proposes to initiate additional pilot projects, preferably in parish communities in which social justice committees (LINK Programme) are at work.

This focus recognizes the fact that working for social justice requires interactive/interventions to promote structural change affecting the lives of the socially displaced/excluded. It is therefore consistent with the Mission Statement of this Standing Committee, which includes, inter alia, "To promote support services for families."

The ultimate aim of this intervention is to enable parish communities to develop a key group of parishioners, who are willing to undertake, after appropriate training, to mentor families facing social justice challenges, with a view to helping them to become independent and capable in the management of their lives.

As a preparatory step this SC plans to organize a workshop to sensitize volunteers (parish teams) on intervention strategies to facilitate the establishment of working relationships with targeted families. Facilitators have been identified and a date for the workshop is to be arranged. In selecting volunteers for this programme, preference will be given to husband and wife teams to interact with families whom Fr Jason will identify.

The Committee reached agreement in principle with *Couples for Christ*, through its Director, Mr. Mark Poon Tip, to enlist volunteers for the programme. Where, as in the case of Gonzales, *Couples for Christ* does not already have a presence, it would be necessary for that group to establish a presence there to facilitate the work within the parish;

- e) This SC has also been involved in casework/outreach work e.g. one of the members of this SC and his spouse have come to the aid of a poverty stricken family in the Guaico-Tamana area. The family comprises a husband and wife and Ten (10) children, between the ages of 19 and 2 years, (the eldest of whom is

brain damaged as a result of a vehicular accident in respect of which minimal insurance compensation was paid). They live in a 2-room shack, as squatters, and etch out an existence on income earned from the sale of garden produce.

In an attempt to make this intervention sustainable and with the aim of making the family reasonably self-sufficient, access to various state welfare services is required. To this end this SC arranged for the member to meet Mr. Gary Tagallie (former member of the CCSJ) who is Director of the TT's EU sponsored Poverty Reduction Programme, Office of the Prime Minister, Social Services Delivery. As a result of the meeting, arrangements were made for the member to meet with the Chairman of the recently formed *Regional Social Development Council* for the area with a view to enlisting the help of the relevant social welfare personnel in that area.

This experience provides an insight into the plight of the rural poor as compared with the urban poor. It is said that information is power. Often the poor do not have relevant information that will enable them to gain access to facilities, funds etc. that may be available to enhance their lives. More needs to be done at parish level to reach out to such families;

f) This SC continues to be fully engaged in the pro-life cause. The Committee Chairman has collaborated with the Chair of CCSJ and Emmanuel Community to communicate to the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs the fundamental threats to family life which are posed by some of the proposals in the Draft Gender Policy and Action Plan which has been circulated by her Ministry for consultation.

4. POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The preferential option for the poor must be seen to be incarnate in the life of our Church at local, national and international levels. Catholic teaching states that the basic moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members.

The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. The Catholic Church must be in the forefront in the struggle to promote the common good, working for social conditions that allow people to reach their full potential and realise their human dignity.

Social concerns also include social exclusion which is a broader concept than poverty, encompassing not only low material means but the inability to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life, and with some alienation and distance from mainstream society.

Social exclusion is a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environs, bad health and family breakdown.

It is worth noting what the Sustainable Development Department of the IDB says about Social Exclusion:

“The Latin American and Caribbean region is one of the most unequal in the developing world. It is a region where income, opportunity, and resources systematically and

disproportionately accrue to only certain, more elite segments of the population. For many years, the poverty and social degradation that results from the region's inequality was considered largely an economic problem. In just the last few years, greater attention and analysis is being paid to a more complex set of social, economic, and cultural practices that comprise "social exclusion", in which certain populations are excluded from the benefits of social and economic development based on their race, gender, ethnicity, or disabilities. Social exclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean affects predominantly indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, women, the disabled, and those living with HIV/AIDS.

Social exclusion affects an individual's opportunity to find good work, decent housing, adequate health care, quality education, safe and secure living conditions as well as their treatment by the legal and criminal justice systems. A working definition of social exclusion is:

A chronic scarcity of opportunities and access to basic and quality services, labour markets and credit, physical conditions and adequate infrastructure, and the judicial system. The complex problem of social exclusion appears to be intensified and more severe for individuals that belong to multiple excluded groups. For example, educational and job opportunities are more limited for indigenous women than indigenous men. Discrimination and racism can occur on multiple levels for the same individual. For example, a black intravenous drug user infected with HIV/AIDS can face racial and legal discrimination, and prohibited from access to health care based on presumed criminal behaviour.

As social exclusion so severely restricts access to the services and jobs needed for a minimal standard of living, there is a high correlation between poverty and social exclusion. Even when they are not the majority of the poor, the excluded typically constitute the poorest. These telling trends make clear that poverty reduction in the region will not be successful without also addressing the complex determinants of social exclusion."

Social exclusion can be reduced by producing what the UK terms 'joined up solutions to joined-up problems. The Government cannot tackle social exclusion by itself but must work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop policies and deliver services. The Catholic Church could play a major role in improving understanding of the key characteristics of social exclusion, and the impact on it of government policies. The Committee will also look at international issues. Inter alia, this Committee will consider the encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (The Development of Peoples) by Pope Paul VI (1967).

This encyclical tells us that "another name for peace is development" and that we have a "collective responsibility" to promote development worldwide. The Holy Father calls for a holistic approach to human development, taking into account the social, political, economic, educational, cultural, spiritual and moral development of the human person. Writing of the need for solidarity between rich and poor nations and people Pope John Paul II wrote:

"Solidarity helps us to see the "other" - whether a person, people, or nation - not just as some kind of instrument with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited...but as our "neighbour", a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which we are all

equally invited by God - hence the importance of reawakening the religious awareness of individuals and peoples.”

John Paul II also stated that because of the interdependence of the world today, we need a more integrated international system. International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends on this, he says.

Inter alia, CCSJ looks at social, economic and political/public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor and work to overcome unjust practices and situations that oppress the poor. CCSJ’s work in this area includes social justice issues relating to:

- Promoting the relief of poverty of men, women and children
- Social exclusion & social cohesion e.g. examining combinations of linked problems that could lead to social exclusion, for example, unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environs, poor health/health inequality and family breakdown
- Lack of basic amenities such as running water, electricity
- Hunger/nutrition
- Economic development/TT’s debt to IMF, World Bank etc./the ethical dimensions of the economy and of financial activities
- Unemployment
- Local, Regional & International trade & industry
- International debt
- Wages/pay equity (part of gender justice)/pension
- Workers’ rights
- Homelessness/socially displaced persons/housing
- The marginalised
- Neighbourhood renewal/environmental well-being
- Land distribution
- Social Welfare, including welfare benefits and the rights of individuals within the welfare system
- Budgeting
- Consumerism/globalisation/international debt/labour markets.

CCSJ liaises with the Social Services Delivery team involved in TT’s Poverty Reduction Strategy. In addition to TT’s annual budgetary allocation, it is understood that approx. \$25m (US) European Union Funding is available to support poverty reduction in TT. The money is available for a 5 year period. After almost 4 years, it is not clear how much, if any, of this money has been spent to alleviate the dire situation of over 300,000 people in TT who live below the poverty line. CCSJ asks the following questions:

- What are the factors that constrain progress in human development e.g. in TT ?
- Is there a holistic approach to the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) e.g. more than just filling ‘bellies’ – social, economic, educational, cultural, political, spiritual, moral and physical development of each citizen?
- What diagnostics/analysis/statistics are available in relation to poverty in TT?
- What technical support do we have in TT for analysing data?
- Do we have the necessary infrastructure to support the PRS?
- How are policies costed, prioritised, and linked to diagnostics?
- Is TT’s target setting realistic?
- What is the social impact of key policy measures?
- How is the PRS being integrated into Government decision-making e.g. the budget

process i.e. how is EU Funding supplementing the Government's budget for Poverty Reduction?

- Is the PRS strategy grounded in the objective of sustained economic growth?
- How is the private sector involved in the process?
- Are there effective and efficient links between Government and Civil Society in relation to PRS?
- How are process issues being dealt with e.g. participation by people in rural areas?
- Are Good Governance and effective public sector performance/public expenditure management being seen as central to the implementation of PRS e.g. transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery?
- What monitoring and evaluation systems, e.g. outcome indicators, are in place to determine whether or not the strategy is successful?

The following scripture references about the poor are helpful for Catholics to focus on with respect to our work in this area:

Isaiah 3:5; Proverbs 14:31; 28:3,6; 21:21; Zechariah 8:10; Job 5:15-16; Psalm 9:19; James 2:5-6; Luke 6:20-21; 24-25; Luke 1:53; Luke 4:18; Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 15:7, 10-1; Psalm 82: 3-4; Proverbs 29:7; Isaiah 58:6-7; Matthew 5:42; Luke 3:11; 1 John 3:17-18; Matthew 10-1; Psalm 82:3-4; Proverbs 29:7; Isaiah 58:6-7; Matthew 5:42; Luke 3:11; 1 John 3:17-18; Matthew 25:35,40)

"Did you know" Global Poverty Facts

Did you know that

- it is estimated that over 300,000 people in T&T live below the poverty line?
- every second a child in our world dies from malnutrition?
- one out of every five persons (that is 1.2 billion people) today lives on less than US\$1 a day and almost 50% of the world's 6+ billion population live on US\$ 2?
- women and children make up more than 70% of the world's poorest people?
- global wealth has doubled from \$14 trillion to \$28 trillion in one decade yet world poverty has not declined?
- in a single day, under globalization, poor countries lose nearly \$2 billion due to international trade and that \$60 million drains from poor countries to rich ones through debt payments?
- there are 60 countries that are poorer today that they were 30 years ago?
- the G-7 (the world's seven most developed countries) have only 10% of the world's population but 63% of the wealth?
- the richest 1% of the us have the wealth that is equal to the poorest 57% of us and that the world's poorest 5% lost almost a quarter of their real income while the world's top 5% gained 12%?

- 115 million children do not attend primary school and that one in six of the world's adults is illiterate?
- only 10% of global spending on medical research and development is directed at the diseases of the poorest 90% of the world's people?
- 30,000 children a day (10 million a year) die of preventable illnesses?
- the poorest countries of the world only have 0.4 percent of international trade; losing US\$ 700 billion from unfair trade rules yearly. Yet they repay 30 times that amount in debt each year.

If you are interested in finding out more about poverty globally see Catholic Agency for Overseas Development's (CAFOD) Poverty Fact sheet (www.cafod.org.uk).

Also, the document: "*To Renew the face of the Earth – Global Concerns*" (April 2004) – produced by Fr Michael Campbell-Johnston SJ of Barbados' Justice and Peace Commission (diocese of Bridgetown), is worth reading. Fr Michael addresses issues such as:

- The rich get rich and the poor poorer
- Is Free Trade the answer?
- Who owes what to whom?
- Is there enough food in the world?
- Private property and social responsibility.

CCSJ decided that the Chair of this SC, Mr. James Potter, should support CCSJ's Project in Gonzales. As an economist, Mr. Potter has specific expertise that can be utilised in this area. He conducted a survey in the area to support the Government's poverty alleviation programme and applied for funds from this programme to facilitate CCSJ's work in Gonzales. Unfortunately, to date there have been difficulties in securing the funds requested.

As part of CCSJ's review after the second session of Synod, it was decided that members of this SC will support the work of other SCs. This does not mean that CCSJ is not promoting justice in this area. A key social justice principle is the Church's option for the poor and marginalized. This work permeates all of CCSJ's work. Mr. Potter's report is included in the Project report on Gonzales hereunder.

5. PRAYER STANDING COMMITTEE

Mikkel Trestrail, Chair of this SC organised a vigil on Abortion on 23 July at Our Lady of Fatima RC Church. Those who attended are committed to promoting the Church's pro-life agenda. Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues, CCSJ's Spiritual Director and Msgr Esau Joseph participated in the vigil.

The Chair of this SC is planning a retreat for members of CCSJ as members also need to nourish themselves, grow in spirituality and pray for God's guidance as we undertake this important work.

6. STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND POST PRISON SUPPORT

It is worth reflecting on the following words uttered in 2000 by our late Pope, John Paul II:

“We are still a long way from the time when our conscience can be certain of having done everything possible to prevent crime and to control it effectively so that it no longer does harm and at the same time, to offer to those who commit crimes a way of redeeming themselves and making a positive return to society. If all those in some way involved in the problem tried to develop this line of thought, perhaps humanity as a whole could take a great step in creating a more serene and peaceful society.”

This remains an important area of CCSJ’s work. Fr Matthew D’Hereaux, Chair of this SC and Prison Chaplain, continues to support offenders through e.g. the WALK TALL programme which commenced in 2004. The 40 week programme helps to prepare prisoners for their release in a variety of ways. However, it is still a challenge to support destitute ex-prisoners on their release. We need more robust rehabilitation programmes both within prisons and following the release of prisoners.

CCSJ agrees with Prof. Ramesh Deosaran, Criminologist, who stated in his study (2003) that although statistics show that at that time there was 17,000 serious crimes committed in T&T, this figure could be halved if there was a greater focus on rehabilitation. Prof. Deosaran’s research shows that more than 60% of our ex-prisoners re-offend. We must assist offenders to turn their lives around. The following report by Fr Matthew D’Hereaux highlight the importance of our work in this area as we attempt to meet the needs of offenders and ex-offenders. Fr Matthew writes:

“The Standing Committee (SC) on ‘Restorative Justice and Post-Prison Support’ has taken on the challenge of working towards actualising Resolution 28 of the 2003 Archdiocesan Synod. The said Resolution mandated the CCSJ to establish a ‘Half-Way House’ for ex-prisoners, hereafter referred to as **The Anthony Pantin Re-Integration Centre**. The establishment of this Centre is of critical national importance in a country besieged by crime and growing helplessness.

CCSJ sees its work as serving our nation through providing ex-offenders and/or repeat offenders alternatives to crime. Hence this SC has given Resolution 28 first priority in the short-term. Notwithstanding this however, it is the vision of our Committee, in the medium to long-term, to use the The Anthony Pantin Re-Integration Centre as an administrative base from which to further the work of public education on Restorative Justice. Furthermore, the programmes of the Centre will be based on the major principles of Restorative Justice - such as mediation and conflict resolution, restoration, reparation and re-settlement. The Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre will be Restorative Justice in action!

The following are the steps we have taken over the past year to assist in the vision of establishing the Centre:

a) Established a Management Committee comprising 12 members.

Our management committee comprises 12 committed men and women who are professionals in various fields. The range of experience, backgrounds and competence on the Management Committee has served us in good stead for all our undertakings.

This Committee will see to the day to day management as well as to the development of the Centre. It is accountable to CCSJ. The Committee whose Chair is Paula Granada, operates with terms of reference and gathers for regular meetings on a monthly basis. Its members have also attended extraordinary meetings when circumstances warranted such.

b) Designed a Logo for the Centre

A logo has been designed for the Centre. The logo represents the signature of the Centre. It symbolises an all-embracing hand being extended to another. The all-embracing hand represents that of the community reaching out to the vulnerable ex-offender, offering him/her an alternative to a path of crime, violence and destruction. The embrace between the community and ex-offender takes place in a structure resembling a church-building. This represents the Church acting in the role as facilitator of rehabilitation and re-integration.

c) Determined the MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS of the Centre

Vision Statement: *TO RETURN TO SOCIETY PRODUCTIVE, LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS WHO ARE WILLING TO SERVE, FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND COUNTRY.*

Mission Statement: *THROUGH MENTORING, COUNSELLING, MEDIATION, APPRENTICESHIP, SKILLS TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT, THE ANTHONY PANTIN RE-INTEGRATION CENTRE OFFERS EACH CLIENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPIRITUAL, SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL TRANSFORMATION.*

d) Purchased approximately 8 acres of land in San Rafael area

Over the past year we encountered difficulties in identifying a piece of land. Those parcels which we deemed 'suitable' were, however, not located in areas that had host communities amenable to housing an ex-prisoner project. The stigmatisation has been real - as is the fear and anxiety over having ex-offenders in neighbourhoods that were considered.

After a long search the Committee was able to recommend to CCSJ the purchase of approx. 8 acres of land for \$350, 0000. We located this 8-acre parcel in the San Rafael area. It is fairly distant from existing communities. It stands in a vast area between two villages some 10 minutes drive from San Rafael RC Church. CCSJ and the Management Committee are now putting things in place to meet with the community out of civic courtesy. We wish to ensure that the nearby communities understand the vision and urgency of the project. Because the land is not in a populated area there is no electricity or pipe-borne water. However, discussions were held with the Minister of Public Utilities on procuring these basic amenities and assurance was given that this will be done. In the meantime the use of generators is an option for electricity. Furthermore, a river bounds the land in one area, so irrigation is also possible.

e) Applied for Incorporation

The CCSJ is in the process of having this SC incorporated as the **TRINIDAD & TOBAGO RE-INTEGRATION FOUNDATION**. This move would assist in attracting funding as well as with the medium to long-terms goals of using the project as a base for advancing the work of Restorative Justice. The Trinidad & Tobago Re-

Integration Foundation will be an administrative arm of CCSJ to oversee (1) the management and continuity of the Centre and (2) the expansion of the work of Restorative Justice, with **The Anthony Pantin Re-Integration Centre** as a physical base from which to do so.

f) Making Linkages with other Social Partners

Part of the energy of the Committee over the past year has been used not only to attract funds but also to make significant links with other stakeholders in human and social development. It is the vision of the Committee to forge links which would contribute to the development of the project at a minimum cost outlay.

We have made links with architects, contractors, service clubs – Rotary and Lions, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, government programmes such as MUST, NAMDEVCO, YAPA and other NGOs such as ALTA and Families in Action. These have all expressed commitment to the project's development and expressed interest in offering programmes when the Centre is officially opened.

Various individuals who have worked in Human Resource Management at a professional level have also expressed keen interest in contributing to the developmental programmes that would be offered at the Centre as per the *Mission Statement*. Through these links we hope to attract, for example, already established programmes to the Centre such as the Multi-sectoral Training Programme MUST and the Youth apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture (YAPA). The latter will provide skills training in farm development for clients.

g. Fund-Raising

In February 2005 we were able to obtain free consultancy services from an architect. In view if this it is estimated that the entire project would cost TT \$2million. We remain undaunted by this figure and are focussed on achieving our goals/ realising our vision.

With regards to funding, we have raised over \$450,000 in the last year through the donations of individuals. We were able to procure an advertisement through TV6 outlining the vision of the project. This advertisement was aired for three months and led to individuals/organisations making donations to CCSJ's fund for this project.

On 25 July 2004 this SC held a concert entitled: *Rays of Hope* to raise funds for the Prison Ministry. The concert was held at Our Lady of Fatima Church Hall, Curepe.

In May 2005, we hosted a concert generously organised by the Marionettes Chorale. The concert raised approx. \$24, 000. We are now in the process of printing posters to advertise the project and raise funds. These will be sent to schools and churches as a way not only of raising funds, but also raising awareness that this is a project being undertaken by the Church.

Furthermore, we are about to develop pledge forms. Individuals and Companies will be asked to pledge material or cash toward every building at the Centre. We are also holding talks with two major commercial banks for funding. We hope to host a mega-concert in October towards this venture also.” (End of Fr Matthew's report)

It is important to note that CCSJ was successful in attracting funds from the Ministry of Social Services Delivery to pay for some of the furniture that will be required when

the Foundation is established. In terms of operating expenses, we have applied to the Ministry of Social Services Delivery for these costs. We await a positive response. With God's help and our efforts, we will meet our \$2million target.

The Commission seeks to raise awareness of the concept of Restorative Justice (RJ) which is an evolving response to crime that respects the dignity of each person, builds understanding and promotes social harmony through the healing of victims, offenders and communities. Our current system focuses on a retributive model.

RJ is a parallel system that embraces a wide range of human emotions, including healing, compassion, mercy, reconciliation, and mediation as well as the imposition of an appropriate sanction for criminal activity. RJ, therefore does not only focus on punishment, but rather asks: 'How do we restore the well being of the victim, the community and the offender?' It is a more holistic approach to a complex social phenomenon.

The Final Report of the Cabinet Task Force on Prison Reform and Transformation (2002) recommends that an RJ approach be adopted. The report states:

"The Committee agreed to the adoption of the Restorative Justice Philosophy as the ideal concept to guide penal policy and practice in Trinidad and Tobago. This approach is considered ideal as it actively incorporates and integrates all stakeholders including the community, victims of crime, corporate society and penal agencies in the fight against crime and in the various strategies and initiatives implemented for the effective management of the offender within and without the prison population. It cannot be over-emphasised that the Philosophy is a highly integrated, proactive participative and flexible approach to crime management. In essence, it (the report) provides a framework for the adoption of the Restorative Justice Philosophy. The transformation strategy for the Prison System in our view requires a new, more dynamic integrative structure of penal management."

The task force summarized three general principles of RJ as follows:

- Doing justice demands that we work to repair the damage inflicted by the offence and so far as possible restore the victims, offenders and communities.
- Those directly involved and affected by the crime should have the opportunity to participate fully in the restorative justice conference if they so desire.
- The State's role is to preserve a just social order while the community's role is to maintain a just peace.

It is from these principles that the values of encounter, amends, reintegration and inclusion are derived. The RJ model looks significantly different from our current retributive model. The introduction of restorative practices in our criminal justice system presupposes a real effort to combat institutional injustice. By addressing social justice issues we will simultaneously advance social cohesion and promote crime reduction.

We must therefore establish the essential linkages between our criminal justice system and social justice delivery agencies that will work with families and communities. Genuine reintegration of offenders into our society will require a holistic approach to the complex and multi-faceted issues of poverty, adequate opportunities for training

and employment, payment of just wages, housing fit for human habitation and family life education. Such an approach will reap significant rewards in the medium to long term.

One advantage of RJ is that it is flexible. It would be remiss of us as a young nation seeking to build institutional structures that support and celebrate harmony amidst our diversity to neglect the possibilities this model offers our society. It can enable us as a people seeking to shape an independent identity to discard the worst of an oppressive, colonial history and to adopt the wisdom and practices of indigenous traditions. RJ also places the victims at the centre of the justice equation whereas at present they are kept on the periphery merely for their utility as witnesses.

Offenders must be encouraged to understand the real human consequences of their actions. RJ places the responsibility for the crime squarely in the hands of those who commit the offence. Awakening a sense of regret may provide the impetus necessary for change in criminal behaviour patterns. What is needed now is a shift in the mindset of all parties.

Every sector of the national community must be open and receptive to other ways of administering justice, which includes: more use of diversions, victim-offender mediation to facilitate healing, community based sentencing, strengthening our families, violence prevention programmes in our schools, an adequate number of guidance officers in secondary schools, police interventions to build capacities that empower youth, RJ conferencing, conflict management/resolutions, skills training, circles of support for high risk former prisoners such as drug offenders and sexual offenders.

We must find ways that will lead to our ultimate goal of keeping people out of prison by dealing with them in the community without simultaneously compromising public safety. The monies we save by keeping citizens out of prison can then be redirected to more productive uses like empowering our youth to live meaningful and worthwhile lives.

7. TOBAGO COMMITTEE

Ms Joan Eversley-Gill, the Chair of CCSJ's Committee in Tobago, is working with Ms Deborah de Rosia to establish a social justice group in Delaford because of the distance between Scarborough and Delaford. Members of the Committee in Scarborough continue to work diligently to achieve their aims. Mrs. Eversley-Gill writes:

“During 2004 members of the Social Justice Committee, attended a number of seminars and policy conferences organized by the Tobago House of Assembly in such areas as Poverty, Gender, the Elderly and Youth.

The Committee, together with representatives of the Moravian, Anglican and Pentecostal denominations and other faith-based organizations also participated in an anti-abortion breakfast meeting hosted by Lawyers for Jesus with a view to mobilizing forces and developing a common strategy to deal with the pro-choice onslaught and to alert the political directorate of our opposition to any proposed legislation in that respect.

After attending these various gatherings we recognized that not only was there a need for education but also re-education in our own community on the meaning and need for social justice and this became our mission for 2005.

Unfortunately the early part of 2005 we were somewhat disorganized as members-schedules conflicted, meetings cancelled or poorly attended. Notwithstanding, members were willing and committed to the social justice mandate and envisioned it as an integral part of the church community so we rallied together to achieve this goal. I am happy to say that the committee now meets regularly and with enthusiasm and drive which augurs well for it's continued development.

Our mission for 2005 was described as an Education Outreach Programme to encompass Scarborough, the outstations of Patience Hill, Mason Hall, Mt. St. George and Castara and the Sacred Heart parish of the Windward area. Our first mission was an after mass session conducted at the Castara Church. The response was heartwarming and we have been requested to include them in our future plans. Also arising from this meeting was a request for a parishioner to act as mediator in a land dispute. After considering the facts he was advised to proceed through legal channels.

Our next outreach visit was the Sacred Heart Church in Delaford. Here our vision was greatly renewed by the response of the community. It was a vibrant and cordial occasion with the participation by all the different age groups. They also supported the plans of the committee and expressed their hope to be part of the social justice activities.

A similar session has been planned for the Confirmation class on a date to be finalized. We anticipate that by December 2005 we would have completed our schedule and held all sessions proposed.

In May 2005 the committee in recognition of the sanctity of life, the importance of motherhood and high esteem of the elderly planned a tribute to publicly acknowledge the most senior women in the community who epitomized the Catholic mother. They were introduced to the congregation after mass and given a corsage. A member of the Sunday school class recited a poem, which was written by one of the women. The event was well anticipated. A similar event was carded for Father's Day but did not come off as planned. We hope to do it in the near future.

Also in May of this year members of the committee were approached to take action about conditions at various private children's homes in the island. We lobbied for State intervention and successfully met with positive responses from the Assembly as almost immediate action was taken to deal with these issues raised.

Contact has been made with two main environmental agencies to prepare a series of activities and seminars to create sensitivity to the environment from a Christian perspective.

The group is in the process of compiling a parish directory of the various church organizations for effective communication among us. In September 2005, in conjunction with the Junior St. Vincent de Paul and Family Life Members we hope to host a Youth Day focusing on sex and a Christian lifestyle.

As part of our long-term plan, we have begun discussions on establishing a Youth Remand Centre in Tobago for Young offenders.”

8. YOUTH STANDING COMMITTEE

Since most of the members of this SC are also members of the Youth Secretariat, this SC has been working closely with Sr Kathy Joseph at the Youth Secretariat. Collaboration facilitates the optimum use of our human, financial and material resources.

Unfortunately, since Adanna James, Chair of the SC will be unable to continue in this position, due to work and study commitments, CCSJ is currently looking for a Chair to replace her. Ms James remains a member of CCSJ.

Members of this SC

- held a series of ‘Visioning Exercises’ to facilitate strategic planning for the SC
- produced a series of 6 TV programmes on the document: *Love and Responsibility*. These were aired on Channel 10 (Cable TV).
- Continues to assist HIV/AIDS patients
- Established a Youth Web Forum on 20 April 2004. Young people were able to visit the site and discuss Youth issues. The Chair of this SC and CCSJ’s Secretary and Research Assistant were overseeing the Forum to ensure that discussions are monitored carefully so that inappropriate material was not introduced in the discussion. This is a very time-consuming project and because of other commitments, this web forum was discontinued.

9. YOUTH AT RISK STANDING COMMITTEE

A meeting was held with key stakeholders working with children/youth at risk to discuss the issues involved in this area. A key issue to be addressed is the need for the Children’s Act to be proclaimed and the Children’s Authority to be established. The Chair of CCSJ produced a paper on this issue for presentation at the meeting and this is available on CCSJ’s website.

CCSJ decided that before the Commission could take action there is a need to determine what provision exists currently e.g. in our Catholic institutions/homes.

On 20 March 2004 a questionnaire was sent to 5 Catholic institutions/homes for children in the Archdiocese to be returned to CCSJ by 7 April 2004. Some of the aims of this exercise were:

- a) to assess the current state of play in these institutions, strengths, weaknesses, areas for action at local and national levels etc.;
- b) to compile a data base at CCSJ’s Justice Desk to support the formulation of an action plan in this area;
- c) to make recommendations to the institutions and to the Government.

An offer was made for CCSJ's Research Assistant to make site visits to each institution to lend support in completing the form. Four institutions completed and returned the questionnaire. Unfortunately, with the departure of our Research Assistant and with the Chair of this SC having left to complete her studies abroad, it was not possible to pursue the work. The Chair has now returned to T&T and it is hoped that work in this area will continue in the near future.

The scope of the survey exercise was limited by 'personnel' problems as each member of the group of three working on the project pulled out or got side-tracked as a result of other, pressing commitments. And so, of a possible 10 plus survey participants, only 5 were surveyed.

The institutions/homes varied in population size from less than Ten (10) to more than One Hundred and Fifty (150), all five providing out-of-home care to children and young people who were socially displaced –children and youth at risk.

Some institutions/homes with specific populations: children infected with HIV/AIDS, female adolescents who were beyond control or who 12 years old plus, had no able or willing to care them and so on. Some catered for boys and girls: children of all ages.

Many of the children and young people cared for by these agencies have experienced abuse (sexual, physical), homelessness, profound loss (family, home), abandonment and rejection. Many present with behavioral problems, mental health issues, learning challenges and special needs.

In larger institutions/homes, the staff-to-child ratio militates against individualized care. Although no data was collected in relation to the kinds of records kept, there was no evidence of the existence of individual care plans for residents of institutions/homes surveyed. Some agencies included counseling in the list of services provided to children/youths in their care, though. All institutions/homes sought to promote the holistic development of the child/youth in an environment that was caring.

As such, children/youths had access to primary school education and secondary as well as vocational training, in case of agencies serving an adolescent population. No data was collected on academic/vocational outcomes although, in cases of adolescent populations, where residents were out to work or in apprenticeships, employment was, generally, in low to minimum wage (low-no-skill) areas.

All the institutions/homes allowed residents some interaction with family. All allowed their children/youths some measure of interaction with the wider community: school attendance, clubs and community group participation and so on.

The following needs that were identified by the institutions/homes surveyed:

- Transition and aftercare services for children/young people leaving care.
- Family support services for children's families-of-origin, from the time the child enters the system.
- Staff training and staff support services.
- Financial support.
- Up-grading of physical ministries.

- Better working linkages within the Social Services and related governmental ministries.
- A more secure, safer care environment.
- Proper staffing (well-trained, motivated, sharing our value)

It is recognized that there is need for further data collection and analysis as the Commission seeks to assess our response, as Church; to the needs of children and youth at risk.

As providers of residential out-of-home care of children/youth in a social services environment in which more and more emphasis is being placed on the child as a subject (as opposed to an object) of care, a human being with rights, and on the suitability of the care environment vis-à-vis universal standards, we need to be aware of the implications of these changes for our practice.

As such, CCSJ will consider organizing a conference, bringing together all residential care providers within the Archdioceses to raise awareness of pertinent issues etc.

D. CCSJ PARISH LINK PROGRAMME

Since its inception in 2003, CCSJ has recognized the importance of working with parishioners at a grassroots level in parishes. The Commission has sought to work with Episcopal Vicars and parish priests to identify individuals/groups that would be willing to collaborate with it to promote social justice, particularly at a local level. CCSJ needed someone, inter alia,

- to develop training programmes for members of the LINK Programme in parishes to raise their awareness of social justice issues;
- to assist members of LINK teams in devising strategies for identifying and dealing with social justice issues in their parishes and in recruiting support for their work from among other parishioners/residents living in the parish;
- to act as a link person between LINK persons/teams and CCSJ e.g. so that CCSJ will be able to act as advocates of their behalf on a range of issues.

It soon became clear that without a worker dedicated to undertake this task, development would be patchy and it would be difficult to maintain momentum across the Archdiocese. CCSJ would like to record its thanks to Sr Joan Duerst, Sinsanawa Dominican Order, who assisted the Commission in this area of work for a few months before she was called back to the USA by her superiors.

Ms Maureen Arneaud was appointed in March 2005 as CCSJ's National Parish LINK Coordinator. Maureen had played a major role as part of the Synod Implementation Team and CCSJ, recognizing her strengths, welcomed her with open arms when she agreed to support the Commission in this important area of work.

The following report by Maureen offers a snapshot of CCSJ's Parish LINK service 2005. Maureen writes:

CCSJ Parish LINK Service Report 2005

“This report addresses key issues, work in progress and the way forward together – under the following headings:

1. What exactly is the CCSJ Parish LINK service?
2. Social Justice as a Spirituality of Communion – Church as Community
3. The “Call” to Participation
4. Positioning of the LINK service at an individual level
5. Our work process – How we go about doing what we do
6. Meeting Format
7. Areas of Work and Themes
8. Types of Activities going on in the Parish LINK justice groups
9. So where are we in the Archdiocese?
10. What else does the Parish LINK service do?
11. The Way Forward Together.

“No one in our community should be suffering if we can help it!”

These words form the rallying cry of the CCSJ Parish LINK program! A call to service, a response to that part of God’s vision for a Catholic Christian life ... "love one another as I have loved you."

1. What exactly is the CCSJ Parish LINK service?

The CCSJ Parish LINK program is *a service offering for Parishes* from the Catholic Commission for Social Justice. It is a resource available to parishes for raising awareness of/building justice spirituality in parishes and re-focusing action for justice among parishioners. It is a Synod implementation effort.

2. Social Justice as a Spirituality of Communion - Church as Community:

**“You have been told, O man, what is good
and what Yahweh requires of you :
Act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with your God”**

Micah 6:8

Recognizing that parishes have always worked for social justice, we take this special moment of renewal and re-focusing that is our Synod moment, and use it as an opportunity to

- look again at social justice and its particular message in our current times
- promote and live social justice in the context of Church as Community
- learn, and grow in an understanding of social justice as a foundation of how we think and how we act at all times in our daily lives
- seek conversion of our hearts through prayer, study and action
- promote the good news of love, caring and justice for all.

All done in His name ... because we are one in Him. And we seek to do this in a practical way in our streets, our communities, and our country.

3. The “Call” to Participation:

The Parish Link service seeks *new ways to be Church*; ways that really take into account people's lives today and the basic goodwill and faith that lies in the heart of every single person.

People want goodness; they want to help but they may not see how they can do so. They are often weighed down with family and social responsibilities. People are tired/ exhausted at the end of the day. Many feel helpless when facing the crime and violence in our lives today; some even feel hopeless. But most people want goodness and coherence; deep down they want to belong, to take part, to be included and to rally around a cause. People want to find ways to link their learned faith to the "dayliness" of their lives, they want to see God's face and feel His hand in their lives - rural or urban, young or old.

Too often however, we Catholics live almost exclusively in the observance of the devotionals and sacramentals. While these are key and beloved aspects of our faith, we are responding to only one part of the great commandment:

"Thou shall love the Lord Thy God with thy whole heart and mind and soul and strength and
Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself ..."

Somewhere along the line we were focused on primarily loving our God through our devotions and sacramentals. A core and blessed practice. That used to be where the emphasis was placed in our schooling. But since we did not focus significantly on service to our neighbours, it does not come as a surprise that many Catholics do not see **service to others** as a core part of Catholicism. "Treat others kindly" seemed to be the main message with regard to "love your neighbour", but not *serve and work for and with* - not seek the root causes and do something about them ... none of that was instilled in us as young people.

But we seek to strengthen that today through the Parish LINK service. Today focused by Synod and guided by Vatican II, we move forward on this and we exhort the inactive Catholics who remain in the pews without getting involved, to take up the challenge to demonstrate love of neighbour through actual service. We exhort them to become community as Christ intended. We seek to promote the Cross as formed by the 2 axes of faithfulness to God:

The vertical up to God, whose grace pours down to us, the horizontal our love of neighbour in Christ evidenced as service to others .

Our CCSJ Parish LINK service puts forward the model of church as Community – and seeks to build a caring community; introducing the concept afresh for consideration and reflection and bringing life once more to what Christ has asked of us - "Love one another as I have loved you."

4. Positioning of the LINK service at an individual level:

The LINK approach seeks to find a way

- a) to make it possible for people to find a spiritual connection between their life and God's plan;
- b) to make it make sense in their busy stressful life;
- c) to help people see a possible link between how we were brought up as Catholics and our somewhat passive attitudes today;
- d) to show ways to change that dynamic of "the inactive Catholic".

Parishioners are invited to participate at one or more of 4 levels of participation which aim to move Catholics into the ranks of justice team membership. This is what we call "new ways to be Church". We offer options that make service involvement feasible and reasonable for many. These 4 levels of participation are:

- At-home membership
- Project membership
- On-call membership
- Core Team membership

Each of these has a variety of service activities - something to suit a broad range of interests/ talents / time availabilities. And each offers some direct contribution to the service needs of the community we work with and the service team we are becoming. All of these options draw members into the spirituality of living justly; serving just causes, learning about justice, growing in justice- it yearns for and builds a just community. Love your neighbour as I have loved you.

5. Our work process – How we go about doing what we do

We strike a balance between proactive work and response to requests for service.

Our proactive work is primarily relationship building – with Episcopal Vicars, priests, and parish leaders. We meet and speak with Episcopal Vicars explaining our service and we request to speak at their Vicariate Council meetings and / or their Vicariate priests meetings. We seek to establish a contact person in each parish initially to act as a liaison between us and the parish priest, parish council and parishioners.

Our service response work is as follows: When a parish calls

- a) We meet with the parish priest and existing team if there is one;
- b) We explain the work process which is as follows:
 - we speak at all masses over a period of one weekend about new participation in social justice;
 - the local youth group is positioned at all the church doors with 'sign-up' sheets;
 - average new membership achieved through those 'blitz talks' is between 50 – 100 sign ups - 50 in the smaller parishes, 100+ in larger ones;
 - a follow-up meeting or event is scheduled within 2 weeks;
 - orientation is given, teams are formed, work allocated, process set in motion.

(Note – this process is not a one or two day event ... it all takes time to get people to a point of readiness, to do some development or training, then start moving forward together)

- c) The Parish LINK representative stays with the parish for 3 – 4 weeks/ meetings - longer if necessary or requested.

- d) On-going follow-up support is provided by e-mail and phone from then on, or by visits when the team requests specific help thereafter.

6. Meeting Format:

All LINK justice teams follow a basic meeting plan:

- Prayer
- Study
- ‘Mission work sharing’ to facilitate the development of common knowledge, advice and support
- Action items, ways in which we can support each other’s growth or work, intercessory prayer needs are agreed upon and the meeting is concluded.

Some teams hold to a one-hour or one-and-a-half hour meeting. We view the respecting of this time frame as a justice issue in itself. Where possible minutes are sent out within days of the meeting by e-mail and ‘hardcopies’ are given to those who do not have access to this facility.

Meetings are weekly or bi-weekly. We suggest that weekly meetings should be held for the first 3 – 6 months and if cohesion has been established then the team may decide to meet bi-weekly. Some groups moved to bi-weekly meetings and later they chose to go back to weekly meetings since they recognize the strength, focus and connectedness that weekly gathering bring. We discourage monthly meetings – no momentum can be established; and growth and engagement can wither.

7. Areas of work & Themes:

To build community for the Kingdom’s sake, to be the voice of justice in our communities, to show Christ’s love through service for justice's sake, to show that it is our Christian duty to be our brother’s and sister’s keeper. These are the principles that drive our work and they are evidenced in the 4 points of action in our Church’s teaching on social justice. The following guide our coming together:

- Solidarity
- Education
- Community action
- Advocacy

And out of reflection and sharing with our teams, were born 2 themes that express what the Parish LINK service stands for:

... *Bring Each Other Home*, and "*If you want peace, Work for justice.*" Pope Paul VI
We have created two 7 foot banners to carry our message into the Parishes.

"*Bring each other home*" emphasizes our need to work with and for each other to build or rebuild a just community – doing whatever is necessary to bring justice to the root causes of the social problems that we face in our communities. ("whatever is necessary" is drawn from the 4 areas that focus our work : solidarity, education, community action, advocacy)

"*If you want Peace work for Justice*" speaks for itself.

8. Types of activities going on in the parish LINK justice groups:

1. Letters to death row prisoners – a personal pen pal programme for caring and evangelization.
2. Intercessory prayer group focused on our ministry.
3. Lecture series with Fr Pat Bascio to spotlight some macro economic issues – from the Politics of Oil to Stem Cell research.
4. Study of the Church's teaching on Social Justice – at *every* meeting.
5. Justice Newsletter and soon a LINK UP Newsletter among the various teams and their parishes – part of an education program.

6. Community action programmes up and running since the programme started:
 - area census to identify needs & talents;
 - advising e.g. SVP of urgent needs identified during census;
 - instigating time and talent-sharing stimulated by census findings;
 - follow-up home visitation;
 - follow-up home blessings (very much wanted across the board – even by Non-Catholics and non-Christians e.g. in Rio Claro of 40 homes covered in our census, 30 homes requested house blessings via a return visit);
 - linking the people of our communities to Government, social services etc.;
 - accompanying people to go to Government offices to seek information and resources;
 - assisting in fixing or rebuilding dilapidated houses of the poor;
 - operation of a free legal aid clinic;
 - teaching computer literacy;
 - organizing community meetings with Government officials and members of the Police Service;
 - building relationships with community police – “speaker programs”;
 - doing “walkabouts” in the community, speaking to people at ‘liming’ areas about community needs and strengths;
 - community relationship building – working with other / existing community groups.
7. Collaborative Ministry – encouraging our own “other” parish groups to our meetings and to support our census efforts
8. Ecumenism – inviting other Christian denominations to join our work, even if the extent of collaboration involves their attendance at our meetings for information sharing and to give advice to us – we can learn from each other. We will also need to extend this to include an inter-faith approach to our work.

9. So where are we in the Archdiocese so far?

We are working in the following areas:

- a) St Theresa’s in Rio Claro,
- b) St Augustine in Cunupia,
- c) St. Michaels in Maracas Valley,
- d) St. Theresa’s in Woodbrook,
- e) Our Lady of Fatima in Curepe,
- f) Santa Rita and Navet,
- g) Dades Road, Cush and Ecclesville worship communities in the greater Rio Claro area,
- h) St Philip and St James in Chaguanas,
- i) The Ugandan Martyrs in Longdenville,
- j) We are commencing work in St Joseph,
- k) St Mary’s in Mucurapo and also at
- l) St John the Baptist in St Augustine.
- m) In the period July to October we will be bringing our service to more parishes in response to their requests for start-up or re-focus service e.g. in
 - La Divina Pastora in Siparia
 - Mary Immaculate, Queen of the Universe in Bourg Mulatresse; and

- Holy Trinity parish in Arouca.
- We will also be going to Tobago.

10. What else does the Parish LINK Service do?

Our parishes exist within a structure of Vicariate and Archdiocese, but they also exist in the community and the nation. Since Social Justice is a mission that particularly takes us out of the Church circle and into the streets of the community in very direct ways, efforts are being made to seek community links and collaboration.

Work as the LINK Coordinator includes meetings with:

- a) organizations with which we need to build relationships and assess the possibility of collaboration e.g. the Caribbean Council of Churches, The Woodbrook Residents Committee, The Piarco-Tunapuna Regional Corporation through Councillor Monica Ferguson who is willing to explore ways in which we can collaborate and to identify services for which people in our communities along the East- West corridor may be eligible;
- b) individuals who could provide useful links between us and those involved in justice issues;
- c) people who could assist in developing our understanding of local, neighbourhood or community issues;
- d) local government officials;
- e) the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP);
- f) public officials involved in Poverty Reduction in T&T;
- g) the group that drew up the *Principles of Fairness*;
- h) funding agencies such as *United Way*;
- i) St Andrew's Golf Club. A program has since started with this Club to provide training and work opportunities for boys from St Dominic's Home (formerly Belmont Orphanage); Tips are kept by the boys and their earnings are placed in Unit trust accounts for them. They can access the funds in their account when they reach mandatory exit age from the Home (17 years) and are on their own facing the world;
- j) The Trinidad & Tobago Association of Ontario. We are discussing ways in which we can liaise with their membership of Trinidadians and Tobagonians living in Ontario ... exploring the potential involvement for time, talent and treasure sharing possibilities from our ex-patriate communities overseas ... a "support-the-country-that-you-love-to-come-home-to " concept including fund raising from abroad to support our justice efforts locally.

11) The Way Forward Together:

When we have achieved the necessary critical mass through the formation of first tier Parish LINK teams, we will come together to create a common strategy for moving forward. But until such time our current/ interim goals are:

- 1) to have a minimum of 2 solid parish teams per Vicariate by the end of 2005;
- 2) to have a strategic planning session in January 2006 with existing teams, Episcopal Vicars, representatives from each Vicariate, Council reps and Parish LINK Coordinators;
- 3) to use the 2+ teams in each Vicariate to assist new sister parishes that want to embrace Parish LINK service;
- 4) to “grow” know-how and share expertise within the first tier teams in concrete service and spirituality areas
 - Conversion : the spiritual life of a justice worker
 - Solidarity Skills: learning to walk with others respectfully – formation in handling social interventions appropriately
 - Learning to access local government social assistance programs
 - Collaborative Ministry inside your parish and with other faith communities
 - Ways to work with NGOs, CBOs, village councils and groups outside the parish community e.g. Habitat for Humanity

We will hold training sessions with all Parish LINK representatives from September – December 2005 with a view to expanding the programme in 2006 – introducing a wider number of parishes to the LINK service by way of an orientation update to the 30 odd Parish LINK representatives. This will be done before embarking on a strategic planning session in January 2006.

The orientation update will involve sharing information, increasing dialogue and communication, building involvement and awareness ... essentially “readiness preparation” for the January 2006 gathering.

At the LINK Representatives Training Session for 2005, existing LINK parishes will share their experiences and the theme: “Social Justice as Eucharist – meal and sacrifice”, will be the focus of breakout sessions. This reflective exercise will prepare participants for the session in January 2006 entitled: “Justice January – a community gathering”.

Change takes time, but we have made a start in this service to Parish communities. We applaud all the good work going on in the many parishes we have not been to, and we look forward to hearing about it from you in the coming months. There is much we can learn from your experience.

In the meantime we, your CCSJ Parish LINK Service, walk in the prophetic words of John Paul II, God rest his soul:

“Stop looking for solutions and BE one!”

For more information on this LINK service please Call Maureen Arneaud at:
662-5417 - personal number (best one) or 622-6680 – CCSJ’s office.

Note: You will probably have to leave messages at both places as this is an in-the-streets-and-parishes job. Calls will be returned starting the week of July 17th, but they will be returned.

E-mail: **caribe_trin@yahoo.com**

Enquiries by e-mail can be serviced within 48 hours - as of immediately.

We look forward to hearing from you ...”

E. PROJECTS:

1. GONZALES

PRIDE IN GONZALES

The Community Intervention Transforming Youth (CITY) program commenced in 2003 as a response of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice and the St. Martin de Porres parish to the violence in the Gonzales community. The following report by Fr Jason Gordon, Parish Priest in the area and Director of the Project, highlight the importance of promoting justice in areas where people live. Fr Jason writes:

“In October 2004 we were approached by the City Corporation and the Canadian Institute of Planners to join forces in an urbanization project for the Gonzales community. The bringing together of these institutions gave birth to the project now know as *Pride in Gonzales*.

During the first year of CITY, the intervention strategy focused on individuals. The major initiative saw the problem of the Gonzales community as indiscipline of the youth. Thus the strategy was to offer formation for the youth of the community through various programs. Combining CITY with the urbanisation project had the potential to address the development of the entire village. *Pride in Gonzales* represents a significant deepening of the intervention strategy.

We have already produced a draft profile of Gonzales with research into the history, assets and problems of the community. In 2005 we held five village meetings, two in Lower Gonzales with 30 and 28 people attending, and three in upper Gonzales with 54, 75 and 56 participants. The community has identified its key areas of concern and placed them in a hierarchical list—Crime, indiscipline of Youth and lack of community Integration, Unemployment, Disposal of Garbage, Reconstruction of Community Centre, Roads & Infrastructure, Inadequate Social Activity and water. In the village meetings we have formed groups to identify the problem more accurately and thus to propose solutions back to the village meeting.

These groups have been working diligently in conjunction with the City Corporation to address the most urgent needs of the citizens. Participatory governance has come to Gonzales. The citizens are having a say in the development of their community.

Pride in Gonzales has brought many people around the table in Gonzales— residents, the leaders of cultural and religious organizations, the Ministry of National Security, Members of Parliament, architects, project managers, market research specialists, theologians and urban planners from Trinidad and Canada.

On May 24, 2005, representatives of the Gonzales community, along with the Port of Spain Corporation, the Ministry of National security, the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture, and Gender Affairs, the Catholic Commission for Social Justice, Town and Country Planning, and other key stakeholders met at St. Martin's Church to discuss the potential for cooperative initiatives to improve social and physical conditions in Gonzales.

The purpose of this meeting was to bring key stakeholders together to communicate plans for improvement projects in Gonzales and the East Port of Spain area; discuss coordination and implementation opportunities; and, identify how all parties can continue to work together in the long term. The meeting was a great success with all of stakeholders unveiling their plans for the Gonzales community and committing to work with the community to ensure coordinated and appropriate implementation.

The CITY program has now moved from addressing individual needs and formation programmes for the youth to rebuilding the village structure of the Gonzales community. The decline of the village structure in Trinidad and Tobago has resulted in violence in communities like Gonzales. The participation of the young people in the community-building exercise is a great sign of hope for our country. We believe that the integrity of the nation lies in the village.

Following are some of the practical projects that have been undertaken by CITY and/or *Pride in Gonzales*:

Vision: In two of our community meetings we worked on a vision exercise for the whole of the Gonzales community. The exercise resulted in a draft document outlining a vision for Gonzales community and for each of the key areas that the community has identified. This exercise is important in moving the community from the despair that it experiences to becoming a people of hope in a new future.

Social Worker and Urban Planners: In June 2005 *Pride in Gonzales* hired a fulltime social worker. This initiative was one of the solutions to the problem of crime/unemployment and indiscipline among the youths. The decision to hire a social worker was made during our January village meeting 2005. The role of the social worker is to work with all community groups in the area to strengthen their capacity to transform the Gonzales community. A great part of this is the linking of services available in Gonzales and the wider community to the needs of the residents of Gonzales.

Because *Pride in Gonzales* is seen as pilot project, the City cooperation has decided to hire two part time urban planners. They will take responsibility for the process that we have undertaken. Together with the social worker they will form a team that will be responsible for the process and the implementation of all initiatives that are agreed upon at the village meeting.

Water: Through *Pride in Gonzales* the community has received five new stand pipes which have alleviated much of the water problems in Upper Gonzales. The Water and Sewerage Authorities are working with the community for a steady supply of water for the whole area.

Recreational facilities: In April 2005 a Design Chereotype brought foreign and local architects together with members of the community to look at existing recreational facilities which needed upgrading. The Chereotype focused on the Community Centre, which was closed in 2000 after an explosion. It linked this centre with an upgraded sports facility creating one community space. It also focused upon a Pan Theatre and recreational facilities in lower Gonzales.

Community Policing: Gonzales has been selected for an experiment in new approaches to Community Policing. This pilot project seeks to move policing from an aggressive tactical approach where young men are often targeted in what they, and many members of the community, consider to be a brutal and hostile manner. This current militarization has driven a wedge between the police and the community, creating greater hostility. The new approach desires to have the police in the community doing a variety of activities that will be both preventative and restorative; befriending the community and at the same time enforcing the law.

Football competition: Gonzales had a thriving football competition up to 2000. We have worked with the main organiser of the competition to get it up and running again. On Easter Sunday 2004, the first phase 'kicked off' - a one day competition.

On Emancipation day 2004, the community organised another one day competition in the school yard. These events bring all of the youth together by day for football and by night for cultural evenings. Many small vendors in the area benefit directly from these gatherings. The main benefit however, is the constructive activity that the youth enjoy.

On January 2nd 2005 we hosted a third football competition; this one was held in the Upper Gonzales area. This event had the benefit of bringing together the warring factions in the community. It was a major success. During the Easter Weekend there was a two day football competition that brought the community together. The usual cultural evenings followed with many 'big' names from the Gonzales community performing.

On May 29th a group of young men in the Upper Gonzales community organised a day of sports which was also a great success. On June 5th another group organised a tribute to Joey Lewis a resident of the Gonzales community who celebrated 50 years of the existence of his music band. Joey Lewis is a national figure who is also honoured and recognised internationally.

The initiative to revive the football competition has led to several groups in the community being keen and willing to organise sports and cultural events. We remain an integral component of the community - in facilitating these groups and building capacity in the community as we consciously set about to find and form the leaders of the next generation.

Community Plan: Between July and December 2005 there will be five more community meetings to discuss and make concrete decisions on the way forward for Gonzales. The topics of the village meetings will be as follows: July—Parks and recreation, August—Security, September—Land use and housing, October—Solid Waste, November—Infrastructure and December—Economic Development.

Invited to these meetings will be government decision-makers at the highest level. Their presence will be necessary for approval and implementation of the community's plan. At each meeting the Government representative should be able to approve or give reasons why a course of action cannot be approved. At the end of each of these meetings a comprehensive report on the topic will be written. The report will contain SMART goals with specific objectives and timelines. Early in 2006 the updated Gonzales community profile will be presented to the community and to all the stakeholders who participated in the process.

The *Pride in Gonzales* Project has been facilitated by the City Corporation, the Canadian Institute of Planners, and the Catholic Commission for Social Justice, together with the community of Gonzales. Gonzales is now being seen as a model for integral development for the whole East Port of Spain Area.

We list hereunder an up to date position with regard to the CITY Projects in Gonzales:

CITY—Community Intervention Transforming Youth

Adolescent Formation Programme: This was the first CITY programme. It began in September, 2003 with twenty two young people between forms one and four. These students came from the East Port of Spain area and experienced a varied after-school programme. For five afternoons a week, from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm, the students were carried through a rigorous formation programme: - Homework supervision, music training, adolescent development sessions, computer literacy, drama and sports. In July 2004, sixteen of our participants graduated - eight girls and eight boys.

In September, 2004 the second programme commenced with 22 students, of which 19 graduated on June 17th 2005. The visible transformation of the children and the overwhelming positive appreciation of the parents make the adolescent formation programme an important offering.

CITY Café: On Friday April 2nd 2004, CITY Café was opened formally by His Grace, Archbishop Edward Gilbert and Miss. Gillian McIntyre, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Public Administration and Information.

City Café is a community based internet café offering technology access to the residents of Gonzales at a much reduced price of \$4.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. We have sought to utilize up to date equipment and provide technology access so that the community experiences the full benefits of technology.

There are eight computers with CD burners and DVD players using a DSL high speed internet. To date, we have over 743 registered users with an average daily use of twenty seven people. Most of these are below 15 years old. This project is in partnership with the Archdiocesan Communications Commission which has a mandate from Synod 2003 to open internet cafés in deprived areas.

CITY Homework Clinic: In April 2004 we opened a homework clinic for pre-teens. The children were assessed and the facilitator recommended teaching/learning approaches including, where necessary, remedial work. In September 2004 we began, in a limited way, with the facilitator taking the children to Cotton Tree Foundation for four days a week. In January 2005 we hired a special education teacher and moved the homework clinic back to Gonzales. Her assessment is that the children are between one and three years behind age appropriate learning. The result of this is high indiscipline and inappropriate behaviour. We have seen behavioural changes in the children and have observed that they settle down as they are motivated to learn and as learning is going deeper. However, there is an urgent need for more hands-on remedial work with several of the children.

Pre-School: We have been in contact with Servol in connection with a Preschool programme for Gonzales.

CITY Camp: Flowing from the homework clinic, we organised a camp for three weeks in July 2004. Due to the success of the 2004 vacation camp and in response to the parents' request, we are in the process of organising a similar camp for July 2005.. During this vacation period we are looking at three different camps for our young people.

- 1) a three week camp for preteens (along the lines of last year);
- 2) a music camp which will run for three hours a day for one month; and
- 3) a football camp which will run for two hours a day for six weeks

We see these activities as being critical for building discipline and character among our young people.

CITY Survey: Until July 2004 CITY had developed in an intuitive way. We listened carefully to the needs of the community and responded where we could. New offerings evolved as we saw new possibilities within the programmes.

At our parish assembly in March 2004, the parish mandated a survey of the area to ground our social justice initiative. Mr. Mark McNish began the ground work and enlisted Louis

Bertrand of HHB and associates to help with the survey. James Potter, the Chairperson of CCSJ's Standing Committee on Poverty and Social Exclusion is working with them to manage the process (see his report hereunder).

After two focus group meetings, we realised that this community was going to be a huge challenge. The youth between fifteen and nineteen years old were extremely negative and saw Gonzales, without any ray of hope. The major problems were "war", the police stripping and searching them, lack of recreational facilities and no water. Mr. Louis Bertrand who has been conducting surveys for twenty years said that he had never experienced a community so negative.

To reflect deeper on the focus group, we called together members of the Gonzales community including a psychiatrist, along with other "experts" in the field - a psychologist with many years of experience in community work, a social worker and 'intellectuals'. The diagnosis was social depression and "*learnt helplessness*". We have changed the direction of the survey and have decided to measure social capital in the community and to investigate established patterns of community relationships. The results of this survey have determined the quality of our intervention.

Photography Club. We have been given four digital still and a digital video camera by the TallMan foundation. We are in an image culture. For most of our people, perception is reality. In this sense, image is the gateway to self-esteem and development. We started a small photography club in October 2004 to teach some of our young people to use photography (still and moving) effectively. The mission of this group is to "*celebrate what is right in East Port of Spain*".

Over the last year our young people have been trained in the art of photography. They have seen the community through new eyes as they see the ordinary in new ways. On June 17th 2005 five young people graduated from the photography club. The club will open its doors again this July to receive new members.

Necessary Arts: We secured a sponsor for ten of our young people from the community to attend the *Necessary Arts* program. This was a great opportunity to expose young people to various art expressions. We are seeing this as a pilot project towards introducing art and performance into the community.

The future of CITY:

The intervention strategy that we embarked upon in 2003 has taken us in very different directions than we had first imagined. The first stage was adolescent and preteen formation programmes, with the internet café as a central area for interacting with the youth of the community.

The second phase has been to assess the needs of the village of Gonzales through introducing participatory governance. This process has been rich in its ability to transform attitudes and open the community to see avenues for the possibility of a new and brighter future.

The third phase will be building capacity of all of the groups working in and around the Gonzales community. Capacity building is the key if the community is going to produce leadership to ensure the continuation of the programmes and initiatives that have been undertaken. Rebuilding the leadership potential in the villages in Trinidad is the surest way

of creating viable and safe communities. It is my belief that the problems in Trinidad today began with a decision, wittingly or unwittingly, to move away from community development to patronage. This decision was made as early as the 1940-50s, but intensified in the 1970s-1980s.

This shift has left the villages without vision and thus without real goals to work towards. The goals have been temporary and monetary in nature, relating to prestige and not development. It is my belief that the shift has undermined much of the real leadership in these communities. They are seen by the younger generation as compromised and greedy; just as the younger generation is seen as not willing to work hard for development. To make village development the core of the agenda for East Port of Spain it is necessary to facilitate real vision emerging out of the village and thus to give villages real goals towards which they can work together. This will create vision and hope and possibility. It requires finding, building and creating new leadership. The social and sporting activities have been an important part of this initiative.

The greatest challenge facing the CITY program is its need to be structured to ensure continuity beyond my term of office. The CITY programme is a response of the Archdiocesan Commission for Social Justice and the Archdiocesan Commission for Social Communications in partnership with the Holy Rosary Parish, the Parish of St. Martin de Porres and the business community and more recently the City Corporation and the Canadian Institute of Planners. Continuity requires capacity building within Gonzales and within all the organisations.

Our funding came from benefactors, local and foreign, who trusted our vision of intervention. To them we owe a debt of gratitude.”

REPORT BY MR JAMES POTTER ON THE GONZALES PROJECT

Although there is some repetition in the following report, the report has been included in its entirety so that the full impact of the initiative is not lost. Mr. Potter writes:

“The Parish of St. Martins has been instrumental in providing social, economic and ecclesiastical support to the Gonzales Community since 1951. The parish church is a vital community asset and is the only building in the area suitable for a hurricane shelter. Since it is also the only community hall in the Gonzales area, it is actively used for a variety of purposes such as: village council meetings, social development training, parish meetings, and more recently, as an Internet Café. Current plans include the development of a children’s recreation centre.

Between January and June 2003 there were seven murders and numerous other shootouts in the area. Our youth are amongst the most vulnerable in Port of Spain to poverty and its consequences namely: crime, drugs, teenage pregnancy, gambling and HIV/ Aids. In short, they are vulnerable to all of the social problems facing urban youths today.

On May 13th 2003, the Parish invited the cultural and religious leaders of Gonzales to a meeting. There was representation from all groups who were invited, together with the police and local Councillor. The decision taken at this meeting was to call a town meeting on June 17th. This town meeting resulted in five initiatives.

- (1) An environmental project to clean up and beautify the area.
- (2) The organisation of sporting activities for the area's youth, notwithstanding the dire shortage of appropriate facilities.
- (3) An Internet Café providing computer training to the youth and the elderly, thus enabling access to the World Wide Web.
- (4) A training session to formulate a strategic plan for networking amongst groups committed to poverty alleviation.
- (5) CITY 1 programme for supporting secondary school youths. CITY (community intervention for transforming youth) is an after school program for inner city youth run by the Holy Rosary Parish. It gives homework supervision, adolescent development, music theory and practise and sports. Its varied offering is targeted at development of the whole person, thus giving the inner city adolescent the grounding to make better moral choices.

To enhance the positive impact of these initiatives on the community's development, the Parish has embarked on a major expansion of its role as an agent for human development through programmes and projects that will enable the residents of Gonzales to more effectively participate in the eradication of poverty.

Poverty

Gonzales and its environs are amongst the most adversely affected by the Structural Adjustment Policies implemented by the state over the past fifteen years. Addressing a high level Ministerial meeting in Port of Spain in late October 1996, Mr. Daniel Blanchard, Director of E.C.L.A.C. sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean stated:

"The new poor were those who had descended into poverty as a result of economic decline or an unintended consequence of stabilization programmes and included the elderly living on fixed and inadequate pensions; children and the disabled. Another group which had emerged were 'the working poor', because their income did not permit more than a subsistence level of existence. A particularly important group of poor was the unemployed, particularly young persons below the age of 30, who were without skills relevant to the current labour market; the underemployed; and female headed households." (Jubilange People's Community Co-operative Society Limited)

In the eight years since this was so explicitly articulated by a representative of the international community, the situation has deteriorated. The 2000 Census conducted by Trinidad & Tobago's Central Statistical Office finds that, in the Gonzales area, sixty (60%) of Heads of Households had no income. A growing number of Heads of Households are in the 15-19 years age range, this being the age range that represents the largest sector in the community.

The modal income band for Heads of Household is \$1001-\$2000 per month. With approximately three (3) persons per household, the average income per person in this range is only \$500 per month.

It is also evident that increasing poverty is perhaps being driven by the lack of opportunity among the youth, who are, more likely than not, ill equipped to deal with the many demands of the contemporary job market.

Objective

To eradicate, or at least to mitigate, the community's socio-economic impoverishment it is imperative that resources be aligned with *community initiatives* that lead to self-sustaining employment and social opportunities. This is because it is now widely accepted that development planning should be driven from the "grass roots" so that policy and its implementation are readily embraced by those who are most affected by it.

Consequently, the Parish plans to work with existing Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to objectively assess the community's current circumstances as they pertain to poverty, and then to define realistic aspirations and the means to achieve them.

The community must be instrumental in determining development priorities so that the projects selected for implementation are owned and championed by the residents. Residents will more readily support projects that are derived from internal rather than external sources. The Parish's objective, therefore, is to engage the community in conducting a Poverty Assessment Survey to identify and evaluate priorities for action.

Unlike a national census, this survey will address the particular circumstances of Gonzales and will seek to answer poverty related questions that the community has of itself. The survey will complement rather than replicate other surveys either previous or current with the view to filling an information gap critical for community-inspired poverty eradication.

The data derived from this survey will provide a basis for the community to more effectively select projects for planning and implementation, all of which will be managed *by the community for the community*. The results of the survey will be publicly available and offered to other stakeholders involved in poverty eradication in Gonzales.

Scope of Work

The Poverty Assessment shall:

- Identify the poor, and detail information according to: income, address, age, gender, family unit, length of time resident in the area, level of education and nature of employment.
- Describe the particular circumstances of the poor and the possible causes of their poverty.
- Identify the linkages between poverty and other social challenges confronting the community, e.g. crime, drug abuse, AIDS, etc.
- Evaluate the residents' perspectives on the nation's economic outlook, public services and their capability to participate in mainstream national life.
- Recommend suitable poverty eradication programmes for the community to plan and implement. In particular, programmes that enable the empowerment of the residents through, for example, skill training, micro-credit, and the development of SMEs."

2. PROJECT IN SAN RAPHAEL AND SURROUNDING AREAS

CCSJ is also concerned about residents in rural areas. In 2004 William Dalton-Brown, a Trinidadian who has returned home after living abroad for many years, joined the Commission for a while to Chair its Standing Committee on Human Development. He has since resigned due to other commitments. When he joined the Commission he said:

"Several approaches may be used to address the spiraling crime in T&T. However, Human development appears to be the most effective method to stem the flow of citizens pursuing criminal activities. It is less likely that an individual would leave a gainful means of life support in an activity of his own choice to live a life of crime and be on the run. This motivated me to select a rural community to initiate

In 2004 CCSJ's Standing Committee on Human Development, Chaired by Mr. William Dalton-Brown, initiated a pilot project to assist in providing facilities to enable persons in rural areas to achieve their goals. He contacted Fr Moses, parish priest in San Raphael and surrounding areas about his plans. At the same time, Mr. Dalton-Brown met a team of 27 students from the England and Scotland, members of "Madventurers", an international group which brings together adventurous travel and development projects in rural areas around the world in building, teaching, sports, coaching, health, medical and environmental development projects. Their motto is: "*Developing together*".

The team was introduced to Fr Moses and committed themselves to working in his parish which covers areas south of Arima: San Raphael, Brazil, Talparo, Mundo Nuevo and Las Lomas. Fr Moses played a key role throughout the project and, together with the community, displayed true hospitality and generosity.

Twelve members of the team focused on sports and human development while 15 undertook conservation initiatives in San Raphael, Grand Riviere, Matelot and Tobago. Of the 15, 5 worked with the local community to restore Arena's historical site while 10 assisted Joseph Naipaul to develop Joy Park in Mundo Nuevo.

The 5-week project fostered a renewal of the community spirit that was in danger of being eroded in the area. Residents in the area made a sterling contribution to the project. As Mr. Dalton-Brown said:

"Before the project started, there was some scepticism that people will not come out to work in the hot sun. But everyone came out; pulled their weight and got the work done. The experience has motivated people and has developed a sense of pride in the community."

At San Rafael the historic site which was restored as part of the project is now an excellent tourist attraction. There are information boards and shrubs and flowers have been planted to enhance the site.

At Joy Park a nature trail in the forest was created; a visitor reception area was developed with an ajoupa; benches made of bamboo lashed together were made; an area for a car park was marked out; shrubs and flowers were planted and, most importantly, steps were built to

facilitate greater access to a spring - the only running water in the area. As Mr. Dalton-Brown said: "Often people would slide down the slope on their way up from the spring and half the water they collected would spill."

Access to transport is a problem in the area. There is a bridge that has been broken for a number of years. This prevents farmers from transporting their crops. One farmer expressed his frustration at having to look at his field of pineapples knowing that he will not be able to reap/sell them as he cannot get them across the river. The roads are also in a diabolical condition. Many young people in the area are unable to attend school for a variety of reasons. This affects their life chances.

Madventurers assisted CCSJ in developing sporting activities involving about 140 young people in the area e.g. under 12 and under 17 competitions involving boys and girls. A prize giving ceremony was held on 6th August.

Eighteen year old Ryan Alexander's brilliant speech struck a cord with many present when he stated, inter alia, that young people may stay off drugs, alcohol etc if there are opportunities for them to become involved in sports and other worthwhile activities and if they can secure gainful employment.

Plans are in train for other members of Madventurers to work on projects in T&T in the future. We need social and economic policies that address the issue of sustainable development in rural areas; addressing the basic needs of these communities, severe deficits in resources, employment opportunities, infrastructure, social and human capital etc. As one economist states:

"Rural economies face many obstacles compared to urban economies in their potential for creating job opportunities. Rural communities lack the advantages of metropolitan areas that can attract new investment; they cannot achieve the same economies of scale in delivering social services for education, training, child care, and transportation; and they generally lack access to capital and credit for job creation."

The truest form of justice is genuine fraternity. Our cup runneth over - but who benefits? We need to ensure that the economy works for all our people. The work accomplished by this SC and others involved in this initiative was reported in CCSJ's column in the Trinidad Guardian and also in the Catholic News. The article is available on the Commission's website.

F. SOME CCSJ'S ACTIVITIES

CCSJ continues to take every advantage to be present and to raise awareness of social justice issues at events to which the Commission is invited or whenever the opportunity presents itself. The following is a sample of work in which CCSJ has been engaged/continues to be engaged in (in addition to the work of Standing Committees, Projects and the LINKS Programme):

- 1. Maintaining/developing CCSJ Website.** During the years 2003 and 2004 the Center of Concern (COC) - *Education for Justice* – a Catholic organisation in the USA which charges a fee for access to the Education section of their website, allowed CCSJ members

free access. Recently this organisation has kindly extended their offer to CCSJ for another year. CCSJ's Chair has written to thank staff at COC for their generosity. Access to this site is of great assistance to the Education Committee in particular. CCSJ would like to record its thanks to Raymond Syms, the Commission's webmaster, for his sterling work in maintaining and developing CCSJ's website.

2. Continues to air *Ask Why?* - Live monthly TV programme. To date 36 x 1 hour programmes covering a variety of social justice issues have been aired on Channel 10 (Cable TV). Tapes of each programme are available for individuals/groups to borrow or purchase from Trinity Studios or from CCSJ. A list of topics covered and which are available on tape from CCSJ is attached (**Appendix 7**).

It is difficult to tell how many people view this programme. CCSJ is working with the Communications Commission to identify some way of gauging the size of the audience. CCSJ plans to prepare 'sleeves' and notes to accompany each tape to market these to schools, RCIA groups, Catechists etc. The Commission is still seeking an individual/group that will be willing to embark on this Project.

3. Continues to produce weekly articles which are printed in a secular newspaper, *The Guardian* (since May 2003). The Commission receives a large number of positive responses from readers who find the articles informative. This is one way of raising the awareness of the general public about the social teaching of the Church and to mobilize support from the general public to promote justice, peace, love, truth and freedom in TT and in our world. Each article is also uploaded on the Commission's website and readers respond from various parts of the world with comments about the articles.

4. Continues to produce articles to be printed in *The Catholic News* which has published a number of articles presented by CCSJ. CCSJ's weekly articles on the *Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church* are currently being published in *The Catholic News* as a means of raising the faithful's awareness of the content of this important document.

5. Was represented at Mass at Trinity Cathedral (Anglican) at which Archbishop Desmond Tutu preached (Fri. 30th April 2004).

6. Collaborated with the Archdiocesan Communications Commission and the Archdiocesan Family Life Commission to mark International day of the Family. A panel discussion was held on the theme: *Strengthening T&T's capacity to support families* on Friday 14th May, 2004 from 5 pm – 8 pm at St Mary's College, POS. The proceedings were recorded and published in a booklet. (see SC on Family Life and Communities).

7. Delivered speech at Presbyterian Church in May 2004 on the theme: "*Honouring our parents*".

8. Held its first fundraising dinner/show at Trinidad Hilton on June 8 2004 on the theme *Celebrating Family Life*. Approx 230 people attended. His Excellency, Prof. George Maxwell Richards, T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D., President of the Republic of T & T kindly agreed to be the keynote speaker and allowed CCSJ to organise the event under his distinguished patronage. Accompanying his Excellency was his wife, Dr Jean Ramjohn-Richards and their daughter, Miss Maxine Richards.

His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert, welcomed participants and spoke on the theme. These 2 addresses are incorporated in CCSJ's booklet produced after the Seminar on "*Strengthening T&T's capacity to support Families*" in May 2004. CCSJ wishes to thank all those who supported this event. The Commission raised about \$90,000 (TT) as a result of this event. This will go a long way to support the Commission's work.

9. Addressed the Dominican Laity meeting on the issue of Abortion – 10 July 2004.

10. Addressed gathering at the Abdul Aziz Trust Seminar on the theme: *Crime and Violence* – 17 July, 2004.

11. Met with President of Cricket Board, Mr. Alloy Lequay on 19 July 2004, regarding support for sports facilities in deprived areas –

13. Formed CCSJ's Crime Committee: *The Archdiocesan Committee on Crime and Violence (ACCV)* on 17 May 2004. Because of the increasing levels and violent nature of crime in the country, the Chair of CCSJ invited members of all Commissions, Secretariats, Ecclesial Communities, Association of Christ's Faithful, and members of the Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) to a meeting at Archbishop's House to seek to work together to address crime and violence in T&T. The IRO appointed 2 representatives to the Committee.

This Committee played a major role in supporting His Grace by organizing on his behalf a series of 3 *Breakfast meetings* in June and July 2004 with key stakeholders to foster a culture of collaboration to address the social ills of our society. This involved reflecting on the current crime situation as well as identifying some of the social ills in our society and sharing strategies for action, particularly in relation to crime and violence.

Those invited included: the IRO; representatives of the business community; leaders of the financial community: bank presidents; Association of Bankers; credit unions; presidents of insurance companies; Association of Insurance Companies; Association of Denominational Schools; the judiciary; the administration of police, prisons, defence force, coast guard, probation service, welfare service; Chair of the Government Crime Committee; Principals of UWI and Hugh Wooding Law School; a T&T Criminologist.

As His Grace stated, the aim was: "to listen to the analysis of these leaders about the problems the nation is facing regarding crime and violence and, especially, to listen to their expectations of what the archdiocese can do to help address poverty-based crime and violence.... Participants were chosen based on their well-established reputation of 'getting things done' in the professional world and their skills/experience in sustaining initiatives."

His Grace's article *Catholic News* following these meetings highlighted his belief that in order to confront poverty-based crime and violence we should develop a culture of partnership and trust and implement priorities.

In spite of the long list of social ills identified during the 'brainstorming' sessions, there was a clear feeling of optimism and hopefulness running through all 3 meetings. There was a general feeling that 'workable' recommendations for actions already exist e.g. in numerous reports that have been submitted to successive Governments in the past.

There was a groundswell of support for the suggestion that what is needed is implementation/action rather than 'ole talk'. The following are some of the social ills identified and recommendations for action suggested – in no particular order:

The following are some of the social ills identified by those present at the meetings:

- Lack of: effective leadership, humanity, regard for each other, selfishness, discipline in schools and among citizens
- Grinding poverty/social exclusion. As well as financial poverty one participant expressed concern that we are becoming a nation of 'mendicants' since many people have to beg constantly for services
- Inequality in society
- Erosion of morals, values and spirituality
- Materialism, greed, individualism
- Tolerance of lawlessness
- Crime, violence (including domestic violence), drugs, gun culture
- Breakdown/disintegration of the family
- Feeling of fear and hopelessness by many
- Inadequate education system
- Negative effects of globalisation
- Absentee fathers and the resulting consequences
- Delay in the justice system e.g. long Magistrates' lists
- Appalling prison conditions
- Pornography

Some recommendations for action by those present:

- The Catholic Church should encourage its flock to 'mingle' more with communities e.g. in villages; to be seen working 'on the ground'; and to become more deeply involved in e.g. prison ministry
- Faith communities should redouble their efforts to promote moral and spiritual values and play their part in addressing T&T's social ills
- All concerned groups and citizens should lobby the Government to act on plans rather than constantly informing the public that it is coming up with another plan. These plans should be used to adopt a more holistic approach to address the problems that we face.
- The entire community in T&T must accept that taking action to bring about changes is a shared responsibility.
- Those in positions of authority e.g. in the Government and in Public Services, should be clear about their areas of responsibility and should be held accountable e.g. for failing to perform their duties. Effective management systems should be established and performance should be monitored
- Strategies to promote effective policing should include training, better equipment, apprehending criminals more promptly, improving surveillance, rewarding performance to motivate members of the Police Service to undertake their duties more effectively
- The Government should
 - consider seriously the recommendations made in reports such as Bishop Abdullah's Report on Prisons, the Task Force Report on Prison Reform and

Transformation (2002), the Gordon Report on Crime and move to implementation phase;

- examine the entire education and social system and address deficiencies therein e.g. by appointing more social workers, guidance counsellors, remedial teachers in schools; establishing more vocational training courses, SERVOL type courses, mentoring programmes, courses on parenting; providing more effective guidance for youth and strategies to promote value formation of citizens;
 - address inequality/structural injustices in T&T e.g. in terms of the distribution of the nation's wealth, access to education, employment, health care, social services, housing, gender equality, sports and recreational facilities
 - devise more effective ways of strengthening family life and addressing the needs of young people
 - take action to ensure that laws are enforced e.g. by dealing with the drug and gun culture in T&T more strategically;
 - put systems in place to ensure accountability at all levels of Government;
 - address corruption and white-collar crime in our nation;
 - promote more effective leadership within Government and in the public sector.
- There must be more demonstrable commitment to act from the 'powers that be'. Therefore all relevant bodies should devise strategies to
 - enhance the management and performance of the Police Service
 - reduce the delays in the justice system e.g. reduce the magistrates' lists
 - move from our current Retributive Criminal Justice System to a Restorative Justice approach which will address rehabilitation more seriously e.g. consider alternative forms of sentencing to avoid 'warehousing' all those convicted. Various forms of community sentencing should be brought on stream. Strong views were expressed that not everyone in prison should be there e.g. there must be alternatives for those committing minor crimes, and treatment for drug addicts who are imprisoned. In particular we should seek to devise strategies to keep our children out of prisons. The treatment of prisoners must be addressed urgently e.g. those at POS prison where chronic overcrowding is dehumanizing. The move along the Restorative Justice continuum will have major implications for the training of prison officers and others e.g. focusing on assessment of prisoners on entry to prison, rehabilitation plan for each prisoner etc.

- promote better co-ordination thus eliminating the fragmentation/disjointed relationships in the criminal justice system e.g. between the police service, courts, prison service, probation service, welfare service.

The list above demonstrates clearly that as a nation we are full of ideas as to the way forward. What is desperately needed is the commitment by all of us, particularly those in authority, to bring about the necessary changes. For our emancipation to mean anything we must break the shackles of our inaction.

The follow-up to these meetings included: articles in the newspapers, including the Catholic News; the establishment of a joint Committee to organize a *National Day of Prayer for Repentance and Healing to begin a journey to build a just society with a new culture of leadership* on Sunday Oct 17th, 2004.

14. Delivered the keynote speech at the Caribbean Teachers' Assoc. at the end of July 2004 at Emmaus Centre on the theme: "*Catholic Educators: Agents of Justice and Peace.*"

15. Participated in Living Water Community's *Telethon* in 2004. This gave CCSJ an opportunity to share with viewers some of the work in which the Commission is engaged and to invite people to support the Commission's work, particularly in their parishes.

16. Delivered keynote speech at Point Fortin Senior Comprehensive School on the theme: "*Professional Development of Teachers*".

17. Attended the launch of the Communities Mobilising Against Crime (CMAC) and have maintained links with this group which is based at St Finbar's Church, Westmoorings.

18. Continues to join with other **pro-life** groups in rejecting ASPIRE's call to decriminalize abortion in TT. This work involves appearances on TV, radio, Conferences, Seminars etc. CCSJ has also produced articles and letters to the Editor on this issue. This will continue to be an important aspect of the work of the Commission in its attempt to promote/build a culture of life and reject the culture of death that currently threatens to engulf our country and our world. Inter alia, CCSJ participated in

- a Business lunch/Seminar on Abortion (9 July 2004) - organized by *Emmanuel Community and Coalition of Life*;
- a Symposium on Abortion (24 July 2004) - organized by Christian Fellowship and Lawyers for Jesus;
- panel discussions during Trinity Communications Network programmes on Abortion during the month of August 2004
- the filming of a documentary on Abortion – being made by *The A-Word Company* (not yet released).

From 5 – 7 November 2004 CCSJ was involved in the planning and delivery of a Caribbean-wide Pro-Life Seminar held jointly between Human Life International (HLI) and a number of local pro-life groups in T&T. The Seminar was held at Crowne Plaza on the theme: "*Love, Life and The Family*".

At the request of Fr Tom Euteneur, President of HLI, the Chair of CCSJ will visit America (at a date to be determined) to appear with Fr Alphonso, Barbados, on EWTN to discuss pro-life issues.

19. CCSJ was represented at the initial 3 day training programme on Abstinence organised by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. Members of the Youth Standing Committee play an active role in this area.

20. Attended St Vincent de Paul Society's AGM on 19 September 2004.

21. Joined with Living Water Community on 21 September 2004 to organise a vigil on the UN International Day of Peace. This was aired on Channel 10.

22. Represented His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert, on 28 September 2004 at the launch of the *Principles of Fairness* - a set of principles drawn up and subscribed to by a wide range of organisations, including the IRO of which the Catholic Church is a member. The main players in the group that worked on the Principles are Mr. Arthur Lok Jack, Mr. Ken Gordon and Mr. Tajmool Hosein. Publicity of these Principles continues. Only recently they were published once more in all main newspapers in T&T. The challenge for T&T is to move from paper to practice.

23. CCSJ's Crime Committee, ACCV, joined with the IRO to organize a *National Day of Prayer for Repentance and Healing to begin a journey to build a just society with a new culture of leadership*. The event was held on Sunday Oct 17th, 2004. The day commenced with a *Walk for Peace* through the streets from 2 locations - Jean Pierre Complex and Fernandes Complex. Music reflecting the diversity of the gathering was played along the way via sound systems on trucks. The walk culminated in an inter-faith service at the Queens Park Savannah. Planning for this event included a few breakfast meetings to which all faith communities were invited. These meetings were well attended and facilitated the planning process.

The event was a great success and received much media attention. Thousands of people from across the country and from various faith communities turned out to pray for our nation. All MPs and Senators were invited to join participants, although they were not invited to speak at the event. It is noteworthy that our Prime Minister and a few Ministers and MPs attended the event. ACCV is to determine follow-up action to this event. Articles reporting the event are available on CCSJ's website.

24 . Collaborates with the IRO in a variety of ways – other than that mentioned above. For example:

a) the Chair of CCSJ has attended a number of meetings of the IRO, either to represent His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert, or at the request of the IRO;

b) the Chair of CCSJ was interviewed by Rev Cyril Paul, Chair of the IRO, and the interviews were aired on the IRO's monthly TV programme on TV6;

c) at the request of the IRO the Chair of CCSJ, together with a representative from Living Water Community, ran a 1 ½ hour programme on Radio 610 on 28 November focusing on the theme of *Advent*;

d) The Chair of CCSJ delivered the keynote speech at TTUTA's Inter-faith service which was organised by the IRO on behalf of TTUTA on 3 October 2004 on the theme: *Forging ahead through quality teachers*.

e) CCSJ was represented at a service at Trinity Cathedral on 1 December 2004. The service was jointly organised by the IRO and the National Aids Coordinating Committee to mark World Aids Day;

f) CCSJ was also represented at the IRO's Annual National Thanksgiving Service on 26 September 2004.

25. Participated in 2 Seminars - at the Crowne Plaza on 15 October 2004 and at the POS City Hall on 15 March 2005 - to discuss issues relating to the Government's Vision 2020 plan. The sessions were organised by the Vision 2020 Planning Committee. The theme was: "*Vision 2020: Charting the Course for developed nation status: Public Participatory Services.*"

Such events provide CCSJ with an opportunity to make a contribution during the planning stage e.g. by sharing CCSJ's perceptions relating to: the strengths of the nation; concerns about weaknesses/obstacles that may stand in the way of TT achieving developed nation status; opportunities that exist and that will facilitate development; threats that can de-rail the process of development; strategies for change and the ways in which TT can build a culture that will facilitate change management.

CCSJ raised issues relating to e.g. poverty and social exclusion, domestic violence, unemployment, poor/inadequate housing, breakdown of family life and the need for policies and programmes that will support family life. At the end of the Seminar the Chair of CCSJ was interviewed by the organizer. This was video-taped for transmission on TV as part of the organisation's strategy to share information with the public about 'Vision 2020'.

26. Presented a paper on 16 November 2004 at the invitation of POS Lions Club on the theme: *Rehabilitation of Prisons*.

27. Delivered a speech on 25 November 2004 at the launch of the *Displaced Nationals in Crisis Coalition (DNICC)*. This is an initiative of Ms. Marlene Jaggernauth who is herself a deportee from the USA. The organization offers support and acts as an advocate for individuals who have been deported from the USA after having been convicted and/or imprisoned for certain crimes committed there. CCSJ has agreed to give advice to the group as and when required.

28. The Chair of CCSJ represented the Holy See at the UNAIDS Conference held in Jamaica from 14 – 15 December 2004. A report was submitted to the Nunciature to be forwarded to Rome as requested. An article focusing on the issues raised at the Conference was disseminated via CCSJ's weekly article in the Guardian and in the Catholic News after the event (see website).

29. Ran a 2 day workshop at the Seminary at the request of the Rector, Fr Michael de Verteuil. Fr Jason and the Chair of CCSJ ran the workshop with the aim of raising the awareness of Seminarians of social justice issues. It is essential that the syllabus/curriculum at the Seminary is infused with a social justice perspective to prepare our future priests for

their work in parishes/society/the world. The biblical concept of Justice and of the social teaching of the Church should inform all their work.

Inter alia, the workshop engaged Seminarians in a social analysis activity which has a variety of names - The Pastoral Circle or Cycle, See-Judge-Act Process etc. The Pastoral Circle has 4 components (see Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice by Peter Henriot and Joe Holland) :

- Experiencing and describing a specific reality/concern/issue
- Social Analysis: Why do the problems exist? What are the causes – looking at the issue from a historical, political, economic and cultural perspective.
- Theological/scriptural reflection: lessons from scripture and application of Catholic Social Teaching: examining problems/reasons for problems through the lens of our Catholic tradition, scripture and our faith values
- Action as a result of that reflection: What should we do?

The process never ends. The cycle begins again as we assess, evaluate, and reflect on the consequences of those actions. This is a disciplined, systematic way of addressing issues in our everyday lives. We need this kind of analysis in our communities/country.

30. Collaborated with Living Water Community to organise a Carol Service at Brian Lara Promenade on 26 December 2004.

31. Participated in a 2 day Symposium on Poverty in the Caribbean Region on 17 – 18 January 2005. The Symposium was organized by the Ministry of Social services Delivery.

32. Presented a paper at a Seminar organized by Rev. Cyril Paul on the theme: *Evangelism in a Plural Society*.

33. Attended the launch at Trinidad Hilton of UNESCO's Caribbean-wide Education programme on HIV/AIDS (16 February 2005). The Chair also participated in a Seminar which UNESCO organized for key stakeholders in TT after the launch.

While the Chair of CCSJ was in Jamaica representing the Holy See at the UNAIDS Conference on HIV/AIDS in December 2004, she made a number of useful contacts. Since then she has been liaising with staff at UNESCO's Education Development Centre, Massachusetts regarding UNESCO's proposed programme in the Caribbean.

In May 2005 the Chair received a copy of a report from UNESCO entitled: *"Inception Report: Advocacy and Leadership Campaign to Advance the Education Sector Response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean"*. A copy of the letter that accompanied the report is included as **Appendix 8** for information. The Chair has agreed to support UNESCO in its important campaign in TT and across the Caribbean.

34. Attended the launch of TT Centre of Excellence for Teacher Training (TTCETT) on 23 February 2005. The PM and the Minister of Education both attended and addressed

participants at the launch This is a scheme launched by President Bush in America and now adopted by the Government of TT. It focuses on innovative strategies for developing the skills of teachers to teach reading and develop the linguistic proficiency of students. Pope Paul VI called illiterate people: “Starved spirits”.

This is a major social justice issue as literacy opens the doors to the world for an individual. It is estimated that although the literacy rate in TT is about 74%, a high percentage of those in this group are functionally illiterate. There is a need for our Government to give more financial support to groups such as ALTA and other NGOs and CBOs who are involved in this area of work.

35. Participated in a consultation exercise organized by KAIRI Consultants on 24 February 2005 - working with the Ministry of Social Development. The consultation exercise focused on plans to meet the needs of ex- prisoners.

36. Participated in the consultation exercise conducted by the Ministry of Social Development’s Division of Ageing’s Draft Policy on Older Persons. CCSJ’s comments on the draft were forwarded to the Ministry on 28 February 2005. This Draft Policy is to be welcomed as it will provide a useful framework to ensure that procedures and programmes are developed in line with the final policy. The number of elderly people in TT and many parts of the world is growing rapidly and we need policies that are just and that will reflect the value that society has for the aged. The Ministry’s response to CCSJ is attached in **Appendix 9**.

37. Attended a meeting organized by United Way on 1 March 2005. This is a 2-year-old local branch of an international organization. CCSJ hopes to succeed in its attempt to secure a grant from this organization to support the establishment of its Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre (T&T Reintegration Foundation).

38. Met with the national Executive of SVP on 7 March 2005 to discuss ways of collaborating more closely with their members in order to achieve the aims and objectives of both organisations. It was agreed that SVP’s Executive will consider ways in which this can be achieved.

39. Was invited to and attended the opening ceremony at the International Women’s Day event held at Brian Lara Promenade. It was noted that there were many stalls erected in which various groups and organisations displayed their work, distributed information about their organisations, sold artefacts etc. CCSJ will consider hiring one of the stalls next year to promote its work.

40. Attended Conference organized by Lawyers for Jesus and other concerned Christian groups on 30 April to discuss the draft Gender Policy and Action Plan.

41. Organized a lecture at Holy Trinity Church, Arouca (29 May 2005), in memory of late Pope John Paul II . As stated earlier, Fr Pat Bascio, CSsP, was the presenter. The subjects covered were: “The moral implications of stem cell research” and “The politics of oil and the effects of globalization in the world and in Trinidad and Tobago”.

42. Was invited to and attended UWI Education Conference (8 – 9 June, 2005) on “*Quality enhancement: innovation and change*”.

43. CCSJ is collaborating with The Women’s Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) to launch a week of activities from 24 June - entitled: “*Week of Action Against Small Arms*”. Last year CCSJ also supported WINAD on this issue.

The purpose of the activities organized during this week is to heighten public awareness about the devastating impact which the misuse of weapons has on any society and especially on our own society; to encourage citizens to act collectively and individually to stop gun violence in our homes, communities and other public spaces; and to develop and/or strengthen initiatives intended to alleviate gun violence, and its related problems, in our society.

The Launch on June 24 at Brian Lara Promenade, POS, will mobilise citizens of many and varied interests and geographic locations including, NGOs , performing artistes, sports people, academics, business associations and individuals, journalists, Faith Based Organisations, youth, women, persons with disabilities, environmentalists and Community Based Organisations.

Activities planned for the week include:

a) A Photo Exhibition: At the time of preparing this report CCSJ and WINAD were exploring the possibility of arranging for such an exhibition to be mounted either of the following: The National Library (NALIS), one of NALIS’ branches, the atrium of the Central Bank, Trincity Mall or at Caribbean Cinemas. We hope to use photos of people affected by violence in different parts of the world.

b) ‘Walk-about’ in selected communities. The contingent will comprise cultural icons, representatives from NGOs, CBOs, faith based organisations , Trade Unions and persons from the media.

c) Distribution of materials, discussion with citizens and so on at Trincity Mall, Tacarigua. The Mall provides indoor access to hundreds of citizens on any one day.

d) Joining Labour Day activities in Fyzabad on Sunday 19 June 2005. This will provide an opportunity for WINAD and CCSJ to reach thousands of citizens in one place at one time and to raise their awareness of the issues.

44. Continues its pastoral work. Members of CCSJ are involved in pastoral work in a variety of ways in their parishes and through CCSJ’s structure. A number of individuals also approach the Commission at the Justice Desk seeking advice and support. This remains an important part of CCSJ’s work. Although Commission members may not always be in a position to assist directly, they seek to ‘point’ people in the right direction by giving relevant information.

G. FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES

As well as the activities that are being planned jointly with WINAD during the “*Week of Action Against Small Arms*”, CCSJ will hold:

a) a Seminar entitled: *The Eucharist and Social Justice* on Saturday 2 July 2005 at Our Lady of Fatima Church Hall from 10.30 am – 12.30 pm. (Registration at 10.00 am). The panel of speakers is: His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert CSsP, Fr Henry Charles, Fr Jason Gordon, and Fr Malcolm Rodrigues SJ. The Chair of CCSJ will act as Moderator.

b) its second annual fundraising dinner at Crowne Plaza on 9 September 2005 on the theme: “*Building a Fraternal Society*”. Once again, His Grace and His Excellency, Prof. George Maxwell Richards T.C., C.M.T., Ph.D., President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, will address participants and it is expected that members of His Excellency’s family will also attend the event. His Excellency has also allowed CCSJ to organize this event under his distinguished patronage.

H. MEETINGS WITH MINISTERS/LETTERS TO PM AND MINISTERS

Since our last AGM, CCSJ representatives have met with a number of Ministers on a variety of social justice issues. To date meetings have been held with:

- a) Senator, The Hon. Christine Kangaloo, formerly Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, Minister responsible for Social Services Delivery (now Minister of Legal Affairs).
- b) Senator The Hon. Mustapha Abdul Hamid, former Minister of Social Development & Gender Affairs. (now Minister of Science, Technology & Tertiary Education etc.).
- c) Hon. Penelope Beckles, Minister of Public Utilities.
- d) Hon. Danny Montano, former Minister of Legal Affairs & Consumer Affairs (now Minister of Labour).
- e) Ms Sandra Marchack, Permanent Secretary to Hon. Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of the Republic of T&T.

LETTERS

* A number of letters have been written to the PM and to various Ministers e.g.

a) Letter to the PM to reject calls to decriminalise abortion.

b) Letter to the PM and to Senator The Hon. Christine Sahadeo, Junior Minister, Ministry of Finance on 5 January 2005 regarding former workers of Caroni (1975) Ltd. The workers were promised on their release from the Company that certain lands would be allocated to them. To date they are still waiting for this promise to be kept. The welfare of some 15,000 staff and daily paid workers who were retrenched by the Company in September 2003 are at stake. Overall, some 45,000 people are on the breadline – families of these workers. This is an issue that is constantly in the news as a number of individuals and organizations

continue to plead with the Government to allocate the lands to those whose livelihoods may now depend on the allocation of land.

c) Letter to the PM and to the Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs regarding CCSJ's response to the Draft National Gender Policy and Action Plan. CCSJ produced a 10 page analysis of its concerns about the content of this document. This analysis was printed in the Catholic News and is available on the Commission's website.

d) Letter to Senator Hon. Mustapha Abdul Hamid, former Minister in the Ministry of Social Development, Division of Ageing to accompany CCSJ's response to the Ministry's draft Policy on Ageing. A copy of the Ministry's response dated May 31 2005 is included in **Appendix 9**.

I. CONCLUSION

It must be remembered that CCSJ is just one organisation in our Archdiocese and does not operate in isolation from the rest of the Archdiocese. It is essential that a framework of collaborative working relationship is developed to optimize the use of the Archdiocese's financial, human and material resources. There are plans in train to support the development of such a framework.

For example, it is worth noting that His Grace has taken the lead as Chair of all the major planning groups in the Archdiocese. These groups bring together the main 'players' in the Archdiocese e.g. the Vicar General, Episcopal Vicars and Delegates, Chairs of Commissions, Secretariats and so on.

It is clear from the smooth running of the 2 Symposia following the second session of Synod that priests, religious and the faithful are beginning to move forward together. There is still some way to go and perhaps on certain issues e.g. hanging, it may take longer for some to embrace the current teachings of our Church.

There are areas of work that CCSJ has not been able to develop as it would have wished to do e.g. work on disability, incest, domestic violence, the high price of certain essential food, labour issues relating to workers, the Environment e.g. the proposed Smelter Plant in South Trinidad and so on.

These issues have been raised in CCSJ's articles and have been dealt with in relation to case work and as issues raised during interviews on radio. However, the Commission has not been able to focus in any concerted way on these and other issues. It is hoped that the Parish LINK programme will assist in addressing some of these issues.

We recognise that many Catholics still view social justice work as involving mainly works of mercy. Our task is to raise awareness of the need for Christians to walk with the two feet of justice – works of mercy and works of social action. As Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor said in the Houses of Parliament in 2001, religious leaders should:

“...speak out on the many moral and ethical issues which face our nation. We can and should be more prophetic, more demanding, less compromising.”

As can be seen from the variety of our activities, CCSJ has adopted a multi-faceted approach to achieve our goals as no one strategy will work. The process of developing in the faithful a spirituality of justice is a long one and we recognise that we are in this for the long haul. As one member said to me: "Once you become involved in social justice work you are in it for life."

We need to thank God for the new collaborative culture that is developing in the Archdiocese. This is a very positive development and will facilitate the mission of our Church in T&T. His Grace's regular meetings with key individuals involved in the life and mission of the Church has nurtured this development and we are grateful to him for his leadership. We are also grateful for the speedy appointment by Rome of His Excellency, Most Rev. Thomas E. Gullickson as Apostolic Nuncio to T&T.

The letter that CCSJ received from Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in Rome, gives us courage as we move forward. Our new Pope Benedict XVI has made a number of public statements that reaffirm the Church's stance on issues such as cultural relativism, liberalism and radical individualism, abortion, same sex unions and so on. Such re-affirmations are necessary to ensure that the world knows where the Church stands on various issues.

The work ahead may seem daunting as each passing day we are confronted by more and more injustices in our society/world. However, we will maintain our focus on our goals knowing that all that God requires of us is to be faithful to His Word. We will continue to do His will and pray for a conversion of hearts so that justice and peace can truly embrace each other in our world.

Pope Benedict XVI's words delivered from the balcony overlooking St Peter's Square on his election as Pope set a tone that will continue to resonate with members of CCSJ. Inter alia, he said: *"I am a simple, humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord."*

We see this as a rallying call to each one of us to truly see ourselves as workers in the vineyard of the Lord. Our watchwords will continue to be love, respect, cohesion, justice, peace, freedom, truth, and solidarity. At the centre of all our work is Prayer. We pray incessantly that the Holy Spirit will guide us in our work; give us the courage and strength to remain faithful to the teachings of our Church; and to stand firm in our efforts to achieve our goals.

J. APPENDICES (see below - some to be uploaded later)

- i CCSJ's Vision, Mission & Core Values (see approp. page on website)
- ii List of members of CCSJ, including Resource Persons (attached)
- iii Second session – Mini Synods: Comments relating to CCSJ's work
- iv Letter from Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino
- v Decree of Approval by Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert
- vi Revised Resolutions of Second Session of Synod in 2005 relating to CCSJ's work.
- vii List of Ask Why? TV programmes
- viii Letter from UNESCO /EDC
- ix Letter from Ministry of Social Development, Division of Ageing.

APPENDIX ii

Members of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice

- 1. Leela Ramdeen - Chair of CCSJ
- 2. Mr. Andre des Vignes - Vice Chair of CCSJ
- 3. Taresa Best - Secretary
- 4. Mario Young - Treasurer & Chair of Finance
- 5. Anthony Hess Alexander
- 6. Clive Belgrave - Chair of Communications Standing Committee
- 7. Dennis Bryan
- 8. Verna Charles
- 9. Fr. Matthew D'Hereaux - Chair of Restorative Justice Standing Committee
- 10. Deborah de Rosia
- 11. Esmond Farfan
- 12. The Hon. Mr. Anthony Gafoor
- 13. Her Worship Mrs. Joan Gill - Chair of the Tobago SJ Commission
- 14. Fr. Jason Gordon – Project Leader Gonzales

15. Paula-Marie Granado (Chair of Management Committee for Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre)
16. Sr. Arlene Greenidge, O.P. – Chair of Youth at Risk Standing Committee
17. Mr. Indal Harracksingh - Chair of Consumer Rights & Protection Standing Committee
18. Adanna James, Acting Chair of Youth Standing Committee
19. Sr. Roberta O’Flaherty - Chair of Education Standing Committee
20. Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues, S.J., Spiritual Director
21. Mikkel Trestrail - Chair for Prayer
22. Eldon Warner - Chair of the Family Life & Communities Standing Committee)

Resource Persons

Dr. John Agard

Ms. Maureen Arneaud

Ms. Valerie Bethel

Sir Ellis Clarke, former President of Trinidad and Tobago

Fr. Clyde Harvey, Parish Priest, San Fernando

Mr. Winston Mathura

Ms. Gale Mohammed-Oxley, Teacher, Consultant: Conflict resolution, Counselling,
Personal Development

Sr. Ruth Montrichard, SERVOL

Mrs. Pamela Punch, former Principal of Holy Faith Convent, Couva

Sr. Juliet Rajah

Ms. Denise Scott

Sr. Theresa Vialva

STANDING COMMITTEES

as at 23/06/05

1. Poverty & Social Exclusion

James Potter (Chair)
Dennis Bryan
Verna Charles
Anthony Salloum
Gary Tagallie
Mikkel Trestrail
Deborah de Rosia
Esmond Farfan

2. Restorative Justice and Post- Prison Support

Fr. Matthew D'Hereaux (Chair)
Paula Granado (Chair Management Committee)
Fr. John Theodore
Sr. Mary Anthony
Delia Chatoor
Ishwar Muttoo
Herman Rougier
Yasim Girod
Derry Lee Loo
Leela Whiteman
Fr. Eddy Birmingham
Sylvester Lewis
Marilyn Ames

3. Youth

(Chair - Vacant)
Adanna James
Kelene Blake
Atiba Caddle
Ayanna Griffith
Oba Kiteme
Matthew Martinez
Nigel Noel
Nyron Rolingson
Tessa Saunders

4.Children & Youth at Risk

Sr Arlene Greenidge (Chair)

5. Finance

Mario Young (Chair)
Anthony Hess Alexander
Keith King

6. Family Life & Communities

Eldon Warner (Chair)
Andre des Vignes
Ivis Gibson
Maldon Pantin
Leslie Weekes
Annette des Iles

7. Education: Biblical/Social Teaching

Sr Roberta O'Flaherty (Chair)
Tracey Rojas
Lewis Martineaux
Rhonda Earle
Brent Emmanuel
Mary Lochan
Evril Rodriguez
Rian Extavour
Sandra Ealie
Rene Wihby
Shirley Steele
Bernice James
Neon Niles
Bernard Raeburn
Peter Telfer

8. Consumer Rights & Protection

Indal Harracksingh (Chair)
Fidel Gonzales
Sean Julien
Peter Charles
Clare Charles

9. Communications

Clive Belgrave (Chair)

10. Prayer

Mikkel Trestrail (Chair)

11. Tobago

Joan Gill (Chair)
T. Lloyd
K. George
A. Lera
L. De Gannes

