

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



## The Catholic Commission for Social Justice

### Our Lady of Fatima Church Hall

Bushe Street, Curepe

Saturday 18 February 2005

11.15 am – 12.15 pm

#### **Prayer for Justice and Peace:**

O God, open our hearts to the gifts of your Holy Spirit as we seek to promote Your reign here in Trinidad and Tobago. Help us to become a nation where peace is built with justice and justice is guided by love, love of God and love of neighbour.

Help us to rediscover and live our faith so that our concern for social justice will be transformed into constructive action as we spread the Good News in this land.

We ask you, O God, to guide and bless all our efforts. Inspire us as you did the Prophets of old with courage, imagination, and creativity. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

#### **AGENDA:**

1. Opening Prayer
2. Welcome and Apologies
3. Minutes of last AGM
4. Matters arising
5. Address by His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert, C.Ss.R
6. Reports:
  - a) Chair's Report
  - b) Treasurer's Report
  - c) Chairs of Standing Committees
7. Retirement and re-election of members of CCSJ, as per By-Laws
8. Members' subscription for 2006, as per By-Laws
9. Chair's Resignation/Departure – March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006
10. Any other business
11. Adjournment of AGM and Prayer followed by lunch.

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- iv. Programme: Women, Development & Peace Conference in Rome: Oct. 2005

# THE CHAIR'S REPORT

## 1. Introduction

This is CCSJ's third Annual Report and its second since its incorporation as a non-profit making company in September 2004. This is also my last report in my capacity as Chair of CCSJ. I tendered my resignation to His Grace and to members of CCSJ some time ago to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2006, by which time I would have served for 3 years as Chair of CCSJ.

I believe that having established a strong foundation for the Commission, I can now hand over to someone else within the Archdiocese to take the lead in this important area of the Archdiocese's work. In light of current events and the many challenges that we face in TT, it is clear that the need for such a Commission is stronger than ever.

If we read the signs of the times we will see that there is an urgent need for personal witness to make visible the presence of Christians in society. CCSJ provides an opportunity for good men and women to witness to the truth. We can do so by speaking out on the many moral and ethical issues which face TT.

If we are not to compromise our position as people of faith, then all those in leadership position within the Church should reflect and act on the words of Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor (UK): "We can and should be more prophetic, more demanding, less compromising."

I would like to take this opportunity to thank His Grace for his leadership and for the opportunity he afforded me to serve the Church in TT over the past 3 years as Chair of this Commission. I thank also all those who continue to commit themselves to this important work as members of the Commission and its Standing Committees, members of the Parish LINK programme, resource persons and so on.

CCSJ hopes that social justice will permeate every aspect of parish life and that of the wider community. Social justice is not an addendum. It is an integral part of who we are as Catholics. Change must start with each of us. If we do not live our faith in our homes, in our workplaces, in our communities then we cannot be part of the solution to the many challenges that we face.

If all we are concerned about is our individual piety with occasional forays out to feed the poor or to give charity to those in need, then we are not true people of the Beatitudes. We have a duty to walk with the 2 feet of justice – works of mercy and works of social action. We must not only feed the poor; we must ask why the poor are poor. Why are more than 360,000 citizens in TT living on less than US \$1 per day? Why are so many of our people struggling without basic amenities?

On Jan 9<sup>th</sup> 2006, Pope Benedict XVI addressed ambassadors of 174 states that have diplomatic relations with the Holy See. His proposal to the international community was

the same he expressed in his Message of for the World Day of Peace observed on Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 2006: "In Truth, Peace". Inter alia, he said:

"One cannot speak of peace in situations where human beings are lacking even the basic necessities for living with dignity...To peoples living below the poverty line...our common commitment to truth can and must give new hope."

At the same time he condemned the huge sums spent worldwide on weapons. He said: "On the basis of available statistical data, it can be said that less than half of the immense sums spent worldwide on armaments would be more than sufficient to liberate the immense masses of the poor from destitution. This challenges humanity's conscience."

As Catholics we have an alternative to offer the country to address poverty and social exclusion, crime, violence and lawlessness in TT. Catholics need to look through the lens of our faith so that we can assist in the process of eliminating other evils such as lack of respect for life, domestic violence, incest, rape, corruption, prostitution, pornography, breakdown of family life, absentee fathers, alcoholism, drug/substance abuse, social exclusion, the inadequacy of the education system and justice system, materialism, greed, cultural relativism, liberalism, radical individualism, selfishness, intolerance, ethnic strife, lack of effective leadership in many areas of life in TT, inequalities and so on.

Catholics make up more than 28% of our population of 1.3 million citizens. How visible are we in the life of our nation? Are we acting as true role models so that others will wish to emulate us, model their lives after us and wish to be baptized into our faith? Do we really understand what our faith teaches us e.g. in relation to social justice?

If we are to turn around our nation and bring it back on an even keel, then we must first reflect on how we are living our lives. God imprinted in our minds and hearts the moral law and gave us free will to be able to choose right from wrong. Have we lost sight of this?

Today too many citizens act as though they have no conscience. Our Catechism tells us that the conscience is the guardian of the soul. It is not the presence of God within a person, but an inward sense of what is morally wrong and morally right, normally influencing a person toward what is morally right. If we allow the negative aspects of modern-day life to influence our attitudes and behaviour, then we are not living our lives in the way that Christ intended.

We need to take action to move away from what is clouding our vision; to let go and let God. St Augustine's powerful words are worth reflecting on: "*Our hearts are restless, Lord, until they find their rest in you.*" We will never achieve inner peace or peace in our nation/world, unless we find our true selves.

Peace is the fruit of justice. Pope Benedict XVI reminds us in his Message for the World Day of Peace on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006 that the struggle for peace must begin in our hearts: he invites us to reflect on the statement, '*In Truth, Peace*'. Unless we are people of truth, and unless the truth that we speak is the truth of the Gospel, we cannot bring healing to

our communities and to our world. We cannot build peace on a lie. Each of us needs to ask: "Is my life founded on truth?" As Fr Rob Esdaile rightly states:

"Peace needs honesty for its foundations. Peace and deceit won't mix...How can we move forward as a global community...we must be truthful about the way the world is. There is a welter of terms we use which are designed to hide the reality of things.

"Can we talk of credit when we mean debt?

Can we talk of free trade when we mean unfair trade?

Can we talk of defence when we mean the sustained threat of massive lethal violence?

Can we talk of peace when we mean a trillion dollars a year being spent on armaments?

Can we talk of an ethical foreign policy when there are so many arms-exporting countries in the world, selling weapons to the very areas of the world most threatened by civil strife or regional conflict – North Africa, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and so on.

"Peace requires the honesty to call things by their proper names and to acknowledge our complicity in the discord of our world...we must bear true witness to the possibility of peace, the promise which is at the heart of the Gospel...Peace is possible. Christ has made it so. That is the truth we proclaim, and in that truth we shall find peace."

Educating the faithful about the social teachings of the Church and awakening their consciences to live their faith remains a priority for our Archdiocese. Each Catholic must demonstrate his/her commitment to build a better TT so that the revised resolutions of the Second Session of Synod 2005 (**App. 1**) will be fully implemented. Each of us can make a difference. Let us continue to strive to do better that which we must never cease from doing, that is, working for justice and peace.

It is my sincere hope that my successor and the Commission will be supported in the important task of promoting God's reign of justice, peace, love, truth, and freedom in TT. I wish all those working with CCSJ success in the future. It has truly been an honour to be able to work with so many talented individuals. I will keep you in my prayers. As I take up new challenges in my life, I remain rooted in my faith. I ask for your prayers. May God bless you all.

## **2) The Year of the Eucharist**

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

- 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

- organised a seminar on 2 July 2005 at Our Lady of Fatima Church Hall, Bushe Street, on the theme: "*The Eucharist and Social Justice*." Speakers were: His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert C.Ss.R, Fr Henry Charles, Fr Jason Gordon, and Fr Malcolm Rodrigues SJ. The Chair of CCSJ was the Moderator. Clips from this Seminar were used

in CCSJ's video tape for use in parishes on October 11<sup>th</sup> 2005. Special bookmarks were printed and distributed at the Seminar. These comprised a list of the Church's social justice principles, relevant quotations from scripture and CCSJ's Prayer;

- was involved in planning for events at Parish, Vicariate and Archdiocesan levels in October 2005

- produced a 30 minute video tape on CCSJ's work for distribution and use in parishes on October 11<sup>th</sup> 2005. This was done at the request of His Grace and members of the Planning Committee who planned the Archdiocesan celebrations for the Year of the Eucharist

The content of the tape is useful as part of CCSJ's efforts to educate the faithful about the Church's teaching on social justice; to share practical examples of the way in which social justice principles can be translated into practice; and to motivate parishioners/parishes to take action to be true witnesses of their faith as Eucharistic people by promoting social justice - as individuals and as a parish.

At the end of the tape 3 questions are posed for discussion/consideration by viewers. It was hoped that after viewing the tape, parish priests would have engaged parishioners in a discussion about issues arising from the tape and that together they would have addressed the 3 questions posed at the end of the tape.

On the evening of 11<sup>th</sup> October, Mr. Eldon Warner and Ms Kimberly Smith, 2 members of CCSJ, joined the Chair for a 1 hour programme organised by Living Water Community (Trinity Communications Network - TCN) so that those who had access to Cable TV were able to view the video that was produced and to ring in to make comments, suggestions etc.

Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, many parishes were unable to arrange for parishioners to view the tape on Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>. It is hoped that the tape will be used by parish priests as part of their ministry 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. It is imperative that social justice permeates all aspects of parish life and of the life of the Church in TT in general.

CCSJ arranged for the tape to be aired on Gayelle, Channel 7 on February 4<sup>th</sup> 2006. The Commission placed an advert in Catholic News the week before it was aired on Gayelle to alert parishioners so that those who did not have an opportunity to view it in October 2005 could do so on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

Since the programme was aired on Gayelle, a number of individuals have contacted CCSJ to offer their services and to seek further information about ways in which they can assist in their parishes.

- published an article on '*The Eucharist and Social Justice*' in the Catholic News in September 2005. This was done in response to a request made by the Archdiocesan Planning Group for The Year of The Eucharist. The article is available on CCSJ's website for reference.

### **3. Conference in Rome: Women, Development & Peace: Oct 28-29**

CCSJ's Chair was invited to attend an International Conference organised by Cardinal Renato Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican on 28 and 29 October 2005. After consultation with His Grace, the Chair accepted Cardinal Martino's invitation to attend this Conference on the theme: "*Women, Development and Peace*". About 22 papers were presented on various topics related to the theme (see programme in **App. 4**).

These papers are available for reference at CCSJ's Justice Desk. The Chair reported on the proceedings of the Conference at a meeting of the Commission and disseminated information via her articles in the Trinidad Guardian and on one of CCSJ's Ask Why? TV programmes.

### **4) CCSJ and the Media**

CCSJ has been represented on radio and television programmes to discuss issues relating to e.g. abortion, capital punishment, the treatment of socially displaced persons, strategies to combat crime and violence, poverty reduction/alleviation.

CCSJ believes that it is important to speak out against injustices when necessary. Indeed, this is in keeping with the Commission's mission to be a fearless and unified voice to eradicate social injustice in T&T and in the world (**App. 1**). How else will we awaken the social conscience of citizens and create an empowered population unless we speak out against injustices? How else will we transform inequitable structures and systems?

It must be stated that CCSJ only issues statements when it is absolutely necessary for the voice of the Catholic Church to be heard e.g. when the Government issued a statement last year that it intended to resume hangings. It must also be remembered that His Grace has instituted a procedure whereby certain media statements must be authorized by him. Because of the nature of CCSJ's media statements, they must all be authorized by him.

During the year 2005, CCSJ issued Press Statements on the following issues:

- a) Dec 21 - Removal of socially displaced persons from the streets
- b) Sept 29 - CCSJ thanks Prime Minister on withdrawal of Draft Gender Policy & Action Plan
- c) Jul 1 - Catholics For Free Choice is not an authentic Catholic voice
- d) Jun 8 - Statement on Capital Punishment
- e) April 7 - Critique of the Draft National Gender Policy & Action Plan
- f) Feb 12 - Stemming an unseemly conflict: The CJ issue
- g) Jan 15 - 2 statements were drafted by CCSJ at second session of Synod: Statement on Pro-Life and Statement on Crime. These were adopted by participants and released to the media.

### **5. Maintaining/developing CCSJ's Website**

Since 2003 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, have allowed CCSJ members free access. To date this organisation continues to facilitate CCSJ's work by allowing us free access to its Education site. 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.

## **6. Ask Why? TV programme**

CCSJ continues to air its live monthly TV programme entitled: *Ask Why?* To date 44 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 (**App. ii**).

Ask Why? is also aired on Trinity Communication Network's (LWC) Internet Radio.

## **7. Articles**

**a)** CCSJ 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 from various faith communities, including Catholics, who find the articles informative. Some teachers have said that they use the articles as a teaching tool.

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.

**b)** CCSJ continues to produce weekly articles which are printed in The Catholic News on the social teachings of the Church as outlined in the *Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church*. The aim is to raise the faithful's awareness of the content of this important document and to motivate them to embrace the social teachings of the Church in their daily lives.

CCSJ has purchased and sold 32 copies of the Compendium from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB Publications).

## **8. Publications/T-Shirts/Bumper stickers**

CCSJ published:

a) a booklet entitled: *A presentation on the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church: A Compendium that touches everyday life: The Church's Mission for an integral Humanism in Solidarity*. CCSJ had agreed to seek sponsorship for the publication of this booklet which contains the text of an address delivered by Cardinal Renato Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Rome, during a presentation in July 2005. Inter alia, Cardinal Martino said that the Compendium is “a document destined to sow its seeds very extensively, to fertilize the soil of the building of society over long periods of time, to motivate and guide the presence of Catholics in history, and not merely in some extemporaneous manner.

“The destiny of the Compendium will be measured by the conviction with which it is received and by the use that is made of it for the re-launching of general pastoral activity in society and, above all, in bringing about a reflective, aware, coherent and community presence of lay Catholics involved in society and in politics...the statement is made in No.12 that the document ‘is proposed also to the brethren of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, to the followers of other religions, as well as to all people of good will who are committed to serving the common good.’”

CCSJ wishes to thank Mr. Derry Lee Loo who arranged for 150 booklets – 18 pages per booklet – to be printed free of charge to CCSJ. The booklets were distributed to Catholic organizations, parish priests and Principals of secondary schools. It is hoped that further copies will be donated by the printer whom Mr. Clive Belgrave had contacted. Any further copies will be circulated e.g. to primary schools.

The booklet outlines the structure and purpose of the Compendium, its relationship to the Church's Mission, and its importance to Bishops, priests, those in consecrated life, and the laity. It is available on CCSJ's website for information.

b) a leaflet outlining CCSJ's vision; mission; core values; the names of members of the Commission, Standing Committees and Resource persons; a list of social justice principles; CCSJ's Justice Prayer and so on. 30,000 copies of the leaflet were distributed to parishioners, schools, Catholic organizations, religious communities and so on. As a result of this exercise, a number of individuals have contacted CCSJ's office offering to serve either on the Commission or on one or other of CCSJ's Standing Committees. A copy of the leaflet is included in this report in **App. iii**

c) CCSJ produced T-Shirts – some of which are still available – in time for the final celebrations of the Year of the Eucharist in October 2005 at the National Stadium. Since many Catholics wear these at various events, they are seen as an important means of promoting CCSJ's work and keeping the issue of ‘social justice’ in the forefront of people's minds.

d) CCSJ is producing bumper stickers with the wording: “If you want peace, work for Justice” (Pope Paul VI) – for distribution/sale. As stated in ‘c’ above, these will assist in promoting CCSJ's work and keeping the issue of ‘social justice’ in the forefront of people's minds.

## **9. Fundraising**

a) CCSJ held its second **fundraising dinner/show** at Trinidad Hilton on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2005 on the theme *Building a Fraternal Society*. Approx 350 people attended. Once again, 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. Dr Jean Ramjohn-Richards, wife of His Excellency, accompanied him to the dinner/show.

His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert, welcomed participants and also spoke on the theme. These 2 addresses are available on CCSJ's website for information. CCSJ wishes to thank all those who supported this event. It must be noted that many individuals and Companies gave donations but were unable to attend the event. >From the sale of tickets and the donations received for this event, the Commission raised about \$83,360.00 (TT). This will go a long way to support the Commission's work.

It should be noted that CCSJ has been 'assessed' by the organisation, United Way of TT, and the Commission has been invited to apply for funding for projects. Chairs of Standing Committees have been asked to submit proposals to the Commission for consideration.

**b)** CCSJ continues to raise funds to facilitate the construction of the Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre/TT Reintegration Foundation. The largest sum granted to CCS to date is from Republic Bank. This Bank has granted CCSJ the sum of TT \$2m to be used in the construction of the facility. For further information, see Treasurer's report and section below: 'Standing Committee on Restorative Justice and Post Prison Support'.

**c)** As part of CCSJ's efforts to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and to eradicate the stigma and discrimination associated with the virus, members agreed to organise a Christmas Carol/Parang celebration for the 38 children at Cyril Ross Home in December 2005.

Maureen Arneaud, members of the Parish LINK teams and members of CCSJ worked tirelessly to support this initiative. The Parish LINK team also devoted much time to decorate the hall with large colourful balloons and involved the children in the fun of decorating their home. Joy Nanton and her family assisted in the process of purchasing and parcelling age-appropriate gifts for the children. St Dominic's Youth Group kindly donated toys to be distributed to the children. The event was a great success.

Mr Gregory Wong Fo Sue accompanied the group on his keyboard and some of his friends from Love Movement joined those gathered to fill the air with Christmas cheer. Maureen arranged for 'Santa' to 'roll in' on his 'sleigh' and distribute toys and gifts to the children.

Sponsors were identified and they provided clothing, food, gifts such as toiletries, toys etc for the children. TT \$10,500 was raised. Some of this will go towards purchasing a computer for the children's use. There was so much food available on the day that Maureen and her team were able to take some to an orphan home to share with the children there. (For further information on this initiative, see Maureen Arneaud's report at D.1 below).

## 10. Pro-Life work

a) CCSJ participated in the production of a documentary which was aired internationally on Mother Angelica's programme on EWTN on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2006. The documentary was produced by Fr. Tom Euteneuer, President, Human Life International and his team ([www.hli.org](http://www.hli.org)) and entitled: **"Thwarting the Culture of Death in the Caribbean"**. The following is a quotation from the publicity that was circulated by HLI regarding the documentary:

"This documentary contains stunning footage from Trinidad and Tobago that you won't want to miss:

- Inspiring interviews with heroic pro-life activists and others affected by abortion.
- Shocking details on how Planned Parenthood and other extremists are trying to force abortion on our neighbors to the south and their pro-life cultures.
- Vivid scenes from the front lines of the titanic struggle to keep the Caribbean abortion-free.

You will also learn of HLI campaigns to hold back and uproot the culture of death in other regions of the globe. In short, you will gain a greater appreciation for and understanding of all that Human Life International is doing to defend life, faith and family around the world."

Unfortunately, a local programme was being aired on Channel 10 (EWTN) at the same time, so we in TT were unable to view the documentary at the allotted time. Ms Najette Abraham, a Trinidadian Catholic who saw the programme in Atlanta, wrote to the Chair commenting on the effectiveness of the programme. Ms Abraham will give a copy of the documentary to CCSJ on her return.

b) Fr Tom Euteneuer, HLI, is arranging for CCSJ's Chair to be interviewed live on EWTN in America on a date to be announced.

It must be noted that CCSJ is only one of the many organizations involved in pro-life work in TT. Others include Emmanuel Community, Living Water Community, Lawyers for Jesus and so on.

c) On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005 CCSJ issued a media release distancing itself and the Catholic Church from the organization: Catholics for Free Choice (CFFC). This is an organization that is based in the USA. It consistently undermines the teachings of the Catholic Church – particularly in relation to the Church's stance on pro-life issues.

The President of this organization, Ms Frances Kissling, was invited to this country by Trinidad and Tobago Family Planning Association (TTFPA).

As was to be expected, CFFC's President received much media attention and undermined the Catholic Church. CCSJ and other pro-life groups in TT issued statements opposing CFFC's statements and making it clear that CFFC is not an authentic Catholic group. CCSJ's statement on this issue is available on the Commission's website.

It is worth mentioning that when CCSJ's Chair attended the Conference in Rome on *Women, Development and Peace*, organised by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (PCJP), she suggested to Cardinal Martino, President of the PCJP, that the hierarchy of the Church in Rome should take action against CFFC since its intention is clearly to undermine the Catholic Church. Cardinal Martino outlined unsuccessful attempts made by CFFC to have the Holy See's Observer status at the UN withdrawn. During the discussions an Italian group outlined its plan to 'tackle' CFFC. It was left to individual countries to challenge the authenticity of CFFC.

CCSJ wrote to thank the Prime Minister, Mr. Patrick Manning, for his pro-life stance. Following his statements in his budget-making speech, he made it clear on December 15<sup>th</sup> 2005 that: "The Government does not support abortion. Nor do we support any flexible interpretation of gender. We don't, and I think that is absolutely clear as the position of the Government of T&T." His comment came in response to a call by the T&T Humanist Association for Government to state its position on abortion.

Mr Manning also refuted the T&T Humanist Association's claim that his Government has been silent on this important issue. He said; "Government has not been silent on the matter. The Government has spoken out loud and clear on it and I don't propose to talk about it every five minutes. The Government does not support abortion."

Groups such as CCSJ need to be vigilant as those who are bent on taking TT down the wrong path continue to work in the background to muster support for their anti-life/anti-family/pro-abortion/pro-choice stance.

In seeking to promote the Church's pro-life position, the Chair participated in the production of a documentary entitled: *'The A-Word'*. The 2 producers, one Trinidadian and an American, received much publicity in the media.

The documentary was shown on TV in TT last year. Sadly, the Chair was the only person interviewed who presented a pro-life position. Other interviewees included members of ASPIRE and 2 key members from 2 faith communities in TT that are not Catholic.

Other Catholic groups were approached to participate in the production of this documentary, but they refused to do so as they felt that their views would not be fairly represented. CCSJ's Chair informed the producers that she was disappointed that after videotaping an interview with her for over 1 hour, they chose clips that did not reflect the core Catholic message that she conveyed, that is, that since all life is sacred from conception until natural death, society must find ways to love and support **both** the mother and the child and that the creation of a culture of life within society will ensure that systems are put in place to support pregnant mothers who are experiencing difficulties e.g. poverty etc.

Unfortunately, as it stands, the video can give the impression that Catholics are only concerned about the unborn baby and not his/her mother. CCSJ sought to counteract this video by successfully negotiating with a TV station, at a reasonable cost, to show a video of its work, which includes its pro-life work.

In January 2006 CCSJ's Chair drew to the attention of pro-life groups, to the Mayor of POS and to the PM the fact that a large billboard advertising ASPIRE's call to decriminalize abortion was attached to wall of the POS Market. On contacting the Mayor's Office, the Chair was told that an advertising agency deals with advertisements along that wall. CCSJ believes that such an Agency should be given specific criteria to ensure that State-owned property is not used to promote a stance that is anti-Government policy.

In light of the above, CCSJ's Chair wrote to the Mayor of POS and copied the letter to the PM about this issue. Being advocates for the unborn requires constant vigilance and action when necessary.

## **11. Draft National Gender Policy and Action Plan**

On April 7<sup>th</sup> 2005, CCSJ wrote to Senator, the Hon. Joan Yuille Williams, Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs etc. and copied this letter to Prime Minister, Mr. Patrick Manning, expressing concern about aspects of the aforementioned draft and outlining the nature of the Commission's concerns.

CCSJ believes that many aspects of the draft were positive and are needed in TT if we are to promote equity and equality for all. However, CCSJ and groups such as Emmanuel Community, Lawyers for Jesus etc. highlighted the dangers of some of the proposals contained in the draft document. We believe that sections such as those relating to same sex unions, abortion, re-definition of 'family' and 'gender' should be withdrawn (see CCSJ's website for copy of CCSJ's letter to the Minister and the PM).

As stated in '9' above, CCSJ wrote to thank the PM for making it clear in a statement during his budget speech in Parliament, that his government does not support abortion; neither does it support any flexible interpretation of 'gender'. He asked for the draft document to be withdrawn and the Minister has complied with this request. Subsequently, CCSJ's Chair offered, in one of her articles, to participate in the development of a further draft of the document. Promoting equality/equity for all is an important part of the Commission's work. Therefore, CCSJ is eager to work with others to ensure that an appropriate draft on this issue is prepared.

## **B. TREASURER'S REPORT**

### **CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT – 05-12-31**

**Saturday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006.**

#### **Greeting:**

Your Grace, Archbishop of Port of Spain – Edward Gilbert; Ms Leela Ramdeen, Episcopal Delegate / Chair – Catholic Commission for Social Justice; Fellow members of CCSJ; Members of the Catholic Community, ladies and gentlemen.

A pleasant good afternoon to all.

It gives me pleasure to present this Financial Report at this Third Annual General Meeting of CCSJ.

#### **Executive Summary**

CCSJ continued to consolidate its financial position in 2005, and was able to raise over \$348.k during the year.

We have over \$350.k in bank deposits; with another \$150.k allocated and paid into an account in CCSJ's name by the Government for our Reintegration Center.

During the period we purchased property for \$369,650.00, and spent \$77,570.00 on its development.

We utilized \$193.k in covering Operating Cost with the continued support and allocations from the Chancery. We thank the Chancery for its financial assistance and anticipate their continued support in the year ahead.

#### **Inflows and Expenditure to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2005.**

The accounts of CCSJ continue to be maintained in two distinct streams:

- 1. Firstly – Expenditure underwritten by the Chancery, and**
- 2. Secondly – Inflows and expenditure specific to CCSJ projects.**

#### **1 Expenditure of Chancery Funds.**

CCSJ budget allocation from the Chancery for the financial year 2005 amounted to \$150.k, our original request was for \$209.k

The total expenditure of Chancery funds for the period to 05-12-31 amounted to \$ 193.k

The main categories of expenditure being:

1. Stipends and staff expenses	-	\$083,950.00
2. Capital and other operating costs	-	\$104,761.49

Again during this year, a number of projects of sub-committees did not materialize in terms of utilization of funds budgeted for such purposes. However funds were reallocated to other projects that came up in the period.

**2 Inflows and Expenditure of CCSJ generated funds.**

Fundraising in 2005 was again successful for CCSJ.

The major areas of inflows included:

<i>Donations towards our Reintegration Center</i>	-	<b>\$265.k</b>
<i>Net returns from our Second Annual Dinner</i>	-	<b>\$83.k</b>
Interest Earned	-	\$17.k

(The majority of the funds are invested in FCB's Money Market Fund).

Our major area of expenditure:

Capital Expenditure – Land for our Reintegration Center	-	\$447.k
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We closed the financial year with the following Bank Account Balances:

• Operating Current Account	\$035,228.66
• Money Market Account	\$317,803.65
• Government Allocation (C/A)	\$148,741.00
• <b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$501,773.31</b>

**Expectations for 2006**

CCSJ expects to be engaged in a number of projects in 2005, the major ones being:

- Our Third Annual Fundraising Dinner, which will be our major fund raising event for the year, where we expect to net a minimum of \$100,000.00. Detail planning for this project is expected to begin shortly.
- The continued raising of funds and donations towards the Reintegration Center, this is difficult to budget, but we hope to do better than 2005.
- The start of construction on the Reintegration Center. The specific budget for this project is expected to be finalized by the middle of 2006, following the completion of the architectural drawings and cost estimates.
- The drawing down on the \$2. million allocated by Republic Bank.
- And of course, the continued work and projects of each of our Sub-Committees.

We were recently advised of the tentative allocation of \$200.k in Chancery funding for operating costs, our original submission was for \$272.k

It is expected that going forward, CCSJ will only rely on the Chancery in respect of the operating costs in the running of the Office of the Chair, and that CCSJ will find ways to fund its various projects.

**Conclusion.**

In closing, I wish to thank our Episcopal Delegate for her stewardship and passion; the other members of CCSJ for their support and dedication to TEAM and particularly to the members of the public who gave generously in 2005.

I thank you.

Mario Young –Treasurer CCSJ  
06-02-08.

## **C. REPORTS: STANDING COMMITTEES (SCs):**

As reported in CCSJ's report last year, the Commission reviewed its work in light of reports from the mini-synods and the second session of Synod. Organizationally, the Commission now has fewer Standing Committees and members focus on the following areas:

### **1. CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK SC**

After reviewing the information obtained by CCSJ from a survey conducted with residential homes for youths in 2005, Sr. Arlene Greenidge, Chair of this SC, embarked on a consultation process on the theme: "Promoting better adult outcomes in children and youth at risk: Drawing on strengths, confronting challenges."

The aim was to stimulate discussion among Catholic providers of residential care services to youth and children at risk.

Sr Arlene organized a workshop on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2006. Prior to the workshop she circulated a document entitled: "The Revised Draft National Plan of action for Children", together with the following list of questions to Managers of Residential Homes in preparation for the workshop.

"The following questions may be used to guide your study of the document provided in preparation for the CCSJ seminar/workshop "Promoting Better Adult Outcomes for Children and Youth in Residential Care":

Section 1. (a) Within your agency, what care practices seem to be working?

(b) What programmes, structures, strategies ... seem to be most effective in realizing your vision for the children and young persons in your care?

(c) What are some of the innovations developed within your agency to prepare those in your care for reintegration into family or [semi-] independent living?

(d) What policies exist in support of the early reintegration of the child into family and/or the maintenance of family relationships?

Section 2. (a) What, within your organization, do you lack?

(b) What are some of the internal barriers or obstacles to more effective service-outcomes?

- (c) What gaps exist in the service we offer to the children and young persons we serve?
- Section 3. (a) What are the gaps and inadequacies within the wider social services system as it pertains to residential child care?
- (b) What difficulties do you experience in accessing support services for the work of your agency?
- (c) What, if any, are some of the disturbing developments which you have observed within the wider social service system as it pertains to the practice of residential child care?

- Section 4. (a) How have developments within the area of Child Rights impacted upon your residential child care practices and policies?
- (b) What, if any, are some of the encouraging developments which you have observed within the wider social service system as it pertains to the practice of residential child care?

Having circulated these questions and the background document to Catholic organizations that provide residential-care services to children and youth at risk, CCSJ held a workshop on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2006 for representatives of these organizations. The workshop, which was hosted by the Children and Youth at Risk Standing Committee of CCSJ, brought together twenty-two caregivers and administrators from nine of the ten organizations on CCSJ's listing e.g. Carmelite Sisters, Credo for Justice, Dominican Sisters, Emmanuel Community, Eternal Light Community, Living Water Community, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Word of Life Community.

The workshop, facilitated by Sr. Arlene Greenidge, Chair of this SC, began with a short reflection on the weekend's Gospel – John 1:35-42, in which both John and Jesus come to a place of recognition or naming, through first 'staring hard at'. Sr. Arlene invited the workshop participants to 'stare hard at' the experiences and situations to be raised, to better analyze/understand the issues and address the challenges faced by persons involved in residential care more effectively.

As the workshop participants introduced themselves and the nature of their work, insight was provided into the breadth and scope of the group's collective ministries. All together, the nine organizations administer a total of fourteen agencies, responsible for the care and development of more than four hundred and fifty (450) children/youth.

The population served included babies, school-aged children, adolescents and young adults, all of whom have experienced loss and displacement. Many of the children in care have also suffered abandonment or neglect as well as physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse.

The document that had been circulated prior to the workshop and entitled: “The Revised Draft National Plan of Action for Children” did not figure heavily in the day’s discussion. Since this was the first meeting of its kind, it was felt that the four hours of meeting time would best be spent on preliminary analysis.

The workshop took the form of a SWOT Analysis. The subject of analysis was “Catholic agencies providing residential care for ‘at risk’ children and youth”. Working in groups, participants identified the strengths and weaknesses of the services offered and explored the wider environment within which these services are delivered in order to isolate some of the threats confronted and opportunities which are available. The findings (*see following page*) were later shared and briefly discussed in the large group.

In light of the National Plan of Action, there will be a further analysis of the findings as well as discussion on the role and function of the Standing Committee at a meeting to take place in February. One representative from each of the nine participating organizations has been invited to the meeting.

A seminar, which will be open to wider participation, is carded for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2006. This will address the same theme: “Promoting Better Adult Outcomes in Children and Youth at Risk”.

## **2. COMMUNICATIONS SC**

Once again, CCSJ wishes to express its gratitude to Mr. Clive Belgrave, Chair of CCSJ’s SC on Communications, for his work in this area. Mr. Belgrave saves the Archdiocese and CCSJ many thousands of dollars by sourcing sponsors to print most of CCSJ’s material e.g.

He secured the following free of charge:

- tickets, flyers and the programme for CCSJ’s Annual Dinner/Show;
- delivery of tickets for the Dinner/Show to firms and individuals within the POS area;
- printing of CCSJ’s T-Shirts;
- printing of 10,000 leaflets about CCSJ, its members and its work;
- bookmarks for distribution at CCSJ’s Seminar on The Eucharist and Social Justice. These included details of the Church’s social justice principles;
- CCSJ’s prayer cards;
- binding of CCSJ’s AGM report.

Mr. Belgrave is currently arranging for bumper stickers to be printed free of charge. These will comprise CCSJ’s logo and the wording: “*If you want peace, work for Justice*” (Pope Paul VI).’

Mr. Belgrave is to be commended also for ensuring that the quality of the material produced is always of a high quality. 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.

### **3. EDUCATION SC**

Sr Roberta O'Flaherty, Chair of this SC, and members of her team, continue to meet on a monthly basis to foster Social Justice Education among its own members, and to plan for Social Justice Education in the Archdiocese. It comprises ten members most of whom are in full-time employment.

**Some of the activities which the Committee carried out since the last AGM are:**

- Workshops for the Eastern and Central Vicariates on the *Social Teaching and Mission of the Church*.
- Preparation of resource material on *Capital Punishment* for the Social Justice Commission Members
- The inclusion in each issue of the Catholic News of a '*Social Justice Quote of the Week*'
- Preparation of a *series of tapes* on the Themes of Catholic Social Teaching for use in Parishes and in other groups
- Collaboration with the Catholic Communication Studios in preparation for the taping of '*Only this*' by *Mawasi Experience*. This song, based on Micah 6 will be used to create awareness of the challenges of Social Justice'
- Editing and preparation of a *series of leaflets on Social Justice Issues* to be promulgated throughout the Archdiocese.
- Collaboration with the Youth Standing Committee and the Youth Secretariat in planning a *Youth Forum* for the formation of youth for action in Social Justice within the Parishes.

### **4. FAMILY LIFE AND COMMUNITIES SC**

Mr. Eldon Warner, Chair of this SC, reports as follows:

For the past six months or so, the focus of the Committee's work has been (and continues to be) on the clause in our MISSION STATEMENT, namely:-

***"To promote support services to families".***

Therefore, interventions in pursuit of effecting social change have been initiated and are in train. We have been seeking to undertake action towards concrete and effective operational results, in full recognition of the fact that these results may be only partial.

This is the background to the **Family Mentoring and Intervention Programme** which we are pursuing; target families are “families at risk” who have been identified and evaluated as such within a parish – community.

When first conceived the target community was Gonzales parish; however, when we teamed up with Couples for Christ, there was the opportunity for access to other parishes in which Couples for Christ was operational. (Couples for Christ describes itself as “a movement intended for the renewal and strengthening of Christian family life” which makes it an ideal partner to our Committee). Couples for Christ members would undertake the field work (after appropriate training) while the Committee with its limited membership, would facilitate and steer the process.

Two training sessions were conducted for Couples for Christ teams and SCFLC members. The first was held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2005 and was attended by 30 persons from 8 parishes. This was an Introductory session and was facilitated by Fr. Jason Gordon. The second session was unfortunately delayed and was eventually held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October and was attended by 28 persons representing 10 parishes. The facilitator was Sr. Julie Peters who offered insights into the identification of high risk families and explored with participants models of intervention for working with such families.

Field work has been initiated by Couples for Christ teams in three parishes namely: Sangre Grande, Paramin – Maraval parishes and St. John – St. Augustine. It will be noted that Gonzales is not mentioned above; this is explained by the fact that no Couples for Christ team has been established in that parish, as yet.

Feedback from the teams in the field has been sketchy to date. The Committee has therefore proposed to the couples for Christ Coordinator (Mr. Mark Poon Tip) that arrangements be made for written reports to be prepared and for SCFLC members to travel out to meet teams in their parishes to discuss their reports and offer help as required.

Another initiative under contemplation by the Committee is to become involved in a programme aimed at relieving to the extent possible, the basic human need for adequate shelter experienced by large members of our disadvantaged citizens. CCSJ was challenged to regard this as an area for social action for its attention when we presented our Video to an audience at Living Water Community (on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2005) in the context of the discussions on the Social Dimensions of the Eucharist which were arranged during Eucharistic Congress week 7<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

Some weeks earlier, the local Coordinator of Couples for Christ introduced the Chair, CCSJ and the Chair SCFLC to international representatives of the movement who were visiting Trinidad and Tobago on the occasion of the Annual Caribbean Conference of Couples for Christ.

At that meeting, the Couples for Christ representatives described their programme for provision of housing for poor families in the Philippines on an extensive scale. The question arose whether or not this was a model which Trinidad and Tobago could attempt

to copy, with suitable adaptation to the local environment. We took note for future reference.

The most recent follow-up to these leads was a meeting which a SCFLC team (comprising the Chair and Mr. Maldon Pantin) held discussions with Habitat for Humanity, Trinidad and Tobago on 9 January 2006 seeking information on the programmes and activities of this Non-Governmental Organization. A report on the meeting is available from the Committee. In sum, we concluded that few, if any, disadvantaged poor who are squatters would qualify for participation in Habitat's programme.

It will be appreciated that these are very tentative ideas. A proposal has been mooted regarding a visit to the Philippines by representatives of CCSJ and CFC (Trinidad and Tobago) to observe at first hand the programme (and some projects) initiated there to relieve the pressure of the housing needs of the poor, with a view to evaluating its applicability to Trinidad conditions. If this proposal is to be pursued, it will be necessary to address the funding of the cost of the trip to the Philippines.

## **5. POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION SC**

Mr. Dennis Bryan has agreed to Chair this SC and is arranging a meeting with members of CCSJ who have indicated their interest in joining this SC. A reading of this AGM report will show that much of CCSJ's work continues to focus on poverty and social exclusion.

## **6. PRAYER SC**

The Chair of this SC, Mikkel Trestrail, attended a Conference organised by the Association of Catholic Intercessors (ACI) on 16 September on the theme: "Forming Prayer Pockets". The course will assist him in his work with the Commission.

Mr. Trestrail hopes to work with ACI to plan a Seminar on the link between intercessory prayer and social justice. The theme will be: "For what we pray".

This SC organised an 'Evening of Prayer and Thanksgiving' at the Chapel at Archbishop's House on 10 February in honour of the Chair of CCSJ who will be leaving the Commission on 1 March 2006.

## **7. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND POST PRISON SUPPORT SC**

CCSJ's concerns about conditions in our prisons have been expressed in the Chair's articles in The Guardian newspapers and in discussion with the Commissioner of Prisons, Mr. John Rougier. The POS prison was originally built to cater for 250 persons. During the earlier part of 2005 there were more than 1,400 persons in that prison (see Chair's article on CCSJ's website entitled: 'Custody, care and justice').

As a result of pressure from a number of concerned groups, including CCSJ, and because of Mr. Rougier's own commitment to promote a Restorative Justice approach to the Criminal Justice System, there are now about 600 prisoners at the POS prison. A large number of prisoners have been moved to the Arouca site. Money has been allocated to install a new sewerage system at Arouca as the current system is inadequate and cannot meet the needs of a larger prison population – even though there is room for many more prisoners at that facility.

The Walk-Talk programme, run by Fr Matthew D'Hereaux, Chair of this SC, is continuing and it is hoped that once the Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre/TT Reintegration Foundation is established, CCSJ will be able to assist those prisoners who would have been involved in this programme while in prison and who, on their release from prison, meet the criteria for admission to the Centre.

Fundraising strategies to support the construction of the Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre/TT Reintegration Foundation include applications to various funding bodies both in TT and abroad, poster advertisements at parish level, and pledge forms to encourage individuals/firms to donate materials.

A number of meetings have been held to ensure that procedures and processes are put in place to facilitate the construction of the TT Reintegration Foundation. Plans are in train to incorporate the TT Reintegration Foundation. This will facilitate the Commission's work in a variety of ways, for example, in its fund-raising initiatives. CCSJ would like to express its sincere thanks to M. Hamel-Smith & Co. for their generosity in undertaking the necessary legal work pro-bono.

Republic Bank has undertaken to give CCSJ a grant of (TT) \$2 million to be used to defray part of the cost of constructing the TT Reintegration Foundation. \$1m will be granted in 2006 and another \$1m will be granted in 2007. A 'mock' cheque for the sum of \$2m was handed over to the Chair and Fr Matthew D'Hereaux at a Ceremony organised by Republic Bank at Movie Towne on 24 November 2005. On 6<sup>th</sup> February, the Chair and 3 other members of CCSJ met with Senior members of staff at Republic Bank to discuss issues relating to the Bank's grant of TT \$2m to CCSJ.

## **8. TOBAGO SC**

Inter alia, Ms Joan Gill, Chair of this SC, and members of her team, have been

- addressing the need for a remand centre for boys in Tobago.
- disseminating information e.g. at a youth forum, about the social aspects of HIV/AIDS and about issues relating to Abortion
- working with other faith communities and NGOs to address justice issues in Tobago.

## **9. YOUTH SC**

During the past year the youth Standing Committee (SC) has been involved in a reviewing and planning process under the leadership of the new Chair of the committee, Ms. Kimberly Smith.

The priority of this SC during the later half of 2005 was to liaise with Sr. Kathy and members of the Youth Standing Committee, in order to establish a solid network connecting with youths across the Archdiocese. As a result, this SC has held meetings to discuss plans, procedures and ideas for action.

Deliberations and decisions arising from such meetings include:

➤ **Youth Standing Committee Logo and Letter Head.**

A YSC logo was designed to be print together with CCSJ's logo. This will be a mark of identification under the CCSJ letter head so that youths can easily recognize this SC under CCSJ.

The logo was inspired by the fact that the members of this standing committee believe that youths play a key role in establishing a just society and we are committed to promoting and establishing social justice among youths.

➤ **YSC Vision and Mission Statement**

This SC is currently in the process of drawing up a vision and mission statement. Decision on the vision and mission is expected to be confirmed at a meeting in March.

➤ **Networking**

Given the challenge of establishing a solid network for youths, this SC has been liaising with Sr. Kathy, Youth Secretariat, to develop a strong networking system. The Chair of this SC has also been in contact with various groups, both in the Church and in the wider community e.g. Zion Community's Association of Catholic Intercessors (ACI). Ms Smith, was a facilitator at a Conference organised by the ACI (Zion Community) on 16 September on the theme: "A Day of United Prayer: Forming Prayer Pockets." A major focus during the Conference was on Networking.

Ms. Smith, together with Mr. Mikkel Trestrail of the Prayer Standing Committee both found the experience spiritually lifting and got insight from the conference on the need for networking and collaboration/unity among the various groups within the Church - for mission.

It is hoped that these groups/organizations will collaborate with this SC to mobilize young people for social action.

Three (3) members of CCSJ's Youth SC, Mr. Mikkel Trestrail, Ms. Adanna James, and Mr. Matthew Martinez, attended World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany in 2005 as part of Sr Kathy Joseph's team. In spite of certain challenges, they found the experience spiritually uplifting. They were able to share their experiences on one of CCSJ's Ask Why? programme entitled: "*Youth and Social Justice*" in September 2005.

➤ **YSC Year of Awareness 2006**

It was felt by members of this committee that our focus for 2006 must be to develop social consciousness/awareness among young people across the Archdiocese / among communities of the nation. Hence we have deemed the year 2006 as our Year of Awareness towards fostering the spirit of social responsibility among youth/young people. The committee has already initiated its awareness-raising campaign through CCSJ's Ask Why? programme "Youth and Social Justice", and intends to mobilize other young people to speak out on social justice issues.

As part of our Year of Awareness the following illustrates the various activities that are currently in progress and/or are to be initiated during the year 2006. They include:

- **YSC Webpage**

As part of our awareness-raising campaign this SC is currently establishing our webpage on CCSJ's website. It will focus on "Speak Your Peace" – an online youth forum which will focus, for the month or a fortnight, on a particular issue that affects young people. They will be invited to express their views on the various social justice issues that exist in their communities across the country.

- **Youth Forum**

The SC has met with Education Standing Committee (ESC) member, Lewis Martineaux, to establish a youth forum across the Archdiocese. The YSC hopes to initiate this project on a date yet to be determined together with the ESC, the Youth Secretariat and other members of CCSJ. This forum will focus on educating youths across the Archdiocese on the various aspects of social justice and help to build their confidence in putting social responsibility into action.

- **Collaborating with other groups in the Church and the wider community**

This SC looks forward to working with the Church and youth organizations across the country to promote justice and peace across the Archdiocese, and by extension the country.

- **YSC Social Awareness Concert.**

This SC has agreed to organize a Social Justice Awareness concert that is to be scheduled for the end of the year. The concert would be the climax event for our Year of Awareness.

## **D. PROJECTS**

### **1. PARISH LINK PROGRAMME**

The Parish Link program now has a presence in at least 2 parishes in each Vicariate, with expansion within the programme planned from these 'starter' parishes for 2006.

In CCSJ's 2005 AGM report it was reported that Parish LINK Teams had been established in the following parishes:

- 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

Since then we have launched the Programme in

- m) Mayaro - Guyaguayare and
- n) Tunapuna

First meetings towards a launch of the Parish LINK Programme have been held with Biche, Manzanilla and La Brea and discussions have started with Mt Lambert, Bourg Mulatresse, and Siparia. We would like to start soon in Tobago as well.

A major concern that the Commission has is that social justice should not be seen as an addendum or another program but rather those working with CCSJ should seek to integrate their work into the life of their parishes and to collaborate with other ministries working in their parishes.

CCSJ's 30 minute video highlighted some of the important work being undertaken by members of parish LINK Teams and has motivated many others to take action in their respective parishes. Maureen and her team expended much time and effort to produce footage for use in the video. Clips that were not used will be of use in the future, e.g. on CCSJ's Ask Why? programme in March 2006 when there will be an opportunity to share with viewers developments on CCSJ's Parish LINK Programme.

Plans are in train to produce a LINK-UP Newsletter (electronic and paper editions are planned ) entitled: *'A call to action'*. The aim is to share/disseminate information, heighten awareness of social justice issues, motivate parishioners to link their faith with action and so on.

Maureen has held a meeting with Fr Jason Gordon to discuss possible collaboration with him in terms of using the 'City' model that he has developed, as a catalyst for change in some of the parishes in which the Parish LINK Programme has been established. Further discussions are to take place regarding this issue.

In 2005 Maureen set up Social Justice booths at parish harvests and family days e.g. in Curepe and Rio Claro. This initiative was a great success. This provided CCSJ with an opportunity to raise awareness about the existence of the Commission and the Parish LINK Programme and about social justice issues, to collect data on needs and opinions within the community, to share ideas and be seen in the 'market place', and to recruit new members. The first Justice booth for 2006 will be at the St John's St Augustine Covenant Day on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

The booths were decorated with CCSJ's banners, balloons and CCSJ's T-shirts, which were also on sale. There were a number of "give-aways" e.g. attractive bookmarks on the Eucharist and Social Justice, the Commission's prayer card, and also some brightly coloured pens on which were printed 2 messages: Paul VI's exhortation: "If you want peace, work for justice" and "Catholic Social Justice Teams". The pens were paid for by the LINK team members.

CCSJ's T-Shirts were printed in time for the final celebrations for the Year of the Eucharist on Oct 16<sup>th</sup> and members of some parish LINK Teams purchased these and wore them at the event at the Stadium and at the Justice booths on Family Days at Rio Claro and Curepe. The sales were brisk!

Currently, key areas of work on the Parish LINK Programme are:

- a) capturing the work of parish teams on video and print media to facilitate Evangelization, to raise awareness of justice issues, to strengthen membership and to spread the Good News of solutions to justice issues in the Archdiocese;
- b) building a Guiding Coalition of team leaders for institutional strengthening, growth and development – primarily leadership development. This is a precursor to phase 2 (year 2), during which phase the teams will be encouraged to move out into their own Vicariates to foster the establishment of new Justice teams.

In August 2005 a meeting was organised for the leaders of 5 of the teams to meet and get to know each other, listen to each other's achievements in their particular parishes and the challenges each group face, share their vision for the path that they wish to take in

order to move forward and so on. This was seen as a key event in the process of forming a Leadership Coalition.

Major decisions taken at that meeting are being implemented e.g.

- work on the preparation of a Parish LINK Newsletter is in train and the first issue should be ready for production by the end of February 2006
  - gestures of solidarity with each other are being made e.g. by attending sister parish events. Representatives from teams attended the Family Day held in Mucurapo. The leadership team visited Rio Claro and Curepe justice teams in solidarity at the Parish Family days in October 2005
  - efforts are being made by those involved to try to attend each other's group meetings and as an example: this year when the Tunapuna LINK team was launched, members from Curepe, St Joseph, and St John's St Augustine were on hand in a gesture of solidarity and to assist in the explanations of ministries undertaken.
  - leadership training has commenced to facilitate the development of the Leadership Guiding Coalition ;
  - It must be noted that building leadership capacity takes time; building team spirit and collaboration takes time and has to be dealt with carefully in order to nurture individuals and foster their development. What is helpful is that those involved are extremely enthusiastic individuals who are willing to learn.
- c) building relationship among teams to strengthen the network. The proposed Newsletter and team visits will facilitate this strategy of Solidarity;
- d) Advent projects within the LINK teams ranged from programs for the elderly in collaboration with community groups, bringing an awareness of Catholic presence in communities via carol singing in many areas, with monies raised for the disadvantaged; hosting a big Christmas party for the Cyril Ross Nursery for children with HIV/AIDS - providing new clothes and shoes for each of the 38 children and generating donations of \$10,500 and a donation of a computer, all of which will go towards creating a computer Lab at the home for the children.

Work has started on the wiring and AC for the lab and a promise of 4 computers - 2 from direct donations to the Cyril Ross Nursery by their donors and 2 from us.

A program of instruction will also be organized by the newly formed Tunapuna LINK team, providing supervised computer workshop times weekly for the children. We are also working on the donation of educational software for the children. Bringing the

justice of equity for the disadvantaged via the Parish LINK programme is an important objective.

e) establishing new Parish LINK Teams. It was hoped that 2 teams will have been established in each Vicariate by the end of 2005. This was achieved and Mayaro/Guayaguayare and Tunapuna have been added to the teams since the 2005 AGM report. Discussions are in train with Mt. Lambert, Manzanilla, Biche, Siparia and Bourg for 'start-up'.

Maureen's activities are wide and varied e.g.

a) she is involved with parishes in areas such as Guyaguayare, Mayaro and Mucurapo where there is a strong interest in establishing social justice awareness programmes in schools. The teams in these areas have

- commenced research and have identified relevant contact persons in primary and secondary schools in the areas;
- spoken to some of the principals in the areas about this proposal;
- arranged for 5 members of the social justice groups to attend a Saturday workshop hosted by Sr Julie Peters and the Franciscan Institute. The workshop addressed Child Trauma, the causes of such trauma, how to 'spot it' and how to make helpful interventions. The teams plan to incorporate the information they gleaned into awareness sessions for PTAs, teachers, and other supervisory groups that work with children.

b) she has made contact with a high school in the USA – The Horlick High School, Wisconsin, which has launched a programme entitled: "Practice Peace". The programme is a positive initiative for young people wishing to promote justice and peace. The programme does not focus much on seeking to eradicate the root causes of injustices. Rather, it seeks to foster awareness among young people of strategies for practicing peace in their daily lives and to address issues such as: "What does it take to become a person of peace?" Maureen has spoken to the principal of that school who is enthusiastic about the possibility of arranging a link between students at her school and those who attend a school in TT.

c) she made a presentation in Rio Claro in October 2005 at the *Youth Awareness Week* of the Trinidad & Tobago Red Cross celebrations. Their theme was "Protecting Human Dignity". This is in keeping with the first of the Church's social justice principles. She was able to make some useful contact/links there e.g.

- she was able to arrange an appointment and to meet with the Chairman of the Mayaro-Rio Claro Regional Corporation, Mr. Ramlochan Panchoo.

Some of the post-census work in which the parish team in Rio Claro is engaged, involve addressing injustice in infrastructure. Maureen aims to share with parishioners strategies for working with government agencies directly and collaboratively in order to address

injustices. Mr. Panchoo has promised to review with the Rio Claro Parish LINK Team representative for 'infrastructure', all issues identified in the census.

- she met and discussed with Mr. B. Ramlal, School Supervisor II of the South-Eastern District, the possibility of our Social Justice team members visiting schools and initiating projects to raise awareness of social justice issues – both at Primary and Secondary levels in that area. Several members of the LINK team are teachers in the education system in that area. Mr. Ramlal expressed an interest in the proposed initiative and promised to meet with Maureen to discuss this and other issues in the near future;

- she also met with a number of community leaders in the area.

Maureen reports that it was an excellent event and that her team made progress both in terms of image/visibility and in building relationship. This is essential if the team is to make an impact in the area. The aim is to link the teams to existing community structures/to integrate the team's efforts with that of existing community groups in order to facilitate the work of the team.

Good examples of this include

- the strategy employed by the team at St John the Baptist in St Augustine. The team joined the village council and worked with them to prepare Christmas activities for senior citizens in the community. This team was also able to recruit the services of the Cancer Society and, at the team's invitation, this Society set up a stall in the Churchyard and provided low cost mammograms and Pap smears for women from 9.00 am – 3.30 pm on a particular day;
- in Rio Claro a project was developed to work with other Christian churches to organize Advent and Christmas activities for communities in Rio Claro, Dades Rd, Santa Rita, Navet and Cush;
- the team at St Theresa's, Woodbrook, is seeking to join forces with the Woodbrook Residents Committee to address social justice issues in the area. This group is well established and has built relationships with several government agencies and key representatives for the area to address issues such as flooding, noise pollution, prostitution, the effects of casinos in the area, lack of effective planning that opens the door to businesses being established in areas designated as residential areas in Woodbrook etc.

## **2. PRIDE IN GONZALES**

### **OVERVIEW OF CITY & PRIDE IN GONZALES**

**PROGRAMMES by Fr. Jason Gordon**

Launched in September 2003, Community Intervention Transforming Youth (**CITY**) initiative is a partnership of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice and the St. Martin de Porres parish in Gonzales.

The objective of this project is to empower the youth so that they will develop into better integrated adolescents and acquire emotional stability and skills required to access better education and jobs. This should ultimately alleviate poverty and the temptation to turn to crime.

### **CITY'S HISTORY**

In 2003, Gonzales was a community in crisis, besieged with violence and undisciplined youth. There had been both willful neglect of the physical infrastructure of the community and a collapse of the village structure. The absence of leadership in the village opened a space into which gangs entered and flourished. The Catholic Church of St. Martin de Porres was located right in the heart of the densely populated Gonzales community.

The Church's response to address the crime, violence and social decay in the area, was to start an intervention strategy beginning a conversation with the leaders of the Gonzales community and then the entire village community. This dialogue focused on youth formation programmes as a response to the community crisis. It was an attempt to involve the whole village community in a strategy to face and reduce the high crime that was being experienced in the area.

### **CITY'S MISSION**

To intervene in troubled communities by forming partnerships among the community, Government and private sector. By building social capital (accumulations of human experience and knowledge) among the partners, the **CITY** initiative seeks to facilitate participation, youth formation and village revitalization. The stronger a community's social capital and civic engagement are, the greater its potential to grow and thrive. The desired outcome is safer neighborhoods, better educational opportunities, strengthening the lives of children and families in low-income neighborhoods.

**CITY** operates at two levels. Although it began in Gonzales, it is a national program that will intervene in several communities over the longer period. On the current Church level, it operates with a group of consultants who function as a Board which will be formalized shortly. On the Community level, the **CITY** initiative works with all the leaders of organizations in Gonzales. They participate in and help to shape *Pride in Gonzales*.

### **CITY'S VISION**

In essence, the genesis of the **CITY** initiative is a Participatory Governance Programme using the tools of urban planning and capacity building programs to foster a revitalized village where justice and peace can flourish. Capacity building or development is the

process by which individuals, organizations, institutions and societies develop abilities (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives.

The ultimate goal of capacity building is to create safe, productive and healthy communities where people can work, live, play and develop their potentials.

The objective of the PGP is to build capacity as it relates to the overall quality of life in the communities. Pride in Gonzales offers resources to residents of local communities to enable individuals to take an active role in their communities and contribute to the overall well-being of these communities. They also provide the basis and infrastructure for forming social networks that support strong communities and facilitate building relationships among people, adding value to community life.

The long-term goals are to empower people, build capacity of existing leaders and have them mentor the next generation of leaders, increase community participation, foster social cohesion, enhance cultural identity and strengthen institutional development. If community members have a sense of ownership in the decision-making processes and feel that resources have been distributed in an equitable and fair manner, the likelihood of success is vastly improved.

The following are the offerings of the **CITY** program: -

1. **SPORTS:** This started in 2004 with a revival of a football competition between groups in upper and lower Gonzales which had been dormant for four years. This was so successful that it led to the formation of a football club for the youth of the community in 2005 and recently to the launching of the Gonzales Sports and Cultural Club to provide formal sports programs for the community.

The Club has been registered with the Ministry of Sports and Community Development. Funding for this initiative has been requested of them for facilities, 4 coaches, cricket equipment and a dual purpose basketball court.

2. **YOUTH:** This encompasses the following: -
  1. An adolescent homework clinic which started in September 2004 and allows the students to do their home work in a controlled/supervised environment and in an atmosphere conducive to study. In September 2005, a Secondary Examination Assessment (SEA) preparation class was added to assist those children in Standards 4 and 5 preparing/writing the SEA examinations. This complements the homework clinic for pre-adolescents.

The pre-teens at Gonzales are under the supervision of a special education teacher trained in remedial intervention and the Montessori Method of teaching. These children are not at the academic level for their ages and remedial services are provided to them in order to raise the standard of their education.

These clinics offer an appropriate environment for learning, studying and completing homework assignments. This has resulted in improved study habits and has made a difference in school performance.

2. An after-school programme for secondary school children in the area of human/social development. This is conducted by a team from *Families in Action*. The programme started in 2003 and is geared towards making children from the inner city area better integrated adolescents with clearer goals for education, career and life. They are empowered to make conscious choices through values education, self-esteem/self-awareness, work and personal development training. These young children are supported in their school work and exposed to a variety of self development modules, drama and formation.

The ultimate objective of this programme is social transformation for inner city youth who are at risk.

3. **ARTS:** A photography club in conjunction with The TallMan Foundation.

TallMan/City's project is geared towards establishing a School for the Visual and Performing Arts in Gonzales. This effort began in 2004 with a Photography Workshop and currently offers video production and still photography. In 2006 two new workshops in dance and music have come on stream.

Recently, they were given the opportunity to merge with a similar programme for younger children, which takes place at the Holy Rosary compound and includes learning to play the steel pan, sign language, dance and self-defense.

4. **COMMUNICATIONS:** On 01/10/05, the community launched its newsletter, the *Gonzales Gazette*. This has been quite an achievement for the community and they are justifiably proud. The second issue has been completed and will be released shortly. Commitments for subscriptions from 10 interested parties of the community have been received so that it is expected that publication will be partially self-financing. The newsletter endeavors to keep the people of the Gonzales well informed of all activities taking place in their community particularly with respect to Pride in Gonzales.
5. **CAPACITY BUILDING:** Leadership is a critical element to create and maintain active citizen involvement and enhance the quality of life in the community. We have a full time social worker whose job is to build the capacity of the existing leaders of associations and groups of all kinds in the community, by working closely with them. Leaders need to continue to motivate others in the community to ensure the community's goals are achieved.
6. **COMPUTER & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:** In February 2004 an internet café was established and this provides an opportunity not only for the youth of the community but also the adults so that they can become computer literate. Basic, intermediate and advanced computer literacy classes are offered.

7. **SUBSISTENCE:** This entails building economic capacity of the community by helping residents to improve their skills to make them marketable. Our social worker oversees this initiative and is instrumental in implementing programs to develop and train them so that they can obtain jobs.
8. **GANG INTERVENTION:** We have been working with three gangs in the Rosary/Gonzales area - St. Barbs, Snake Valley and Mapp Lands helping them to move to legitimate business through mentoring, business direction/tutoring and access to a range of services, technical assistance, financial aid and other kinds of support..
9. **CRIME PREVENTION:** Several meetings have been held with the Ministry of National Security. Plans are in train to establish a police post and a mobile unit in the community. Following from this is a new strategy of community policing which will be a joint effort between the residents of the community and the police.
10. **INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS:** In May 2003 this started with an environmental project to clean up the Gonzales village. Since then we have been working with the planners and the City Council to address the issue of garbage collection/disposal including the sub-contracting of the litter carts to unemployed persons within the community. Other ongoing and future projects include the installation of stand pipes, the establishment of a Pan Theatre, a Community Center and recreation ground.
11. **CRISIS INTERVENTION:** Our Social Worker intervenes in terms of assessment of any form of crisis situation that develops particularly in families. She attends to walk-in or referred clients from the community, assesses the situation and then refers them to the relevant government or agency for appropriate assistance.

### **VILLAGE REVITALIZATION**

This dimension of the program has emerged as the deeper foundation to the adolescent formation programs. A revitalized village is the best tool of youth formation.

The entire village has been engaged in a series of meetings with our partners - the Port of Spain City Corporation and the Canadian Institute of Planners. The most urgent urban issues in the village have been identified and groups of citizens have been formed around each issue. These groups work with an urban planner to create an issue paper around each urban issue. The position and solution are brought back to the village for ratification. The adopted solution is then carried to the Municipal Body and then the Government agency. A triple sign off on each issue is obtained.

At the end, a **Local Area Plan** (LAP) is formulated that guides development for the community for the next 15 years - charting short, medium and long term goals.

### **VILLAGE REVITALIZATION PLAN**

The village revitalization plan is focused on eight key areas of concern that have been identified - crime, unemployment, disposal of garbage, rebuilding community facilities, roads and infrastructure, street lights, inadequate social activities and water.

The village revitalization plan is based on a 10-step programme: -

1. Find the leaders and engage them in a process of leadership formation
2. Identify the key concerns of the community
3. Have the leaders/community formulate a Vision/Mission Statement
4. Form working groups around the key concerns
5. Create an Asset Map of the community
6. Develop a Local Area Plan (LAP) using the asset map and key concerns
7. Obtain community approval for the LAP
8. Obtain Government approval for the LAP
9. Form implementation teams for the LAP
10. Evaluate success

### **SOURCES OF FUNDING**

CITY reports to and is accountable financially to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain.

CITY was originally funded by the Holy Rosary parish and the contributions of many private individuals both local and foreign, who wanted to be part of an intervention strategy.

The target population of these intervention programmes cannot afford to pay for these intervention programmes which are growing, ongoing and many of which require professional facilitators. Funding is therefore dependent on benefactors outside of the area, the business community and voluntary help.

Donations have been received from corporate citizens such as RBTT Bank Limited, Neal & Massy Holdings Limited, BG Trinidad and Tobago Limited, Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission, M. Hamel-Smith & Co. the Ministry of National Security, POS City Council/Government of T&T.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (identifying projects) (see report)**

## **E. 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 LINK Programme):

**a)** participated in a 2 day conference held at UWI on the theme: *Quality Enhancement in Education: Innovation and Chang*” - 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005

**b)** collaborated with The Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) to launch a week of activities from 24 June 2005 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 was 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 initiative was launched on Friday June 24<sup>th</sup> at Brian Lara Promenade, Port of Spain. Many interest groups from around the country – including NGOs, performing artistes, sports people, academics, business associations and individuals, journalists, youth, women, persons with disabilities, environmentalists and Community Based Organisations were involved. WINAD took the main lead in activities which included:

- i) A photo exhibition – using photos of people affected by violence in different parts of the world.
- ii) 'Walk-about' in selected communities.
- iii) Distribution of materials, discussions with citizens and so on e.g. at Trincity Mall, Tacarigua. The Mall provides indoor access to hundreds of citizens on any one day.
- iv) Participation in Labour Day activities in Fyzabad on Sunday 19 June 2005.

**c)** ran a week-end workshop for Catechists in Barbados in September.

**d)** participated in the Moral Theology workshop that was organised by the Archdiocese on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2005.

**e)** participated in discussions at the Crowne Plaza on 6 September on the new Civil Proceedings Rules which are now in effect.

**f)** delivered the keynote speech on 6 February at one of the Bramha Kumaris' Seminars on 'Women of Values' (Administration without tension) at their Centre on Sackville St., POS.

**g)** was represented at St Vincent de Paul Society's AGM on 17 September.

**h)** participated in the celebrations to mark the *UN's International Day of Peace* organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UN Information Centre for the Caribbean Area, and the Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD) – held at the Central Bank Auditorium, POS.

**i)** was represented at a lecture delivered at Queen's Hall by Guyanese-born Madame Justice Bernard, the sole female jurist on the panel of judges of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ); winner of numerous awards, including the CARICOM Triennial Award for Women (2005). The theme of the lecture was: 'Gender and the Law – Strategies to combat violence against women.'

**j)** participated in the 3 days of fasting and praying organised by Emmanuel Community in the Queen's Park Savannah. The theme of the event was 'Save our Families'. The aim was to raise awareness of the dangers of some of the proposals contained in the Draft Gender Policy and Action Plan which has since been withdrawn on the instruction of the Prime Minister.

**k)** CCSJ's Chair met with Mr Stephen Cadiz, Chair of the Keith Noel 136 Committee to discuss issues relating to the March that that Committee planned and which took place on 22 October 2005. CCSJ's Chair was able to share information relating to the National Day of Prayer that CCSJ's Committee – ACCV – had organised in 2004 with the Inter-Religious Organisation and with other organisations.

In spite of controversy surrounding the march organised by Mr Cadiz, citizens turned out in large numbers. CCSJ is of the view that such peaceful marches are useful in a democracy as they help to raise awareness of issues, provide a platform for people who feel frustrated about the state of affairs e.g. crime to come together in solidarity etc. The Chair focused on the March in one of her articles in the Guardian before the event.

**l)** participated in a Retreat (October 2005) for members of the Ministry of Education on *Advocacy and Leadership in the Education Sector's Response to HIV/AIDS*. CCSJ's Chair is one of 12 'Leaders' identified in TT by UNESCO/Education Development Centre (EDC) to work with the Education Sector on this issue.

Work will involve: encouraging schools to develop workplace policies that will seek to eradicate stigma and discrimination against persons infected and affected by the virus; creating a skills-based curriculum that addresses this issue; providing training sessions for staff, students and parents on this issue etc.

CCSJ's Chair has contributed to the development of a pack of material that will be used across the Caribbean to achieve the goals outlined in the pack. CCSJ is mentioned in the pack as one of the contributors to the formulation of the pack. A CD and an Advocacy Workbook entitled: 'Leading the Way in the Education Sector: Advocating for a comprehensive approach to HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean' are available from CCSJ or from the National Aids Co-ordinating Committee. The frameworks, examples, worksheets and the list of resources provided in the workbook are intended as guides to facilitate the design of an advocacy strategy.

It is worth noting that the minister of Education, Permanent Secretary, Heads of Departments, School Supervisors etc also attended the retreat.

**m)** participated in the *Caribbean Consultation on Strategy Development for Inter-Religious Dialogue and Cooperation* which was held at Cascadia Hotel on 28 and 29 November 2005. This event was organised by the World Conference of Religions for Peace and TT's IRO. A useful CD was circulated with the aim of supporting the work of faith-based groups. It is entitled: '*Combating Stigma and Discrimination: The Role of Religion in Building Inclusive Communities Responding to HIV & AIDS.*'

CCSJ's Chair presented a paper during one of the Sessions on the theme: *'Cooperation between women of faith and their role for advancing peace and development in the Caribbean'*. This speech is available for reference on CCSJ's Website.

**n)** participated in Living Water Community's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations at the Centre of Excellence on 20 November 2005.

**o)** marked Disability Awareness Week in a variety of ways e.g. Fr Jason Gordon was the Chief Celebrant at a Mass for the Disabled at Rosary RC Church where he is parish priest. CCSJ's Ask Why? TV programme on 22 November addressed issues relating to Disability and Social Justice. This programme was also aired on Gayelle, Channel 7. The Chair's column in the Guardian that week focused on 'Ministry to the Deaf'.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

As we stated in our last report, CCSJ is just one of many organizations in our Archdiocese. There is still a need for the Archdiocese to develop a framework that would facilitate communication/closer collaboration between the various groups that operate within the Archdiocese. This will help us to optimize the use of the Archdiocese's financial, human and material resources. It is hoped that in due course the Archdiocesan Administrative Council, established by His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert, will develop such a framework.

The work of the Commission is growing. Members of the Commission believe that CCSJ should be restructured to reflect this and to ensure that responsibility is distributed to appropriate individuals to reduce the workload of CCSJ's Chair. Members are of the view that in order to release the Chair to focus mainly on Policy issues relating to the Commission, it is necessary for a Secretariat to be established with an adequate number of staff e.g. Administrative Assistant, Researcher/Consultant with background in Theology, and Secretary. This is critical to provide the necessary support for the successor to the current Chair and to promote the development of the Commission's work.

The current Chair has undertaken a wide range of duties and has often had to work lengthy hours to address the work in hand. This should not be expected of any single person. If the Church is serious about social justice work in TT and wish individuals to present themselves to serve their Church, then it is essential that a proper structure is established to support such persons.

At the moment, there is only 1 member of staff working at the Justice Desk, that is, Kimberly Smith, CCSJ's Secretary. CCSJ also receives support from Mrs Rita Potts, Secretary to the Commission for Communications. However, now that Fr Cuthbert Alexander, Chair of this Commission has returned to TT and is based at the Cathedral, it is not clear how long the current arrangement will last.

In any case, from the list above it is clear that a variety of knowledge, skills and abilities are required to support the Commission if it is to continue to be effective and efficient.

During CCSJ's meeting in January 2006, His Grace invited members to submit to him their proposals for a new structure. At the end of the meeting Members who wished to join the group that undertook to develop the new structure, submitted their names to the Chair.

A group of 5 members met and agreed on a proposed new structure which was submitted to His Grace on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February. It is hoped that this will receive support.

CCSJ continues to adopt a multi-faceted approach to achieve our goals as no one strategy will work. And while we focus on local issues, we are also aware of the many injustices that take place around the world. We seek to draw attention to these and to suggest strategies for change e.g. in our articles, at Seminars etc.

Members of CCSJ must continue to raise their voices together with millions of others e.g. through international projects such as "Making Poverty History". Since our future is at stake, we must continue to raise our concerns about global warming, ecology justice, racism, pro-life issues, debt relief, global trade justice, human trafficking, conflict and wars in various parts of the world, justice for displaced persons, immigrants and asylum seekers, workers' rights and so on.

The social mission of the Church must involve each of us. Each of us must play our part to address the fundamental issues of our times - not only in Trinidad and Tobago, but worldwide. We must use the resources of our faith and every opportunity to shape a society/world in which right relationships exist – not only with each other, but also with all of creation. As Pope John Paul II said: *'It is indispensable that everyone involves himself or herself on behalf of justice, in respect for human rights, and in recognition of the duties that are implied.'*

The process of developing in the faithful a spirituality of justice takes time and we must never give up hope that this can be achieved. The challenge is to remain focused on our goals and to encourage the faithful to stand as models of social justice and to see themselves as change agents.

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.

## **G. APPENDICES**

- i Revised Resolutions of Second Session of Synod in 2005 relating to CCSJ's work.
- ii. List of Ask Why? TV programmes
- iii. Leaflet: CCSJ's Vision, Mission, Core Values, Members of the Commission, Members of Standing Committees, Resource Persons etc.
- iv. Programme: Women, Development & Peace Conference in Rome: Oct. 2005