



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Port of Spain



Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ)

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THE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (CCSJ)

6th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Thursday July 23, 2009

FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2008 – 31 DECEMBER 2008

AEC Secretariat, Gray Street, Port of Spain

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.

CCSJ's ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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A. CHAIR'S REPORT

The year under review (1 January 2008 – 31 December 2008) was challenging for a number of reasons. Fr. Michael Moses tendered his resignation as Episcopal Vicar, CCSJ, effective December 31, 2007. Following continued failing health Fr. Moses subsequently passed away on March 12, 2008. May he rest in peace.

Mr. Clive Belgrave assumed the position of Acting Chair, CCSJ, effective January 1, 2008. While Mr. Belgrave was out of the country for the period June 23 to July 31, 2008, Mrs Annette des Iles undertook the duties of Acting Chair.

Effective December 1, 2008, I, Leela Ramdeen, assumed duties as Chair of the CCSJ. Both Fr. Jason Gordon (now Msgr Jason Gordon) and I extended our gratitude to Mr. Belgrave for his leadership during the 11 months when he acted as Chair of the CCSJ and in particular for laying the foundation of the CCSJ's new organizational structure.

It must be noted that after the third sitting of Synod (Jan 2009), His Grace accepted the recommendation made at Synod that the Values and Virtues Formation Programme should continue and that CCSJ should take lead responsibility for this Programme as part of CCSJ's lead responsibility for Pastoral Priority 3: Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society. The CCSJ continues to work with the V&VFP Inter-Departmental Committee to ensure the effective implementation of the Programme.

At the end of December 2008, the CCSJ's Management Committee comprised: Leela Ramdeen, Chair; Clive Belgrave, Vice-Chair; Nadine Bushell, Secretary; Annette des Iles, Member; Sr Roberta O'Flaherty; and Eldon Warner, Member.

Mario Young, the CCSJ's Treasurer, resigned due to other commitments. By the end of December, 2008, plans were in train to identify a replacement to fill this position.

Jo Anne Lodge, the CCSJ's Project Manager, supported the work of the CCSJ throughout the year.

Both Mr Belgrave and I would like to thank all those who contributed to the CCSJ's work in 2008 and those who continue to support the Commission in all its initiatives as we pursue the vision and mission of the CCSJ which are as follows:

VISION

We envision a transformed national/world community where Justice, Peace and Love prevail, as divinely ordained by God, and which:

- ensures human rights, duties and human dignity
- celebrates diversity and promotes equality
- promotes the common good, respect for human life and ecology justice

MISSION

To be a fearless united voice challenging injustice, awakening social consciousness and fostering integral development. We strive to do this through:

- Social Justice Education and Advocacy
- Promoting people-centred development, and
- Working for the transformation of inequitable structures and systems.

Our AGM report covers the period 1 Jan 2008 – 31 Dec 2008. While we thank God for assisting the Commission and the Archdiocese in achieving all that we have accomplished during that time, we are mindful that the challenges we face in TT and in the world today are, in many respects, greater than those we faced during 2008. Truly, we live in challenging times.

But, as a Eucharistic people, as people of the Beatitudes, as the Body of Christ on Earth, we go forth daily assured that with God's Grace we will meet and overcome these challenges.

Our third sitting of Synod in January 2009 has given us a new impetus for action. CCSJ's work is underpinned by the Mission Statement of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain:

We are the People of God in Trinidad and Tobago, building the Civilization of Love - reconciliation with God, neighbour, creation and self - through:

- The New Evangelization
- Revitalizing Catholic Culture and Identity
- Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society.

As we move forward, taking a lead in the Archdiocese for Cluster 3's work to promote Pastoral Priority 3: *Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society*, we are mindful of our responsibility also to play our part in implementing the other 2 Pastoral Priorities outlined above. We are part of the whole.

Since Synod, members of CCSJ have been playing our part in helping Catholics to rediscover the vocation to be Catholic so that the practice of our faith and parish involvement will lead to a deeper discipleship and commitment to Church and to community. Mission is where people are e.g. in their parishes.

Pope John Paul II reminded us that: "The ecclesial community, ... finds its most immediate and visible expression in the parish... it is the church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters...the parish is not principally a structure, a territory, or a building but rather the family of God, a fellowship afire with a unifying spirit" (Christifideles Laici).

CCSJ's task is to nurture in the faithful a spirituality of justice so that each of us will contribute to the transformation of our world. As the US Bishops said in *Everyday Christianity: To hunger and thirst for justice* (1998): "Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities, but transforming them." If we allow Gospel values to infuse our lives we will transform society.

As we seek to live our mission, we will often be swimming against the tide of secularism, materialism, autonomous/unconstrained individualism, and moral relativism. We will be swimming against a tide that seeks to deny God's existence. There can be no integral human development without God. God is at the center of development.

Pope Benedict XVI has urged Catholics to do more to combat secularism and to build up Catholic values. In his latest encyclical: *Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth)*, the Holy Father says:

“Without God, development becomes negative, ‘dehumanized’ (10-12)...Secularism and fundamentalism exclude the possibility of fruitful dialogue” between reason and religious faith. A breach that "comes only at an enormous price to human development (53-56)...Reason without faith is doomed to flounder in an illusion of its own omnipotence. Faith without reason risks being cut off from everyday life (74)... God's love calls us to move beyond the limited and the ephemeral; it gives us the courage to continue seeking and working for the benefit of all.” (78)(Vatican Press Office – 7 July).

There is an urgent need for personal witness to make visible the presence of Catholics in society. Under our Constitution, the Humanist Society is free to promote its essay competition in TT (20 June – 20 August, 2009) entitled: *“Secularism is essential for Trinidad and Tobago to become a stable and progressive society.”* Humanists are critical of traditional religions and religious ideologies. This essay competition is one way of getting their message across. Are we getting our message across?

We Catholics are also empowered not only by our Constitution but by God, our Creator. The time has come for us to move out of our comfort zone and play a stronger role in being counter-cultural if we are to fulfill our mission to evangelize the culture in which we live. Fr Joe Harris’ words at Synod still ring in my ears. He listed numerous signs of moral decadence in our society and added:

“We have let the culture shape us instead of being the ones to shape the culture. There can be no doubt that we are in crisis, but crisis is always opportunity for creative ways of forging new realities...the new reality must be a Church which with humility and steadfastness is faithful to its mission of evangelizing both people and culture so that a new and morally revitalized Trinidad and Tobago comes into being.”

The most effective way in which we can be counter-cultural is to live our daily lives in our homes, in our workplaces, in our communities as true witnesses to Christ; to do as Fr Joe said at Synod and answer “the call to holiness which is part and parcel of our baptismal anointing to be priests, (live) lives worthy of being offered to God; to be prophets proclaiming the message by our very lives and calling others through our very lives, to the acceptance of the message; to be kings, ensuring the well-being of those who find themselves on the margins.”

It is time for us to re-discover our vocation to be Catholic. And remember that discipleship and social justice go hand in hand. Let us embrace our mission with renewed vigour to build God's Kingdom of justice, peace, love, truth and freedom.

Justice is at the heart of who we are and what we believe. Let us show that there is some authentic, visible and credible sign that Catholics are living and working for justice in TT and in the world.

As our CCSJ prayer says: "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."

Lord, send your Holy Spirit to fill us with wisdom and courage to continue our indefatigable struggle to realize our vision; to be a leaven in the mass.

B. TREASURER'S REPORT

The following statement, provided by Kenneth Cipriani, the CCSJ's Treasurer (appointed in February, 2009), outlines the financial position for the CCSJ for the year ended December 31, 2008.

Operations

Expenses of \$156K were incurred of which \$155K was funded directly by the Chancery.

Funds

The Operating Account improved from \$40K to \$58K largely from donations

The Money Market Account increased to \$195K from \$37K at the beginning of the period as a grant for the TTRF was received in the amount of \$149K and interest in the amount of \$8.5K was accrued.

In September 2008, an account was opened with Republic Bank with the intention that funding from the Chancery would be placed in this account. CCSJ would then be able to handle its routine expenses other than payroll.

CCSJ Income & Expenditure Statement for the Year ending December 31, 2008

Opening Balances

FCB Operating Account	40088.39	
FCB Money Market Account	36746.44	76834.83

Receipts

Sale Items	101Questions	1200.00	
	Compendium	1400.00	
	Take a bite	2420.00	
	Leaflets	135.00	5155.00
Donations			14000.00
TTRF funds			148741.00
Misc			300.00
Interest	Operating Account	723.46	
	Money Market Account	8532.12	9255.58
Funds from Chancery for new Bank Account			<u>500.00</u>
			254786.41

Expenses

Stipends	136600.00	
Stipends	1000.00	
Advertising	4880.00	
Internet services	480.00	
Printing & Supplies	5934.30	
Caterers	2000.00	
Computer	5600.00	
Hall Rental	300.00	
Funding from Chancery	<u>-155794.30</u>	
	<u>1000.00</u>	1000.00

Closing Balance

253786.41

FCB Operating Account		58176.85
FCB Money Market Account		194919.56

Republic Bank Limited

500.00

253596.41

Cash on Hand

190.00

253786.41

C. REPORT ON THE CCSJ'S WORK DURING 2008

1. Human Resources

As a result of the restructuring of the CCSJ agreed to in 2007, three new human resource positions - "Champions" - were identified for the reorganized structure: Champion – Sustainable Development and the Environment; Assistant to Champion – Sustainable Development and the Environment; Champion – National Issues: Education and Advocacy. Job specifications and draft Contracts of Employment were prepared for these posts. They were advertised and interviews were held in November 2007 but no appointments were made.

Following the resignation of Fr Michael Moses as Episcopal Vicar, CCSJ, in December 2007, there was a need for further discussions with Fr. Jason Gordon, the Vicar for Administration, regarding appointments to the above 3 new positions, particularly as no final budget had been agreed for CCSJ for 2008. Following these discussions a decision was made to fill only the established post of Social Justice Parish Link Co-ordinator - pending the appointment of a Vicar/Chair, CCSJ.

Mrs. Bernadette Gopaul-Ramkhalawan, was appointed CCSJ's Social Justice Parish Link Co-ordinator, effective March 1, 2008. Unfortunately, due to personal commitments she resigned from this post - effective September 30, 2008.

Ms. Roxanne Paul and Ms. Petal Joseph who had been interviewed in November 2007 for the post of Champion, Sustainable Development, were contacted regarding their interest in participating in the Parish Link Programme . Mrs. Josephine-Anne Lodge, CCSJ's Project Manager and Mr Clive Belgrave, CCSJ's Acting Chair, met with these candidates on September 16 and 30, 2008. The purpose of the meetings was to inform the potential candidates about the Parish Link Programme - its objectives and achievements to date, and to determine their interest in participating in the programme.

Ms. Paul and Ms. Joseph agreed to assist with the Parish Link Programme for the period October 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009, by which time, the third sitting of Synod (Jan. 2009) would have taken place and recommendations regarding the future mandate of the Commission would have been articulated.

The CCSJ wishes to record its thanks to Mrs. Bernadette Gopaul-Ramkhalawan, Ms. Paul and Ms. Joseph for their contribution to the CCSJ's work.

2. New South Office

During the first quarter of 2008, the CCSJ decided to pursue the establishment of an office in south Trinidad to facilitate a presence in the southern part of the Archdiocese and to improve the CCSJ's service to the Southern and Central Vicariates e.g. by making resource material available to members of Social Justice Teams in the southern and central areas of Trinidad.

In June 2008, Fr David Khan responded positively to a request by the CCSJ for space in his parish in La Romaine. He identified a room which the CCSJ could share with the Southern Vicariate representative of the Catholic Education Board of Management.

The CCSJ identified furniture and equipment to facilitate the establishment of a CCSJ office in South Trinidad.

However, when the CCSJ's Social Justice Parish Link Co-ordinator resigned in September, 2008, the Commission decided not to take advantage of Fr Khan's offer as there was no CCSJ member of staff who would be able to use the facility there. The CCSJ records its thanks to Fr Khan for his kind offer.

3. Synod 2009

The CCSJ was involved in preparations for the third sitting of Synod which was scheduled to take place on January 16-17 and 23-24, 2009. The CCSJ

- submitted its Synod Implementation Report to the Office of the Vicar for Administration on 13 June 2008;

- was involved in the production of a documentary which CAMSEL prepared for use at Synod. The documentary highlights the work of the various Commissions, Secretariats and Departments in the Archdiocese. Mr Clive Belgrave, Ms. Leela Ramdeen and Fr Robert Christo were interviewed by CAMSEL members. Excerpts from these interviews were used in the documentary.

Pre-Synod documents circulated within the Archdiocese highlighted the fact that three new Pastoral Priorities had been identified by the Archdiocese for discussion at Synod: “The New Evangelization”, “Catholic Culture & Identity” and “Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society”. These priorities emerged from reports arising from Parish and Vicariate Assemblies and from a meeting of the Clergy in May 2008.

Resolutions were drafted. These were discussed and fine-tuned at various Heads of Department Meetings following which the document “Journey to Synod” was produced in time for presentation at Synod 2009. The CCSJ was aware that any Synod resolutions agreed to by His Grace will have implications for the CCSJ’s work and will inform the CCSJ’s Business Plan and Budget for 2009.

The following representatives of the CCSJ were identified as attendees at Synod 2009 – Ms. Leela Ramdeen, CCSJ’s Chair, Mr. Clive Belgrave, CCSJ’s Vice Chair, Ms. Nadine Bushell, CCSJ’s Secretary, Sr. Roberta O’Flaherty and Mrs. Annette des Iles, Members of CCSJ.

4. National issues: Education and Advocacy

a) Food Security Initiative – Research and Publication

In February 2008, a food security initiative was identified that sought to address the important issue of rising food prices in Trinidad and Tobago at that time.

A team was convened comprising Ms. Wendy Lee Yuen, Agricultural Consultant; Mrs. Annette des Iles; and Ms. Marion Lewis, Economist to address this issue for the purpose of influencing national policy.

A paper, entitled: “*Comparison between changes in income and changes in food prices*”, was submitted by Ms. Lewis on December 16, 2008. It highlights the fact that over the past few years while food prices have increased significantly, incomes have remained relatively stable. This affects the poor more than any other group. 80% of the income of the poor is spent on food, compared to other groups. The CCSJ hopes to develop this project to encourage people to grow their own food. The Commission also hopes to act as advocates for the poor by arranging meetings with relevant authorities/agencies to highlight some of the issues raised in the report and to make recommendations for policy and programmes.

b) Claxton Bay Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

At the CCSJ’s National Issues Committee Meeting held on May 21, 2008, the team met with Mr. Gary Aboud of Fishermen and Friends of the Sea (FFS). Their concern centered around the reclamation of 600 acres of land in the Claxton Bay area for which an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) had been completed and for which public comments were requested by the Environmental Management Authority (EMA). FFS is dissatisfied with the Government’s response to the concerns of the citizens of Claxton Bay and requested the CCSJ’s assistance to strengthen submissions by the public to the EMA with respect to the EIA.

In response to this request, Prof. Julien Kenny prepared a technical response to the EIA document on behalf of the CCSJ. This was submitted prior to the public comment deadline and formed part of the material reviewed by the EMA before granting the certificate of clearance to the developer.

c) Children’s Package of Legislation

A Stakeholder Engagement Forum on the Children’s Package of Legislation was hosted by the Ministry of Social Development on June 18, 2008. Sr. Roberta O’Flaherty represented the CCSJ at the Forum. Information received informed the work of the National Issues Committee on this issue.

d) Women's Choice on Pregnancy Bill

The CCSJ continues to oppose the draft document prepared and circulated in 2004 by the organization: Advocates for Safe Parenthood: Improving Reproductive Equity (ASPIRE). This draft document with the misnomer: *Women's Choice on Pregnancy Bill* outlines ASPIRE's proposed changes to Trinidad's legislation on abortion. Since no MP or governmental ministry has accepted the document, it is not actually a legislative bill, but only a "wish list" of ASPIRE.

Inter alia, this draft document proposes that

- non-physicians will be able to perform abortions;
- abortions will be performed anywhere the abortionist sets up a clinic;
- a girl/woman would be able to obtain abortion on demand up to and including the 3rd trimester, without the patient being required to notify her husband or parents. The justification for such an extreme proposal is for the mental and physical health of the mother. Young women under 18 in T&T will be able to have abortions without informing their parents or guardians and without obtaining their consent.

Over the past few years, the CCSJ has issued statements opposing the recommendations made in that document.

At the December 2008 CCSJ Management Committee Meeting, the Chair reported that Trinidad and Tobago's Family Planning Association had retained the services of Attorney-at-Law, Douglas Mendes, Senior Counsel, and he has prepared a Legal Opinion on the laws governing abortion in Trinidad and Tobago. His opinion favours a pro-choice perspective but is yet to be tested in TT's Courts.

e) Archdiocesan National Day of Prayer

The CCSJ participated in preparations for the Archdiocesan National Day of Prayer which was observed on February 29, 2008.

f) Response to Questionnaire

On April 18, 2008, the CCSJ responded to a questionnaire from the Antilles Episcopal Conference's Justice and Peace Commission (JPC).

g) Laventille Devotions 2008

At the request of Fr Dwight Merrick, the CCSJ arranged for the following 6 speakers to make presentations on the themes outlined below at the 2008 Laventille Devotions at the National Marion Shrine RC Church:

- Ms. Annabelle Davis, Attorney-at-Law: Human Dignity and the Sanctity of Life.
- Justice Stanley John, Appeal Court Judge: Forgiveness and Restorative Justice.
- Mr. Gary Tagallie: Poverty and Social Exclusion.
- Ms. Andrea Alexander: Social Justice in our daily lives as Catholics.
- Sr Arlene Greenidge: Social Justice and Youth at Risk.
- Sr Mary Anthony: The Lady of the Rosary, social justice and prison ministry

The CCSJ received the scripts of 4 of the 6 presentations and obtained permission from the authors to publish these in a booklet for use as an educational resource in the Archdiocese.

h) Restorative Justice Seminar

Fr Robert Christo, Prison Chaplain, represented the CCSJ at a Seminar on Restorative Justice.

i) Meetings with Youth Secretariat

Ms. Petal Joseph represented the CCSJ at 2 meetings hosted by the Youth Secretariat in November 2008 to consider the Secretariat's Pastoral Plan, the Youth Ministry's Calendar of events for 2009 and a new protocol for planning and organizing events for Youth Ministry. This protocol was produced by the Office of the Vicar for Administration. These documents were circulated to members of the

CCSJ Management Committee for comments to be submitted to the Youth Secretariat before Synod 2009.

j) CCSJ partnering with CREDI and University of Dayton

In December 2008, Ms. Leela Ramdeen, Chair of CCSJ, attended a meeting with the Vicar for Administration, representatives of CREDI and the University of Dayton to explore the possibility of partnering with the latter 2 institutions to run online courses e.g. on social justice. The CCSJ will pursue this as such courses will empower the faithful in the Archdiocese as they seek to address social justice issues and to live lives that reflect Gospel values.

k) Theology of the Body Conference

Mr. Eldon Warner, Mr. Dennis Bryan and Mr. Anthony Hess Alexander represented the CCSJ at a Conference organized by the Family Life Commission on December 6 and 7, 2008 at the Chaguaramas Convention Centre. The Conference, entitled: “*Created and Redeemed*”, focused on the Theology of the Body. Mr. Christopher West was the feature speaker.

5. Ask Why TV Programme

The following Ask Why TV programmes were aired during 2008:

January	Overview of Social Justice – “Take a Bite” Series Pt I
February	Overview of Social Justice – “Take a Bite” Series Pt II
May	Food: Crisis or Challenge
June	Re-run of a previous programme
July	The Gift of Life, Pastoral Letter of the AEC
September	Re-run of a previous programme

October Promoting a Culture of Life

There were a number of re-runs of previous programmes during the latter part of 2008.

5. Sustainable Development and the Environment

a) Community Project

In addition to the Food Security Initiative outlined above, it was agreed that a concurrent project will be established in a selected community where individuals and groups will be introduced to practical solutions that could facilitate access to food at reasonable prices. A team was convened comprising Mr. Clive Belgrave, the CCSJ's Acting Chair; Mrs. Josephine Anne Lodge, the CCSJ's Project Manager; and Ms. Wendy Lee Yuen, Agricultural Consultant, whose role is to guide the project.

CCSJ identified the community of Cedros as a desirable area for adopting sustainable activities that will support the preservation of its community. This was mainly as an alternative to the proposed Aluminium Smelter project which the Government proposes to build in that area.

Fr. Wilfred John, Parish Priest of Cedros, agreed to this initiative. Some members of the community identified a few economic activities related to agriculture and they agreed to pursue these. One of the initiatives identified by these community members was the need for training in compost making since many persons in the community have small agricultural plots and community- produced compost would be beneficial to small farmers in their area.

This training was conducted at a workshop led by Ms. Wendy Lee Yuen, Agricultural Consultant, on September 11, 2008 at the Granville R.C. Church. Seventeen community members attended.

The Principal of Granville R.C. School attended part of the workshop. He is interested in implementing a compost-making project at the school and undertook to discuss his ideas with the Social Justice Parish representative for Cedros.

Leaflets entitled: “Tips on Compost Making” were prepared by Wendy Lee Yuen. These were copied and sent to Fr. Wilfred John during December 2008. The Social Justice Parish representative for Cedros distributed these to interested persons.

b) CCSJ Meeting with the La Brea Community

The CCSJ responded to a request by Mr. Elijah Gour, President of the La Brea Village Council, for a visit by the CCSJ to the La Brea community to determine how the Commission could assist their community.

A date was finalized with Sr. Paul, Parish Administrator, La Brea. The meeting was held on September 7, 2008, following the Sunday morning Mass. Five parishioners registered their interest in Parish Social Justice Ministry.

Community issues discussed/identified at the meeting were:

- Given the high prices of basic food items at that time, households should be encouraged and assisted in growing their own food using the grow-box method. Any surpluses that cannot be consumed by the household could be exchanged with members of the community or sold at the Farmers’ Market in Debe or Point Fortin.
- A water project should be defined and designed to assist with the supply of water for agriculture in the community. This is in addition to addressing a much larger need of a regular supply of water to the area, in particular in Sobo Village and Vessigny.
- Clarification was sought as to how the Anthony Pantin Re-integration Center would operate with respect to ex-offenders re-entering their community or the wider society.
- Some of the waste collected by CEPEP could be recycled.

- Members of the community need to be empowered through education and awareness raising programmes to enable them to speak out on social issues and to be assertive of their rights as individuals.
- There is concern that the current method used for the distribution of houses and housing grants by the National Housing Authority and the Ministry of Planning, Housing and The Environment is not equitable and fair. Many of those in need are unable to access housing through the lottery system currently used by Government agencies.
- Assistance required in identifying issues affecting youths in T&T.
- High prices of transportation.
- Clarification was sought on the CCSJ's current position on the establishment of Aluminium Smelter plants in T&T.
- There is need for a public forum for citizens to voice their concerns on issues that are affecting them negatively.

c) Training in Agriculture: Proposal

Representatives of the CCSJ met with Fr. Joseph Harris on April 29, 2008 to discuss collaboration on an idea he had for a food project. This involves the identification of a parcel of land on which training and a demonstration farm on integrated farming could be established. No further action has been taken by the CCSJ to promote this initiative due to other pressing priorities.

d) Food Distribution Project

On May 9 and 13, 2008, a proposal for a Food Distribution Project entitled "Diakonia" was submitted to CCSJ by Mr. Carl Arneaud for review and consideration for implementation in parishes in the Archdiocese. It was agreed that the project was a feasible option for Social Justice Teams in parishes, as it would provide an option to individuals with fixed incomes facing rising food prices.

A project outline was prepared and circulated for comment. The outline defined the project objectives, target groups for the project, the distribution method,

guiding principles, operating guidelines, roles of participants, sample sales agreement and sample parish project co-ordination agreement. This was finalized at a team meeting held on June 4, 2008. The CCSJ had hoped to implement this Project in certain parishes through the Parish Link network. However, without a Parish Link Coordinator, it was not possible to pursue this initiative. Support from the CCSJ was essential to facilitate the introduction of the project to parishes and to provide assistance during the implementation of the Project.

6. Parish Link Programme: Social Justice Parish Link Co-ordinator

The Social Justice Parish Link Co-ordinator, Mrs. Bernadette Gopaul-Ramkhalawan, was appointed effective March 1, 2008. Mr. Clive Belgrave, the CCSJ's Acting Chair circulated letters to Parish Priests and Parish Administrators to introduce her. She participated in an orientation meeting with Mrs. Josephine Anne Lodge, CCSJ's Project Manager and her line manager, on March 4, 2008. A meeting with Sr, Roberta O'Flaherty and members of the CCSJ's Education Committee was held on March 8, 2008 to share ideas on the status of the Social Justice Ministry in parishes. Issues relating to a training programme for parishes were also discussed at this meeting.

7. Parish Link Newsletter

Two issues of the Parish Link newsletter were produced: April 2008 and May/June 2008. With the departure of the Parish Link Co-ordinator, no further issues of the Newsletter was produced.

8. Housing Seminar – Chaguanas Parish

A Seminar was hosted by the Chaguanas Parish Social Justice Team on August 5, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. at the Max Murphy Centre, Chaguanas. Guest presenters were representatives of the Ministry of Planning, Housing & the Environment.

Approximately sixty persons attended and feedback was positive. Parishioners appreciated the opportunity to attend the Seminar and obtained a better understanding of the financial support available from Government for housing. Participants were also able to voice their dissatisfaction with the current lottery method used to allocate Government funded houses to citizens by the National Housing Authority.

9. CCSJ's Education Committee: Catholic Social Teaching Workshops

Responding to the call of Synod 2005 to revitalize CCSJ's Social Justice activities and to initiate/strengthen Social Justice Teams in all parishes, CCSJ's Education Committee invited all Catholics to participate in workshops at the Vicariate level. These were held over the period January 19 to March 1, 2008. The workshops offered an opportunity to:

- Create awareness of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Reflect on incidents of injustice.
- Encourage critical analysis and practical responses to injustices.

10. Education Materials

a) Brochures/Discussion Starters :

The CCSJ produced a series of 10 brochures which are intended to assist Parishes with on-going education of social justice issues that could be addressed in their communities. The brochures focus on the following topics: Social Justice, Crime from an Equality Perspective, Health, Consumer Rights, Education, Poverty, Disability, Pro Life and Prejudice.

The brochures are being distributed free of charge e.g. at the November 29, 2008 Follow up Workshops held in the Northern and Eastern Vicariates.

b) “Take a Bite” DVDs

The CCSJ continues to promote the use of the Take a Bite series which parishes can use to develop parishioners’ awareness of social justice issue. There are 5 DVDs in the pack which have been on sale at the CCSJ’s office at a cost of \$100 per set:

Fr. Jason Gordon: Overview of Social Justice

Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues: Global Solidarity

Sr Diane Jagdeo: Human Life and Dignity

Dr John Agard: Stewards of God’s Creation

Ms. Leela Ramdeen: Rights and Responsibilities

Some parishes have requested further copies of the DVDs and the CCSJ arranged for these copies to be made available. 500 blank DVDs were purchased. These will be used to make copies of the five DVDs in the “Take-a-Bite” set.

c) Mini Posters:

A series of mini posters was added to the stock of Education Materials that could be used by Parishes. These are pictorial representations of social justice issues. They convey messages of Catholic Social Teaching and may be used by Parishes for Social Justice notice board displays that serve to encourage greater

participation in the Ministry. The advantage of the Mini Posters is that the information on Catholic Social Teaching is presented in a simpler form for those not attracted by more complex material. Copies of the mini posters are available from the CCSJ's Education Committee.

d) General Education – Catholic News:

The CCSJ continues to publish weekly articles in the Catholic News to raise awareness of the Church's teachings as outlined in *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

Also, bite-sized teachings from Catholic Social Teaching continue to be offered through the inclusion of a weekly "Social Justice Quote for the Week" in the Catholic News. These articles and teachings are also posted on the CCSJ's Website.

11. Values and Virtues Formation Programme (V&VFP)

a) Post SEA 2nd Teacher Training Workshop

It is important to state the origins of this Programme. In January 2007 Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert CSsR asked all Diocesan Commissions/Departments and all involved in youth ministries in the Archdiocese to develop programmes to combat HIV/AIDS. Such programmes were also to be aimed at promoting dignity, self worth, abstinence and practical life skills.

The V&VFP is introduced to students in the Archdiocese's 120 Catholic Primary schools after they have completed the Secondary Entrance Assessment Examination (SEA).

The Programme is made up of various components:

- an Abstinence component which is adapted from the Governor of Louisiana's Abstinence Programme which itself is based on the Uganda model;
- a Health and Family Life component. This is based on the Ministry of Education's Health and Family Life Programme which was introduced as part of the curriculum by the Education Ministry;
- an academic cross-curricular component— English , Mathematics, sports, field trips, art and craft;
- a religious component in which students are taught life skills.

The Family Life Commission (FLC) initially had lead responsibility for the Programme. Fr Llanos (Msgr Llanos from 12 June 2009) set up an inter-Departmental Archdiocesan Committee to take this initiative forward.

However, when the FLC Project Manager of the Programme, Mrs. Timitra Davies-James, went on maternity leave in October 2007, the CCSJ was asked to plan and co-ordinate the Programme until the return of the Project Manager.

The first Teacher Training Workshop had been held over the period August 22 - 24, 2007, The 2nd Teacher Training Workshop for teachers of Post SEA students was held over the period January 2 - 4, 2008 at the Central Regional Sport Complex, Saith Park, Chaguanas.

Taking into account those who attended both workshops, the total number of Certified Teachers trained and the total number of Catholic primary schools with at least one (1) Certified Teacher were as follows:

**b) Values and Virtues Formation Programme: Teacher Training Workshops
– August 2007 & January 2008**

Vicariate	No. of Schools with at least one Certified Teacher	No. of Certified Teachers
Suburban	12	18
Eastern	9	14
Northern	11	11
Central	8	13
Southern	14	18
Total	54	74

The V&VFP Project Manager (FLC), took responsibility for the Programme once more on her return from maternity leave. Relevant information was passed to her at a meeting held on January 21, 2008, Inter alia, she was given a list of Catholic primary schools where there were no Teacher Certified to teach the Programme at that time. This information was intended to assist her in preparing for the third Teacher Training Workshop.

As part of the on-going promotion of the benefits of the Programme, an article was prepared by a group of teachers trained during the second teacher training workshop. The article was published in the Catholic News dated February 3, 2008.

Representatives of the CCSJ continued to participate in the V&VFP through attendance at the Inter-Departmental Committee meetings. The CCSJ also facilitated the publication of the V&VFP Students' Workbook and Teachers' Protocol Manual.

A V&VFP Review Meeting was held on June 10, 2008 at the Seminary, Mt. St. Benedict to discuss the progress of the programme and to identify improvements. A key suggestion made at the meeting by the CCSJ was that a root cause of the difficulties in rolling out the programme was due to insufficient lead-in times for

planning and executing activities. This could be addressed by hosting regular planning meetings between the V&VFP Project Manager (FLC) and relevant contributors to the programme.

The CCSJ's Project Manager was asked to co-ordinate the Teachers' Evaluation Meeting which was designed to obtain feedback from teachers to make further improvements for the next cycle of the programme. This was held on June 30, 2008 at the La Romaine Parish Hall. It was the first of two meetings facilitated by Mr. Selwyn Bhajan, Director of CREDI. Twenty-nine teachers were in attendance, mainly from Catholic primary schools in the Southern Vicariate. Feedback was useful and provided many suggestions that were incorporated to improve the Programme in the next cycle.

The CCSJ Project Manager met with the V&VFP Manager (FLC) on July 9, 2008 to provide feedback on the Teachers' Evaluation Meeting held on June 30, 2008.

At a meeting held on November 10, 2008, the Values and Virtues Programme was reviewed and a plan for its re-introduction in 2009 discussed. The CCSJ was represented by Mr. Clive Belgrave, CCSJ's Acting Chair. In rolling out its plans, the Family Life Commission will look to the CCSJ for similar support given in the 2007 to 2008 period.

12. Special Needs Co-ordinator

During February 2008, discussions were held with Sr. Christina Arajo and Mr. Mikkail Trestrail, co-authors of the Synod Resolution related to the appointment of a Special Needs Co-ordinator, (Synod 2005 Resolution #32). It was suggested that the CCSJ should seek to appoint a candidate trained in Social Work who has been exposed to a disability programme, similar to that offered by the UWI's Social Work Department. Following investigations, it was not possible to obtain a candidate on a voluntary basis. The UWI Social Disability Studies Unit and its resource network remain available to the CCSJ for advice and guidance on the programme.

13. 2007 Annual General Meeting

The 2007 AGM was held on August 23, 2008 at Archbishop's House. The Vicar General, Msgr. Christian Pereira represented His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert CSsR at the AGM and addressed those present. One minute silence was observed in memory of Fr Michael Moses, CCSJ's former Chair who had died in March, 2008.

14. Human Rights Day

Ms. Leela Ramdeen, CCSJ's Chair (from 1 December 2008), was interviewed on Gayelle the Channel (TV) "Cock-a-doodle-doo" morning programme on December 10, 2008, International Human Rights Day. Issues relating to human dignity and the sanctity of life were discussed.

15. Documentary on crime and violence

On 10 December, the CCSJ's Chair participated in the production of a documentary that was being made by the TT Regiment. She spoke about possible causes and solutions to crime and violence from a Catholic perspective.

16. Letter to Indian High Commissioner

As part of the CCSJ's efforts to practice the social justice principle of solidarity with the one human family, the CCSJ's Chair sent a letter dated December 15, 2008 to His Excellency, Mr. R.K. Chawla, Acting High Commissioner of India, to extend the CCSJ's condolences to those who lost loved ones in the Mumbai terrorist attack.

17. Media Release

The CCSJ continues to raise awareness of social justice issues by issuing media releases e.g. On December 16, 2008, the Chair of CCSJ issued a Media Statement for Christmas entitled “CCSJ make a plea for generosity this Christmas”. This appeared in the Trinidad Guardian dated December 16, 2008, page A4, as an article entitled “Catholic group calls for generosity”.

18. CCSJ’s Calendar for 2009

In December 2008 CCSJ produced a Calendar for 2009. Printed on the calendar were some key social justice themes. The calendar was widely distributed to raise awareness of social justice themes.

D. Resolutions to amend the CCSJ’s By Laws and Articles of Incorporation

At this AGM, 4 special resolutions will be circulated for discussion, amendment (if necessary) and approval.

3 of these resolutions relate to the CCSJ’s By Laws (s.5.2, s.6.1, s.12.1) and one relates to the CCSJ’s Articles of Incorporation (s.5 on Form 2).

E. Trinidad and Tobago Reintegration Foundation: Report for 2008

The CCSJ continues to support the work of the Trinidad and Tobago Reintegration Foundation. Although both the CCSJ and TTRF are Companies in their own right, the CCSJ owns the land on which the facility is being built and this Project was initiated by the CCSJ. The TTRF was established as a separate entity from the CCSJ to look after the work of the Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre (APRC). To ensure that the CCSJ maintains a lead on this Project, Mr. Eldon Warner, a member of the CCSJ's Management Committee, is the Chair of TTRF. Mr. Clive Belgrave, the CCSJ's Vice-Chair is a member of the TTRF's Board of Directors.

The Vision Statement of TTRF is:

To return to society productive and law-abiding citizens who are willing to serve their family, community and country.

TTRF's Mission Statement is:

Through mentoring, counselling, mediation, skills training and apprenticeship and job placement the APRC offers each client opportunities for spiritual, social and intellectual transformation.

The TTRF Board is responsible for the construction of the APRC. On completion of this the facility, the TTRF Board will seek to ensure that the Centre is developed, staffed and operated efficiently.

The Board is also responsible for the ‘Walk Tall’ Programme at Golden Grove Prison. Inter alia, this programme helps to prepare inmates for their release. The Programme was a CCSJ initiative – under the direction of Fr Matthew d’Hereaux who was Prison Chaplain until his departure for Rome to pursue further studies. Fr Robert Christo, a TTRF Board member undertook responsibility for this Programme on Fr Matthew’s departure.

Located on the site are ‘cottages’ – converted from 20-ft. and 40-ft. containers, an administration building, a Chapel and all-purpose area. During 2008, work continued to raise funds to complete the APRC. Certain remedial works were carried out on the site during the year e.g. infrastructure and drainage. Mr. Rawle Mitchell, Architect/Construction Engineer, who volunteered his services as Project Manager in 2007, is playing a major role in taking the Project forward. Plans are in train to raise further funds to complete the facility.