

CCSJ'S 7th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2009 – 31 DECEMBER 2009

Date: Wednesday 25 August, 2010

Time: 5:45 p.m.

**Venue: Archbishop's House,
27 Maraval Road, 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.

AGENDA:

5:45 p.m. Welcome and apologies for absence: Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ.

5:50 p.m. Opening Prayer and Address by Msgr Jason Gordon

6: 15 p.m. Minutes of CCSJ's AGM held on Sat 23rd July 2009 & Matters arising.

5:35 p.m. Report on the CCSJ's work in 2009: Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ.
Questions/Comments:

5:55 p.m. Treasurer's Report and Questions/comments.

6.40 p.m. Election of: a) Officers b) Auditor/Auditing Firm.

6.45 p.m. Vote of Thanks.

6:50 p.m. Closing Prayer

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WEDNESDAY 25 AUGUST 2010**

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CCSJ'S 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.

CORE VALUES

- We recognise our duties and obligations to the wider community.
- “To bring good news to the poor, liberty to captives, new sight to the blind, and to free the downtrodden” (Luke 14).
- Always respecting the dignity of the human person.
- We value the process of Reflection, Research and Action.

A. CHAIR'S REPORT

Are we a Eucharistic people living Eucharistic lives?

The year 2009 has seen a shift in CCSJ's work. However, in evaluating the Commission's work, it is clear that although we have been busy, and much has been accomplished, in terms of implementing aspects of Synod 2009 Resolutions that fall within our remit under Pastoral Priority 3: *Regenerating the moral and spiritual values of our society*, we seem to be a long way off from making a difference in parishes and from making any significant dent in building a just, inclusive society.

I ask myself, as Fr David Standley asked in the UK years ago: "As a Eucharistic people, do our celebrations of the Eucharist really manifest and connect our faith in Christ with our concern for truth and justice? Is our Eucharist an image of a community working for justice?...The Eucharist commits us to continuing his work, being his body, making our world a more just, more human society, healing wounds, building the kingdom... the Eucharist calls us not only to charity, but to justice...Do this in memory of me."

What are we Catholics doing in TT in memory of Christ? The Catholic Church teaches that the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man/woman, the human person in his or her integrity, and that respect for life cannot be detached from all other matters of social justice and human development.

There are many ways in which human life/human dignity is under attack in our society and in our world today e.g. crime and violence, unjust wars, abortion, the death penalty, euthanasia, torture, subhuman living conditions, incest, domestic violence, pornography, arbitrary imprisonment, slavery, prostitution, human trafficking, disgraceful working conditions, child labour, forced labour and forced migration and religious intolerance. (See *Gaudium et Spes*, #27). (NB: The theme chosen by Pope Benedict XVI for World Day of Peace 2011 is "Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace").

Added to these is the issue of a lack of respect for our environment. We have one home – planet Earth, which God has given to us as a gift. As Pope John Paul II said (24 July, 2007) "Our earth speaks to us, and we must listen if we want to survive".

Our AEC Bishops are aware of the issues that we need to address. In their 2008 Pastoral Letter: “We are called to proclaim, celebrate and serve the gift of life”, they said: “...today we face a profound crisis of culture in the Caribbean. The culture in which we all share (the violent criminal included) is marked by a general weakening of the sense both of God and of sin, the influence of moral relativism and confusion, and a growing secularization that reduces religious faith either to the private sphere of the individual, or to public displays of intense emotion, coupled with a weak moral understanding, and fuelled by a spirituality that promises material success.

“The Church is to announce with great vigour, by word and deed, that human life is sacred and inviolable. This proclamation demands the promotion and the renewal of a culture of life. All Catholics, including bishops, priests, religious, laity, theologians, catechists, parents and teachers have a role to play in promoting a culture of life.”

The Holy Spirit is calling all of us to be counter-cultural. This is essential if we are to resist the culture of death that threatens to overwhelm us.

The challenge for the Archdiocese

The challenge for us in this Archdiocese is to get people to reflect on who and where we are in God’s creation and to commit ourselves to become partners in the movement to transform ourselves and our communities in order to create a just, inclusive and sustainable society/world.

Our post-Synod efforts should be a time of renewal for our Church as we chart our course over the next few years. My concern is that not everyone is “on board”; not everyone has embraced or bought in to what those in the hierarchy of our Church in TT are seeking to achieve.

The Archdiocese’s website states that the new name for Church in TT post-Synod is “collaboration”. But there is a gap between theory and practice. The danger is that if key personnel in our TT Church fail to buy in to this movement for post-Synod transformation/the implementation of Synod 2009 Resolutions, then very little will, in fact, be transformed.

We have a shortage of priests and our priests are overworked. Parish Administrators continue to give of themselves freely. In all parishes/areas there is a number of Pastoral Ministries in train. However, is what is going on in our parishes in sync with the demands of post-Synod requirements?

And then there is the issue of the number of individuals vying for the attention/commitment of Parish Priests and parishioners to adopt their agenda. At a meeting of Heads of Departments at Fatima RC Church Hall some time ago, we engaged in an exercise to determine whether there were times in that year when there would be too many groups making demands on parishes. The exercise highlighted the fact that unless there is a coordinated approach, there will be “over-kill” at times and parishes will be overwhelmed by the demands being made on them.

Sadly, I believe that while there are many activities going on at different levels in the Archdiocese, they don’t all add up to the kind of coherent, coordinated, sustained plan that we need to drive us forward as an Archdiocese. And I say this as a member of SIT myself. Perhaps this is a good time for us to take stock of developments since Synod 2009.

We must all see ourselves as contributors to change – active, creative contributors. We must see ourselves as contributors not to 3 separate Pastoral Priorities in the Archdiocese, with different groups working in silos on different Synod Resolutions, but as contributors to building God’s Kingdom of justice, peace, truth, love and freedom.

The time has come for us to reflect on Msgr Jason Gordon words in his address to those gathered at Synod 2009 and to determine whether or not we are implementing our 3 Pastoral Priorities separately from each other. He said:

“As we begin this sitting of the Synod, we focus on three pastoral priorities. These three, together constitute one mission, the Mission of Christ and His Church in Trinidad and Tobago. While presented separately, they are inseparable; while we will attempt to draw clear lines of distinction, they cannot be conceived of in isolation. The New Evangelisation will force us to reconsider Catholic Culture and Identity, but it will also challenge our moral choices. Wherever we begin with the three priorities, we will be led back to the other two as indispensable. The blurring of the lines between them is unavoidable.”

We must get to a point where Parish Implementation Teams, and indeed, all Catholics, accept that the social doctrine of the Church/social justice is an integral part of what our mission is as Catholics. That's the challenge for us.

I recall the words of the Bishops at the Synod of Bishops in 1971: " "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appears to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel or, in other words, of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation". (Justice in the World - Synod of Bishops 1971).

This is what the New Evangelisation is all about. The words of Father Thomas Williams, LC are instructive:

"The objective of the Church's social doctrine is not only intellectual or cognitive, but also eminently practical and personal. It should change our lives and help us assume our own responsibilities vis-à-vis the common good, especially as far as those most in need are concerned...

"Catholic social teaching seriously confronts existing realities and structures, and challenges humankind to look for solutions to social, political and economic situations worthy of human dignity, thereby creating a healthy degree of tension between temporal realities as they stand and the Gospel's ideal."

CCSJ strives to be visible and present in our Church and in society, for example, promoting the sanctity of life and the dignity of each human person and building the common good through service provision (with paid and volunteer staff), empowerment, advocacy and education.

I would like to record my sincere thanks to all members of CCSJ, to volunteers working with CCSJ, and to those persons and organizations that have contributed to the Commission's achievements - all of whom, in spite of their other commitments, find time to journey with us in our important work.

Thanks also to Archbishop Gilbert for his leadership and guidance to all of us in the Archdiocese and to Msgr Jason Gordon, Vicar for Administration, for his leadership on SIT and for responding positively to CCSJ's needs in a timely manner.

B. TREASURER'S REPORT

The attached statement outlines the financial position for CCSJ for the year ended December 31, 2009.

CASH BALANCES INCREASED OVER THE PRECEDING PERIOD BY APPROXIMATELY \$24K.

Major factors accounting for this increase were as follows:-

Interest	\$ 9.3K
Sale Items & Donations	5.0K
Surplus in direct funds from Chancery (Rec'd \$46.7K/ Spent \$37.4K)	9.3K

Cash balances include an amount of \$147K held on behalf of the Trinidad & Tobago Reintegration Foundation. It should be noted that \$150,000 was released to the Foundation in January and February 2010.

Operations

Operating costs increased by \$196K due largely to the new Post-SEA Values and Virtues Formation Programme. Other contributing items were Salaries/Stipends and Stationery/Office Supplies.

Values & Virtues Formation Programme	\$ 108K
Salaries/Stipends	61K
Stationery/Office Supplies	12K

Respectfully submitted,

K.C.Cipriani, Treasurer

Catholic Commission for Social Justice

Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year ending December 31, 2009

Opening Balances

FCB Operating Account		58,176.85
FCB Money Market Account		194,919.56
Republic Bank limited		<u>500.00</u>
		253,596.41
Cash on Hand		<u>190.00</u>
		<u>253,786.41</u>

Receipts

Sale Items	101Questions	480.00	
	Compendium	1,820.00	
	Take a bite	500.00	
	Leaflets	0.00	2,800.00
Donations			2,200.00
Interest	Operating Account	697.98	
	Money Market Account	8,555.23	9,253.21
Reversal of Bank Charges			76.00
Amount Over Deposited			690.00
Direct Funding by Chancery			46,700.00
			<u>61,719.21</u>

Catholic Commission for Social Justice

Expenses

	CCSJ	Chancery	
Stipends/Salaries		198,677.52	198677.52
Advertising	2,986.40	2,512.00	5498.4
Post SEA Values/Virtues	22,850.00	85,709.51	108559.51
Stationery & Office Supplies	4,126.19	14,355.38	18481.57
Caterers	722.47	1,550.00	2272.47
Turtle Watch	896.00		896
Brian Clowes	350.00		350
Vault	949.99		949.99
AGM	750.00		750
Annual returns	460.00		460
Work Shop	1,120.00		1120
Diaries	1,756.91		1756.91
Web Site	436.90		436.9
Compendiums		2,600.00	2600
Travelling		5,226.28	5226.28
Miscellaneous		5,203.02	5203.02
	<u>37404.86</u>	<u>315833.71</u>	<u>353238.57</u>
Expenses paid by Chancery			<u>315833.71</u>
			<u>37404.86</u>

Closing Balance

278,100.76

FCB Operating Account	63428.07
FCB Money Market Account	203974.79
Republic Bank limited	<u>10495.14</u>
	277898.00
Cash on Hand	<u>202.76</u>
	<u>278100.76</u>

C. REPORT ON CCSJ'S WORK DURING 2009

1. SYNOD 2009:

It is important to place CCSJ's work within the context of Synod 2009. The focus of CCSJ's work changed dramatically following the third sitting of the Archdiocesan Synod which took place over 2 weekends: Friday, January 23 and Saturday, January 24 and Friday, January 30 and Saturday, January 31, 2009 at the Centre of Excellence, Macoya. Previous sittings of Synod were held in 2003 and 2005.

Archbishop Edward Gilbert C.Ss.R launched the third sitting of Synod at a 3:00 p.m. Mass on Sunday 18 January 2009 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Further details about Synod 2009 and implications for CCSJ's work are attached in **Appendix I**. CCSJ now has responsibility for Pastoral Priority 3 (PP3): Regenerating the moral and spiritual values of our society. The full list of the goal, resolutions and strategies for PP3 can be viewed in **Appendix II**.

2. CCSJ'S TEAM

Two new members joined CCSJ in January 2009, namely, Ken Cipriani (CCSJ's Treasurer) and Mike James, who is also the General Secretary of the Antilles Episcopal Conference of Bishops. Other members of CCSJ during 2009 were: Clive Belgrave (Vice Chair), Nadine Bushell (Corporate Secretary), Eldon Warner, Annette des Iles, Sr Roberta O'Flaherty, and Leela Ramdeen (Chair). Josephine Anne Lodge (Jo Anne) supported CCSJ's work as the Commission's Project Manager. Robert Persad was appointed CCSJ's Parish Link Coordinator in October 2009. If CCSJ is to equip the faithful to address social justice issues, it is essential that the Commission establishes outreach projects in parishes; plan education programmes in parishes; share good practice; empower and mobilise parishioners to walk with the 2 feet of justice – works of mercy and social action. The work of the Parish Link Coordinator is critical to the success of CCSJ's work.

3. SOME ASPECTS OF CCSJ'S WORK DURING 2009

CCSJ, like all other Departments in the Archdiocese, was asked by SIT to produce an action plan from Easter 2009 – 7 December 2009 – based on Synod Resolutions and strategies outlined in Pastoral Priority 3. This plan, under the headings: Priority, Action and Sub-tasks, Timeframe, can be viewed on CCSJ's website:

http://rcsocialjusticett.org/Documents/actionplan_eastertodec2009.pdf

On December 8 2009, all Departments, schools etc. were obliged to submit a Pastoral Plan to Archbishop Gilbert during a Mass at the Cathedral. This plan is also available on CCSJ's website and is based on Synod Resolutions and strategies under Pastoral Priority 3: Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society.

Key aspects of the above Plans were implemented and areas of activities covered are outlined below.

a. PARISH LINK PROGRAMME

Sr Roberta and Jo Anne had created Social Justice Parish Cluster Teams - involving individuals from various parishes across the Archdiocese, to facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas, information sharing and so on. Parish representatives on the Programme were encouraged to promote in their parishes the Home Grow Box Government Scheme as a useful way of combating high food prices.

A Parish-Link Newsletter was launched in 2008 to raise awareness of social justice issues and to promote networking among parish link representatives.

CCSJ intended to run workshops with these Parish Cluster Teams so that they could disseminate information in their respective parishes. However, with CCSJ's revised workload resulting from Synod 2009, and in the absence of a Parish Link Coordinator, these workshops were put 'on hold'.

As stated above, Robert Persad was appointed Parish Link Coordinator in October 2009. He commenced implementing a Plan of Action which the Chair had drawn up in conjunction with Jo Anne.

As Parish Link Coordinator, Robert's key tasks were to promote the Social Doctrine of the Church at parish level and to support CCSJ in its implementation of Synod resolutions.

During 2009 it was an uphill task trying to mobilize support at parish level for social justice work. It remains a fact that many of the faithful are prepared to get involved in various parish-based ministries, including those involved in charitable works – direct social services. However, many are reluctant, for whatever reasons, to address social action issues. This is a challenge which CCSJ continues to address, seeking new strategies to encourage the faithful to walk with the 2 feet of social action: works of mercy and works of social action – seeking systemic change. Working for justice involves changing systems, structures, institutions and public policies that are at the root cause of injustices such as poverty and social exclusion.

It is important to understand the interplay and differences between the two approaches. Social ministry, in the Catholic tradition, is a "both/and" proposition. While we meet immediate needs today, we work for long-term changes that will create a more just tomorrow – for all. As Pope Pius XI stated in *Divini Redemptoris* (1937):

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

Here in T&T we need to look at the social, political, and economic systems as a whole and press for systemic change. We need an holistic approach when dealing with ‘violence’. Violence takes its forms also in unjust and inequitable social and economic structures.

We need to address the structural violence of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion and to consider peaceful ways of effecting changes in society to promote social justice.

Each day we see a declining respect for human life in T&T. Human life is sacred. “The dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. People are more important than things. The test of every institution or policy in our nation must be whether it threatens or enhances human dignity and indeed human life itself.” (US Bishops).

We must have an holistic approach to development since authentic development must be full human development. We must raise our voices to heal our broken nation/world. We have the capacity to make a difference.

We must stand in solidarity with people everywhere, who are e.g. on low incomes or unemployed, disabled, ill or infirm, homeless or poorly housed, in prison or who are otherwise vulnerable, powerless and at a disadvantage. “Solidarity means the willingness to see others as another ‘self’ and so to regard injustice committed against another as no less serious than an injustice against one’s self.” (US Bishops)

b. NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER:

In January 2009, CCSJ was asked by Fr Jason Gordon (now Msgr Jason Gordon) to take the lead in organizing a National Day of Prayer which was scheduled to take place on Friday 13th March 2009 on the theme: “Regenerating the moral and spiritual values of our society”. CCSJ drew on the template that had been adopted for similar events over 2 previous years. CCSJ also established a Planning committee involving certain members of other Commissions/Departments who had been involved in planning similar events for 2007 and 2008.

The Prayer Supplement was published in Catholic News in time to support schools, families, individuals, groups and organizations who observed the day on Friday 13th March.

c. OBSERVING UN INTERNATIONAL DAYS

During 2009, CCSJ sought to observe a number of UN International Days as a way of raising public awareness of social justice issues e.g. Feb 20th 2009 marked the first ever *UN World Day of Social Justice*. CCSJ observed the day in a number of ways e.g.

- Midday Mass on Fri 20 Feb at Sacred Heart RC Church. The homily focused on the theme.
- the Chair’s articles in Catholic News also addressed the above theme and the theme on *UN World Environment Day* on 5 June: *Your Planet Needs You – UNite to Combat Climate Change*. These articles were uploaded on CCSJ’s website.

d. Values & Virtues Formation Programme in RC Primary (V&VFP)

CCSJ has lead responsibility for this programme which, in 2009, was in its 2nd year in RC Primary Schools. The programme is delivered to Post-SEA students. There

is a cross-Departmental Archdiocesan Committee that oversees the Programme. The Programme comprises 4 modules: Self Awareness, Relationships, Being Responsible, and Balance and Wholeness.

In order to localize the Students' Workbook that is used in the Programme, CCSJ established a Focus Group in 2009 comprising 5 persons: Principals, Teachers and a member of CEBM, to produce a 2nd Edition Students' Workbook that is more student -friendly and that reflects TT's culture. (NB: Archbishop Gilbert wrote a Foreword for the Workbook which was launched in March 2010)

Catholic Schools play a significant role in assisting parents in the education of their children and in faith formation. CCSJ believes that the V&VFP should be part of the work of the Catechetical team so that there will be a coherent approach to faith formation within our Primary Schools. CCSJ's Chair has discussed this issue with Sr Juliet Rajah, Acting Directress of Catechetics, Archbishop Gilbert and Msgr Jason Gordon.

It is agreed that the Programme will form part of the work of the Catechetical team but that CCSJ will maintain overall responsibility for the programme since it falls within Pastoral Priority 3.

CCSJ's Chair is awaiting the return from Sabbatical of Sr Columba Byrne, Directress of Catechetics in the Archdiocese, to discuss with her the timetable for handing over responsibility for planning and delivery of the Programme. It is envisaged that the Archdiocesan Committee will continue to sit to guide developments in relation to the programme.

It would be remiss of CCSJ to report on developments regarding this programme while ignoring the many deficiencies in our Catholic Education system in the Archdiocese. Suffice it to say that CCSJ hopes that in the not too distant future we will be able improve our ability to raise the standard of achievement in our Catholic schools, to build the moral character of our students, to create conditions in our schools that will enable students to realise their potential.

The Church is committed to what Pope Benedict XVI calls "integral human development" (the development of the whole person in all his/her dimensions and of every person). This is a social justice issue and we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that we continue to fail many children in our Catholic schools. In the context

of injustice and inequities, we must ask: “What are Catholic Schools for? Do we have a compelling picture of where teaching and learning in our schools/classrooms need to go? How advanced are our plans to put in place quality assurance systems in our schools that will facilitate monitoring and evaluation procedures to determine how well we are doing?”

At a Seminar at the Catholic Religious Education Development Institute (CREDI) on Sat 24 April, 2010, CCSJ’s Chair and Prof. Emeritus, John Spence, addressed the question: “Can the Catholic Church lead the way for reform of the education system?” (See CCSJ’s website for the presentation by CCSJ Chair: http://www.rcsocialjusticett.org/downloads/crediconf_240410.pdf)

Inter alia, she said: “There are about 119 Catholic Primary Schools and 21 Catholic Secondary Schools. With such large numbers of schools in TT run by the Church, it is fair to say that we should be leading the way to show the State what ‘good practice’ is all about. Yet, many of our own schools are failing many of their students.”

As the mission statement of St Joseph’s Primary School in Leicester, UK, states: “A Catholic School is not just an environment for providing a series of lessons. It operates out of an educational philosophy which aims to meet the needs of the young people of today, in the light of the Church’s faith in Jesus Christ and to prepare them for life as Catholics in the community”.

But our concern goes beyond our Catholic schools. CCSJ is also concerned that our Education System in TT generally needs to be reformed if we are to meet the needs of all our students.

e. CCSJ’s COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:

In his 2010 Message for World Communications Day, Pope Benedict XVI made it clear that “The development of the new technologies and the larger digital world represents a great resource for humanity as a whole and for every individual...” While we are all aware of the ways in which new technologies can be abused, the challenge for CCSJ is to use these to build the common good.

There is no doubt that the media/ new technologies offer us an opportunity to raise awareness of the social teaching of the church and the “Word”, promote advocacy/social action as well as social service, motivate others to take action to transform society/the world as we seek to build the civilization of love.

To promote the formation of the faithful, CCSJ uses the media/new technology which assist us in raising the faithful’s awareness of the teachings and the values of the Catholic Church, for example, through appearances by CCSJ members on radio and TV programmes and through CCSJ publications such as the Commission’s 9 leaflets focusing on various aspects of Social Justice and other publications listed below:

i. Monthly Ask Why TV Programme on Trinity Communications Network:

CCSJ’s monthly TV programme on TCN, entitled ASK WHY, continues to be a vital part of the Commission’s work. During 2009 the following programmes were aired. Videotapes of these programmes are taped and used as an educational tool. The list is also uploaded on CCSJ’s website:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 27 Jan 2009 | Mary King and Gary Tagallie (Leela Ramdeen – Presenter)
Fighting poverty to build peace |
| 10 Feb | His Grace and Fr. Jason Gordon (Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)
Moving forward after Synod. |
| 24 Mar | Deborah de Rosia/Fr. Joe Harris (Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)
Pope’s Lenten Message for 2009 |
| 21 Apr | Students from Holy Faith Convent (Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)
Going Green |
| 26 May | Fr Dwight Merrick, Mike James, Leela Ramdeen(Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)
The vocation to be Catholic |

- 23 Jun Msgr. Perreira and Fr Joe Harris (Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)
The Year of the Priests
- 28 Jul Teresa Best, Marie Gurley (Leela Ramdeen – Presenter)
Catholics using vacation constructively
- 22 September Sir Ellis Clarke, John Spence, Leela Ramdeen(Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)
Reflections on our journey as a Republic
- 27 October Beverly Beckles, Gail Oxley, Robert Persaud (Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)
Preparation for Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)
- 24 November Mary King, Leela Ramdeen (Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)
Partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future

ii. Media Releases: 2009: CCSJ seeks to speak out fearlessly on social justice issues. It must be noted that all Media Releases are approved by Archbishop Gilbert before they are circulated. To date, His Grace has supported the release of all our Media Releases – with minor amendments. During 2009 the following Media Releases were circulated:

Dec 10 – CCSJ message – Give from the heart this Christmas

Nov 30 – CCSJ on UN Human Rights Day – ‘Embrace diversity, end discrimination’

Nov 24 – CCSJ calls on citizens to combat violence against women

Nov 18 – Justice for people with HIV/AIDS

Nov 18 – Every child matters – Universal Children’s Day message

Nov 3 - CCSJ condemns torture of a minor in Guyana

Oct 16 – Protecting the rights of migrant workers

Jun 12 – Human Life International representative to visit Caribbean

Mar 3 – International Women’s Day: CCSJ calls for unity to end violence against women and girls

Feb 17 – CCSJ makes plea for modesty in dress and ‘good’ behaviour during Carnival

Feb 10 – Observance of World Day of the Sick

It is important to note that such releases lead to requests from the media – TV, radio and newspapers, for further information or requests for CCSJ’s Chair to appear on programmes or to be interviewed for the print media. The Commission sees this as part of its strategy to get the Church’s message across to the wider community.

iii. Use of Trinity Communications Network

TCN is to be commended for their continued support of CCSJ. Rhonda Maingot and her team are always ready to support us e.g. we are invited to participate in various TCN events such as their Annual Fundraising Telethon. We are also allocated air time to address a number of social justice issues such as

- Human Rights on Human Rights Day;
- Human Trafficking when there was a ‘scare’ in TT that a number of children were allegedly being trafficked in containers. (NB: International reports have highlighted the fact that Trinidad and Tobago needs to introduce legislation to deal specifically with this issue and to put systems in place to support victims of trafficking); and
- Climate change

iv. CCSJ’s Website (www.rcsocialjusticett.org)

CCSJ’s Website helps us to educate readers about Catholic Social Doctrine. We wish to record our thanks to Raymond Syms, CCSJ’s Webmaster, whose sterling support helps us to keep the site up to date. In such a competitive media environment, it is essential that our website is regularly updated. Weekly articles that appear in Catholic News are uploaded to provide

material for the formation of the faithful. Feedback received from visitors to the site is always positive. Raymond provides us with statistics highlighting the number of visitors to our website each month. Statistics for 2009 will be circulated at the AGM.

If we are to support Priests in addressing social justice issues in their homilies, they need access to well thought-out homilies that focus on these issues. CCSJ uploads Fr Joe Harris' weekly homilies on its website. Fr Joe is the Vicar for Priests and this is one way that he can support them in their ministry – by example.

v. Catholic News

On a weekly basis, CCSJ writes a column in Catholic News (CN) focusing on social justice issues. A separate “Social Justice Quote for the Week” also appears in CN weekly. CCSJ's Corporate Secretary and member, Nadine Bushell continued writing articles based on the Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church up to 25 October 2009 when the series ended. CCSJ records its sincere thanks to Nadine for her commitment to task in seeking to convey the key aspects of the Compendium to the faithful in laypersons' terms.

Since that series ended, CCSJ's Chair has taken responsibility for writing weekly articles on social justice issues for publication in CN. Readers are asked to submit feedback to the Commission.

CCSJ sought to use such feedback to assist the Commission in evaluating its work. However, individuals seem to prefer using the telephone or face-to-face contact to discuss issues arising from articles. Generally, such feedback is positive.

Interestingly, on a few occasions, some Catholics have challenged statements in some of the articles and have to be convinced that what they read is really the Church's teaching. What this highlights is the need for ongoing formation of the faithful, particularly on issues relating to the Church's social doctrine.

vi. Parish Link Newsletter

As stated earlier, the Parish Link Newsletter is a useful communication tool that not only raises the faithful's awareness of social justice issues, but also facilitates

networking across the Archdiocese. With Robert's appointment, work commenced on the production of an updated version of the Newsletter, offering reflections on Pope Benedict XVI's Encyclical, *Charity in Truth*. (NB: This was published in January 2010 and is available on CCSJ's website).

vii. Take-a-Bite Series: DVDs on social justice themes

CCSJ arranged for the 5 DVDs in the Take-a-Bite series to be copied and circulated in packs of 5 to parishes as an educational tool. The pack focuses on the following themes:

Overview of Social Justice: Fr Jason Gordon
Human Life and Dignity: Sr Diane Jagdeo
Stewards of God's Creation: Dr John Agard
Rights and Responsibilities: Leela Ramdeen
Global Solidarity: Fr Malcolm Rodrigues.

viii Booklet with Laventille Devotions Presentations

CCSJ's Chair wrote the Foreword to a booklet which was published in March 2009 containing the content of the following presentations made during Laventille Devotions in 2008 when CCSJ, under the Acting Chairmanship of Clive Belgrave, had taken responsibility for arranging speakers:

- Forgiveness and Restorative Justice: Justice Stanley John
- Poverty and Social Exclusion: Gary Tagallie
- Social Justice and Youth at Risk: Sr Arlene Greenidge & Ms Candice Khan
- Mary, the lady of the Rosary: Sr Mary Anthony.

The booklet, which was widely circulated e.g. to parishes and other Archdiocesan Departments, has been found to be very useful in raising awareness of social justice issues. CCSJ would like to record its thanks to those who made presentations during the 2008 Laventille Devotions.

ix. Personal contact with individuals/groups where necessary – by telephone, electronic media or in person. It is important that CCSJ is available to meet

with/speak to people to give advice and/or support, to act as advocates, or to empower individuals/groups to take action. For example, when CCSJ's Chair was invited to speak at St Theresa's RC Church in Rio Claro on the issue of Food Security, she welcomed the opportunity and her presentation was well received. The Good News Project, led by Maureen Arneaud, videotaped the presentation and it is used as an educational tool.

x. Working with/liaising with other partners within and outside Church circles: Communicating with/collaborating with others is critically important if CCSJ is to optimize opportunities to promote the social teaching of the Church and to transform unjust structures, policies and practices.

There needs to be stronger working links between the various Archdiocesan Departments and between Departments and parishes. The concern that Archbishop Gilbert has expressed in the past about groups working in 'silos' still exists. We fail to optimize the use of our human, financial and other resources by working in this way.

It should be noted that although CCSJ members sometimes attend events organized by certain organizations whose values are different from ours, we make our Catholic position on issues clear. We do not journey alone, and it is better to attend such events and to stand up for what we believe in, than to isolate ourselves. We stand a better chance of transforming the world by being "in" it. Of course, we are aware of the importance of praying for God's grace constantly lest we fall prey to values that are not in keeping with those that underpin our faith. CCSJ's work is grounded in prayer. However, we recognize the need for time to be allocated for retreats to facilitate the spiritual development of CCSJ's team.

CCSJ takes every opportunity to work /liaise with others. For example CCSJ:

- was represented at the **1st International Conference** on the theme: "**Life, Family, Development: the role of women in the promotion of human rights**". CCSJ's Chair attended the Conference in Rome from 20-21 March 2009. It was organized by The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, in collaboration with the World Women's Alliance for Life and Family (WWALF) and the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO).

Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, the then President of the Pontifical Council, said that “never so much as now has the hour come for women to respond fully to their vocation to witness love for life in every realm of society and in all parts of the world. At a time of profound transformations, women, illumined by the evangelical spirit, can do much to help humanity.”

Cardinal Martino noted at the end of the Conference that “Christian women must lead in the discovery and promotion of a new feminism that underlines God's plan for human persons... There will be no new feminism without God, especially if God is not discovered as Love.”

Pope Benedict XVI said in a message sent to participants that "because they have been gifted by the Creator with a unique 'capacity for the other,' women have a crucial part to play in the promotion of human rights, for without their voice the social fabric of society would be weakened."

APPENDIX III contains reports from Zenit and Catholic News Service about the Conference.

It should be noted that this is the 3rd such Conference that CCSJ's Chair has attended in Rome on behalf of the Commission/Archdiocese. All 3 were organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Such fora provide excellent opportunities for networking, sharing good practice and challenges, and keeping abreast of global issues.

- supported Emmanuel Community in their planned **March for Life** which took place on 29 March 2009. CCSJ's Chair wrote an article in Catholic News encouraging parishioners to join the march. Parish Link teams were also contacted and some participated in the event;

- worked with Brian Clowes, Human Life International (HLI) and planned a pro-life trip to facilitate his visit to various Caribbean islands (10 days: July 1 - 10, 2009). During his stay in TT CCSJ organized a number of events to allow him to share his expertise with Catholics and other faith communities;

- collaborated with other faith communities & with the then Minister of National Security, Hon. Martin Joseph, by participating in a Committee established by the Hon. Minister - entitled: *Faith-based organizations' response to crime*. Mr Gerard Granado, General Secretary of the Caribbean Conference of Churches was appointed as Chairman of this Ministerial Committee which was established in the latter part of 2009.

The aim was for the leaders of faith communities or their representatives to meet and make recommendations to the Hon. Minister for action to combat crime. Msgr Jason asked CCSJ's Chair to represent the Archdiocese. She attended a few meetings and made a number of suggestions. For a variety of reasons, attendance at these meetings was poor and the group ceased to meet;

- supported the work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul e.g. CCSJ's Chair delivered the feature address at SVP's AGM on 25 Sept 2009 (see Catholic News dated 27 September, 2009).
- supported the IRO on its National Day of Prayer & Thanksgiving on Sept 27 on the Theme: *United for a Greater Nation*. The Chair and Sr Roberta attended the event. Archbishop Gilbert was the keynote speaker at that event (see his presentation in his column in Catholic News 4 October 2009);
- collaborated with others regionally by participating in a Justice & Peace Seminar organized by the AEC Justice and Peace Commission and held at the Regional Seminary of St John Vianney and the Uganda Martyrs on 12 and 13 Sept 2009. CCSJ was asked to submit a paper on Climate Change to Bishop Lafont to be discussed at an AEC Bishops' Meeting in Grenada. CCSJ's paper was submitted to Deacon Mike James for onward transmission to Bishop Lafont and thereafter to the AEC Bishops. The Chair's article published in 20 September 2009 issue of Catholic News is attached at **APPENDIX IV.**
- used the opportunity to highlight Catholic Social Teaching as it relates to integral human development when CCSJ's Chair delivered the feature address at TTUTA's Conference in Tobago on Fri 9 October, 2009 on the theme: *30 years united: Resolute, growing, managing diversity*. (See

presentation on CCSJ's website:

http://www.rcsocialjusticett.org/downloads/ttutaconvtbgo_091009.pdf)

- participated in the 5th *Summit of the Americas* (17-19 April 2009). CCSJ was a member of the Civil Society Forum that was established, inter alia, to prepare papers/list issues that were eventually raised with the Leaders of the 34 OAS who met in TT in April. The theme of the Summit was: *Securing Our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability*.
- worked with the Sub-Regional Coalition, the Network of Faith-Based Organisations and the Inter-Religious Organisation in preparation for the *Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting* which was held in TT from 27-29 November 2009 on the theme: 'Partnering for a more equitable and sustainable future'.

CHOGM is “the highest consultative and policy-making mechanism of the Commonwealth...It is convened every two years to review political and economic developments that impact on the organisation and to conduct a strategic overview of the Commonwealth's work in support of the interests of member countries and in a global perspective.”

(<http://www.news.gov.tt/index.php?news=792>).

According to this website, CHOGM 2009 was “about partnership, global engagement and coherence, lifting the intrinsic strength of the Commonwealth to a new level.” The theme sought “to underscore the importance of multilateral approaches to resolving global challenges. Its underlying message (was) that only through genuine partnership can the world achieve sustainable and equitable human development.”

CCSJ took the opportunity at both events to address social justice issues as they relate to TT, the region and the world at large. CCSJ also set up a booth in the People's Space during the Summit to promote its work and to raise the awareness of visitors to the booth about social justice issues.

It is interesting to note that both these events took place in a year that saw unprecedented human suffering due to the global financial crisis, yet, many

believe that opportunities were lost for genuine partnership between nations to address this and other crises such as climate change and drug trafficking.

Yet Civil Society continues to hope that those Leaders who gathered in TT for both events would commit to implement more of the recommendations that they had committed to in the past, and embrace at least some of the new recommendations made at these 2009 meetings.

Many are cynical and see such meetings as “talk shops” while the “real” decisions are made by those nations that hold power. An article entitled: *The world's 'G' order - G5, G8, G14, G20*, published in The Economic Times ([Link](#)) on July 10, 2009, makes interesting reading. Inter alia, it states:

“It can be termed as the new 'G' order of the world where the presence of various nations spells out their international political and economic status... G7, the group of the world's most wealthy and industrialized countries founded in 1975, is now better known as G8 after it included the Russian Federation a few years ago.

“G8's membership comprises the main industrialised countries (United States, Japan, Germany, France, UK, Canada, Italy and Russia). It is not an international organisation, nor does it have an administrative staff with a permanent secretariat. It is a process that culminates in an annual summit at which the heads of state and government of the member countries hold talks with a view to finding solutions to the main world issues...G5 is the grouping of emerging economies comprising Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa.”

And then there are the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) – another economic grouping that is taking on great significance. It held its second summit this year. (See Konstantin Rozhnov's BBC report: *Bric countries try to shift global balance of power* – 15 April 2010 at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8620178.stm>)

And in the meantime, many developing countries continue to be crippled by debt. Enormous debt repayment, for example, to the World Bank and the IMF is seen by justice advocates as a new form of colonialism.

As Anup Shah said (see link below): “millions face poorer and poorer living standards as precious resources are diverted to debt repayment... the poor are subsidizing the rich... Total debt continues to rise, despite ever-increasing payments, while aid is falling. For example:

- The developing world now spends \$13 on debt repayment for every \$1 it receives in grants.
- For the poorest countries (approximately 60), \$550 billion has been paid in both principal and interest over the last three decades, on \$540bn of loans, and yet there is still a \$523 billion dollar debt burden.

“Debt kills. Some 11 million children die each year around the world, due to conditions of poverty and debt. Various G8 Summits have seen promises of billions in debt-write off, but almost hardly are carried out, or contain a lot of spin. For example, a lot of debt relief promised may include moneys previously announced for such purposes, thus creating an impression of enormous write-offs. Bilateral debt relief also does not typically release actual money to be used for other purposes. Multilateral debt relief, however, could.”<http://www.globalissues.org/issue/28/third-world-debt-undermines-development> .

Repayment of huge sums of money is an obstacle to development in those countries that have this millstone around their necks. For example, it impacts adversely on poverty alleviation, infrastructure, education, health care, and transportation.

As is stated on the World Development Forum (see link below): “The effects of debt burden on Third World development is so grave that debt is now considered a silent war. A different kind of war, but nevertheless one that produces the same results as the conventional war – miseries, pains, destruction of human lives and resources. To many observers, debt is a new form of colonialism; a different kind of North-South relations. A relation in which Western creditors, IFIs and other lenders hold the poor countries in perpetual state of domination and control. A war in which instead of bombing bridges, infrastructures etc. with military hardware, communities, households and peoples’ lives are being systematically destroyed using debt as a principal weapon.”
http://www.derby.ac.uk/gees/jollyfranc/third_world_debt.htm .

CCSJ's social justice work must include a concern for the dignity of all God's children. As Martin Luther King Jr. said: "Injustice anywhere affects justice everywhere." We are all diminished by injustice and must never cease from doing that which we know we must do – see Luke 4:18-19:

"The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour"

f. TRAINING PROGRAMMES

In 1971 the Synod of Bishops stated in "Justice in the World" that "*action for justice is a requirement of our faith*" and that "*action for justice must happen in the parish at all its levels.*" (#6,#72).

Sadly, because the social teaching of the Church remains the Church's best kept secret, many of the faithful are not aware of the richness of this 'secret' and of the many ways in which they can act for justice. Therefore, education and training programmes are built into CCSJ's work to empower the faithful to See, Judge, and Act – seeing each experience through the lens of the Gospel/social teaching of the Church, engaging in social analysis and theological reflections and moving to act – as part of a cyclical process.

i. Training for the Diaconate: A key training programme in which CCSJ was involved during 2009 was the training for **applicants for the Diaconate**. In response to His Grace's request, CCSJ conducted training sessions on the Social Justice component of the Training Programme for the 26 applicants to the Diaconate - via monthly workshops – once per month on a Saturday from February 2009 – July 2009 from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

ii. Social Justice online course: In order to promote integral human development and to develop a spirituality of justice among the faithful, CCSJ has partnered with the Catholic Religious Education Development Institute (CREDI) and the University of Dayton, USA, to run an online course on Social Justice.

APPENDIX V contains an article which was written by CCSJ's Chair and CREDI and which appears on the website of the University of Dayton: Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation
<http://vlc.udayton.edu/news/article.php?article=10130> :

Sadly, for a variety of reasons, some of the students who started the course were unable to continue. All participants are working full-time and some have found it difficult to continue on the course as the work became more and more demanding. (Twenty persons had enrolled for Module 1 in 2009. As at August 2010 there are only 11 persons on the course. However, it must be stated that those who have stayed the course are finding it challenging and informative. CCSJ hopes to draw on their expertise when running training courses in the Archdiocese).

Participants are expected to use the knowledge gained in their homes, parishes, communities and workplaces. CCSJ keeps a data base so that the Commission can draw on the expertise of our brothers and sisters on this course in the future.

iii. Workshop on Pope's 3rd Encyclical: CCSJ held a workshop on Sat 30 October 2009 at Living Water Community to discuss Pope Benedict XVI's third Encyclical, Charity in Truth. Archbishop Gilbert opened the Workshop and Msgr Jason Gordon and CCSJ's Chair presented papers on some of the key issues arising from the Holy Father's Encyclical. Sadly, attendance at the Workshop was not good. It is hoped that when CCSJ establishes and mobilises Social Justice Teams in parishes, attendance at such events will improve.

iv. Other training material: CCSJ's pack of leaflets on various social justice issues, the TAKE-A-BITE Series of DVDs and the DVDs of CCSJ's Ask Why TV monthly Programmes are just some of the tools used as part of the Commission's training programme to raise the faithfuls' awareness of social justice issues.

CCSJ also produces material that promotes a social justice/Catholic message e.g.

- CCSJ's **Christmas Calendar** in 2009 focused on the theme: "**The year for Priests**". Pope Benedict XVI had decreed a Year for from Friday 19 June

2009 (Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the death of St Jean Vianney (the Curé of Ars and patron of parish priests). CCSJ saw the calendar as a useful tool for raising awareness of the need to support priests; to pray for them and for vocations to the priesthood. The Calendar was widely circulated across the Archdiocese;

- Bumper stickers were produced and distributed in May 2009 with the wording: “Catholic and committed” – to link to the Archdiocese’s theme: *Vocation to be Catholic*.
- A DVD was also produced and distributed to parishes on the theme: *Vocation to be Catholic – from a Social Justice perspective*.

g. **Promoting responsibility as Stewards of God’s Creation.** CCSJ’s work in this area includes the following:

i. **Draft framework towards an Archdiocesan Environmental Policy:**
The Archdiocese’s Mission Statement and Synod Resolutions, particularly Resolutions 3a and Res. 6, include a concern to reconcile ourselves with creation.

Resolution #6 states: “Be it resolved that in keeping with the Catholic position on Creation, our families, schools and parishes recognize our responsibility as stewards of Creation and express this in relevant tangible ways.”

Res: 6:1 states: “The Archdiocese to formulate a policy and guidelines on environmental awareness.”

In October CCSJ circulated to key stakeholders an initial draft document on the environment – prepared on behalf of CCSJ by Marion Lewis. CCSJ would like to thank Ms. Lewis for her contribution to this initial Draft.

Comments on the document were solicited from a number of key environmentalists some of whom responded. (Work on this document was carried over into 2010 when CCSJ’s Chair prepared a document which was launched in February 2010 by Archbishop Gilbert).

ii. Linked to CCSJ’s concern to implement the above Resolutions and to promote environmental justice/the integrity of God’s Creation, CCSJ

liaised with Nature Seekers and the Forestry Division and arranged two trips on May 23 and 30 for 150 persons to watch leatherback turtles lay their eggs on Matura Beach.

Hundreds of persons had applied to go on CCSJ's Turtle Watching trip. However, CCSJ was only able to obtain 150 permits from the Forestry Division. Parishes were encouraged to organise their own trips to Matura or Grande Riviere between May and August – the period during which leatherback turtles come to our shores to nest and lay their eggs. Some parishes organised trips and included special trips for Confirmation classes.

- iii. CCSJ wrote an article to mark World Environment Day on Friday, June 5 2009 on the theme: *Your Planet Needs You – UNite to Combat Climate Change*. (See Catholic News dated 7 June 2009). The article reminded readers that CCSJ had circulated to all parishes a poster (to be displayed) inviting Catholics to work to protect the integrity of God's Creation. The poster included key quotations about this issue - from a Catholic perspective, and the St Francis Pledge which the faithful were urged to make. Readers were encouraged to show respect for our Creator by caring for the earth and promoting ecological justice.

The article also included a link to the International Augustinian Secretariat for Justice and Peace in Rome. This organisation has produced two prayer services for use in communities, parishes and schools and has granted permission for the material to be downloaded and used/adapted to local situations once their authorship is credited. See:

<http://www.midwestaugustinians.org/justpaxworldenviropray.html>

In his 1990 World Day of Peace Message, Pope John Paul II had said: "The ecological crisis is a moral problem...Modern society will find no solution to the ecological problem unless it takes a serious look at its lifestyle."

Inter alia, CCSJ seeks to raise awareness of the adverse effects of our attitudes and lifestyles on the environment and encourages the faithful

to become champions for change and active agents for sustainable development.

- iv. As part of CCSJ's efforts to promote the Church as a 'green' Church, CCSJ continues to encourage the faithful to join organisations such as Nature Seekers in beach clean-ups – through adverts in Catholic News and communication with parish link teams.

D. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO REINTEGRATION FOUNDATION/ANTHONY PANTIN REINTEGRATION CENTRE

Although TTRF/APRC is a limited liability Company in its own right and has its own Board of Directors, CCSJ's work is inextricably linked to that of TTRF/APRC. Initially this was a CCSJ initiative and the land that is being used to establish the facility is owned by CCSJ. CCSJ continues to play a major role in seeking to complete the facility. The following is a report from the Chair of TTRF, Mr Clive Belgrave, who is also CCSJ's Vice-Chair:

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO REINTEGRATION FOUNDATION

REVIEW

The construction and operation of the Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre have continued to be plagued by difficulties both financial and administrative.

Construction of the facility had to be halted in June 2009 due to the unavailability of funding and the inability of the selected contractor to meet agreed deadlines. In the wake of this situation and the absence of security personnel, the site was vandalized by intruders with substantial loss of materials. The Board has since agreed to proceed with construction on a phased basis and has secured the pro bono services of a Quality Surveyor, Mr Francis Ellis, and an Architect, Mr Raul Poon Kong to assist in this process. A fund raising drive was undertaken and this has succeeded in securing some \$250,000 to enable construction to recommence.

The Board advertised the position of Walk Tall Director and, on the basis of interviews conducted with candidates, selected Mr David Henri to fill the position on a probationary basis. Mr Henri's employment was subsequently terminated in December 2009 after a review of his performance. With regard to the Walk Tall Programme at Golden Grove, the prison authorities have introduced a new programme for prisoners into which Walk Tall has been incorporated. The weekly visits to the prison continue together with ministry to released prisoners. Currently eight (8) ex-prisoners are being assisted to reintegrate into the community and all are employed.

In December 2009, the President of the Board, Mr Eldon Warner, tendered his resignation and Mr Clive Belgrave was elected to complete the term of office.

OUTLOOK

With respect to construction, two new contractors have been identified and quotations submitted for the first phase of the facility have been received and are currently being evaluated. It is anticipated that construction will resume in September 2010. The funding held by the Board, together with funds agreed for the project by the Self Help Programme, will enable this phase to be completed. Construction is expected to take ten (10) weeks.

With respect to operations, a possible candidate for managing the Centre has been identified and is in the process of being interviewed. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul has also signified its willingness to participate in the operation of the facility and to minister to the ex-prisoners selected for rehabilitation. Operational funding is expected to be sourced through United Way Trinidad and Tobago (this has been agreed in principle by UWTT), BPTT and the Ministry of Social Development which has assisted in the construction phase. The new Ministry of Justice has also indicated an interest in the project and discussions with this Ministry are being pursued.

17 August 2010

APPENDIX I

Information about Synod 2009:

About 785 delegates attended Synod 2009 - drawn from the Archdiocese's 61 Parishes, Priests, Religious Orders, Public Associations of Christ's Faithful, Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, Commissions, Councils and Secretariats. A number of overseas visitors also attended e.g. from St Lucia, Suriname and Guyana. It is to be noted that the Synod was televised via TCN. Clive, Sr Roberta, Nadine, Eldon and Leela attended Synod 2009.

CCSJ's report of its work from the date it was established in 2003 to Synod 2009 is included in a full colour Synod brochure entitled *Synod Journey – The Commissions' Report 2003-2008*. "This document reports on the successes of the various mandates from the two previous Synods." (See report on: <http://www.rcpos.org/v2.0/synod-pre.htm>)

CCSJ also participated in the production of a 20-minute CAMSEL (Catholic Media Services Ltd) documentary on the achievements of the various commissions since their inception, in 2003. This was shown on the opening day of Synod 2009.

Msgr Allan Ventour, who led the Synod Team in preparations for the 3rd sitting of Synod, had worked with his team to refine the many resolutions and strategies arising from months of meetings with synod delegates, priests, parish administrators and other parish personnel in Parishes and Vicariates.

These resolutions and strategies were considered by Synod delegates along with the following Mission Statement which was adopted for 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.

Synod delegates voted on these resolutions which were grouped under 4 headings: New Evangelisation, Revitalising Catholic Culture and Identity, Regenerating the moral and spiritual values of our society, and Implementation Resolutions.

On 12 February, 2009, Archbishop Gilbert, on the basis of the authority granted to him by Canon #466 of the Code of Canon Law, approved the Goals, Resolutions and Implementation Resolutions (along with an addition and clarifying comment to Resolution 5 under Implementation Resolutions). These will help the Archdiocese to chart a course over the next 5 years and beyond.

Archbishop Gilbert authorised the publication of the Goals, Resolutions and Implementation Resolutions as amended. These were published in an official document entitled: *The third sitting of the Synod of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain: One Faith, Diverse People, One Journey*.

PASTORAL PRIORITIES FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE

Following Synod 2009, the efforts of everyone in the Archdiocese are focused on implementing Synod Resolutions in order to achieve our mission. Most of the Archdiocese's work centres around 3 Pastoral Priorities (PP):

PP1: *The New Evangelisation*, deals with evangelisation, family life, youth and Catholic education. Msgr Robert Llanos has lead responsibility for the Cluster that leads the Archdiocese in the implementation of this PP;

PP2: *Revitalising Catholic Culture and Identity*, deals with catechetics, liturgy and stewardship. Sr Juliet Rajah has lead responsibility for the Cluster that leads the Archdiocese in the implementation of this PP; and

PP3: *Regenerating the moral and spiritual values of our society* deals with issues of social justice and communications. CCSJ's Chair, Leela Ramdeen, has lead responsibility for the Cluster that leads the Archdiocese in the implementation of this PP. Cluster 3 includes: CCSJ, CEBM, and CAMSEL.

We, the People of God in Trinidad and Tobago, will seek to achieve our mission of building the civilisation of love through these three pastoral priorities.

It is from this Synod process that CCSJ has been given its mandate post-Synod 2009.

PP3 includes the following Goals and Resolutions. Each Resolution is accompanied by a number of strategies. The Goals are outlined below. The full list of the goal, resolutions and strategies for PP3 can be viewed in [Appendix II](#). It should be noted that while it is compulsory for Synod Resolutions to be implemented, the strategies outlined in Appendix 1, and which emanated from Synod 2009, are a guide to support the implementation of Synod Resolutions. As far as possible, CCSJ seeks to adopt these strategies. Since they cannot all be addressed at the same time, they are being dealt with on a phased basis.

The Archdiocese's website: <http://www.rcpos.org/v2.0/synod-impl.htm> lists the process since Synod 2009:

“In this first year of implementation – Easter 2009 to December 2009 - the parish work plan is built around the theme – *The Vocation to be Catholic* – and the purpose is to prepare the parish, its people, groups, ministries, administration and structure to align with, embrace and live the mission.

To accomplish this goal requires two specific sets of actions that are inter-related:
*1) Facilitate all Catholics to rediscover the vocation to be Catholic so that the practice of the faith and parish involvement will lead to a deeper discipleship; and
*2) To realign the structures of the parish to implement the threefold mission of the Synod

In Year 2, which runs from December 8, 2009 to December 7, 2010, the theme of the Pastoral Priority the New Evangelisation is **Catholic Family. Become What you are.**

Year 3 (December 8, 2010 to December 7, 2011) will deal with the Pastoral Priority –Catholic Culture and Identity with its theme - **My Church, My Parish, My Family.**

The theme of Pastoral Priority #3 – Moral and Spiritual Values - will be dealt with between December 8, 2011 and December 7, 2012, with its theme **Trinidad and Tobago, a Community of Families.”**

It is to be noted that all Departments are to address each year's theme in their work.

CCSJ's work must be seen within the context of new structures in the Archdiocese post Synod 2009, for example, Synod Implementation Team (SIT), and Parish Implementation Team (PIT).

SYNOD IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

As the Archdiocese website states, shortly after Synod 2009, Archbishop Gilbert "named a seven-member team and approved its mandate, its purpose and objective were identified as 'to oversee, facilitate and evaluate the process of implementation of the Resolutions of the Third Sitting of the Archdiocesan Synod'. As with the Synod process itself, SIT functions under the authority and in union with the Archbishop." The term of each member is 3 years, renewable. The members are listed alphabetically below:

"Selwyn Bhajan, Msgr Jason Gordon (Chair), Fr Joseph Harris CSSp, Msgr Robert Llanos, Bernadette Patrick, Sr. Juliet Rajah HF, Leela Ramdeen, Msgr Allan Ventour, Derek Walcott.

"When Archbishop Edward Gilbert named the seven-member team and approved its mandate, its purpose and objective were identified as 'to oversee, facilitate and evaluate the process of implementation of the Resolutions of the Third Sitting of the Archdiocesan Synod'. As with the Synod process itself, SIT functions under the authority and in union with the Archbishop."

"THE PLAN "

One of SIT's first tasks was to prepare a Parish Action Plan - spanning Easter to December 2009 - aimed at engaging Catholics in the rediscovery of their vocation to be Catholic. The Plan, which was circulated as a poster to all parishes, lists the following key areas for action:

Theme: *The Vocation to be Catholic*

1. Set up Parish Implementation Team
2. Study and discuss Archbishop's columns* (published in *Catholic News* March 15, 22 and 29) in families, schools, parish groups, ministries and Confirmation classes
3. Parish Groups meet, study and discuss DVD presentations on three pastoral priorities

4. Conduct repentance service
5. Stewardship appeal
6. Reflection retreats on the theme
7. Restructuring to reflect the three priorities;
8. Use of programmes, including Alpha and Catholicism 201, to complement theme;
9. Prepare Pastoral Plan for offering on December 8, 2009
10. Initiate youth creativity competition
11. Conduct Family census
12. Leadership training for school leaders”

(See the Archdiocese’s website for further information about SIT). It is important to note the above as the implementation of Resolutions related to the 3 Pastoral Priorities, including CCSJ’s, had to take into consideration the “demands” that were being made of parishes. It was important that Parishes were given “space” to prepare their Action Plans.

PARISH IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS:

Resolution #2: “Be it resolved that every parish and ecclesial community appoint a Synod Implementation Team” was adopted by Synod 2009.

The Archdiocese’s website states: “A strong and result-driven Parish Implementation Team (PIT) will go a long way towards ensuring a successful implementation of Synod resolutions...The major role of the PIT is to ensure that the Synod mandate is successfully implemented. In addition, however, the Team has to coordinate the ministry of the parish and find the best ways to organise the parish for mission. It directs ministry, deals with administration, and seeks to find the most effective ways to achieve the aims of the various themes and pastoral priorities. The PIT coordinates the individual parts into a whole and focuses on monthly planning.

“The Pastoral Council, on the other hand, exerts leadership of the parish with emphasis on overall direction and vision, focusing on the whole and ensuring the cohesiveness of the various parish ministries.”

CCSJ is concerned that many Pastoral Plans prepared by PITS do not incorporate a concern to address social justice issues in the respective parishes. Training for PIT members must include a social justice dimension that will seek to educate

members about the importance of the social doctrine of the Church e.g. social justice principles and fundamental values – from a Catholic perspective, and guidelines for action.

The social teaching/doctrine of the Church is not an optional extra. Therefore, if the major role of the PITs is “to ensure that the Synod mandate is successfully implemented”, members of PITs must immerse themselves in a training programme that will raise their awareness of the social doctrine of the Church. Since there is currently a training programme for PITs in progress (2010), it will be helpful if this could be expanded to include a social justice dimension.

APPENDIX II Synod Resolutions and strategies -

ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN: POST SYNOD 2009: (Pastoral Priority 3):

REGENERATING THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES OF OUR SOCIETY: CLUSTER: CCSJ, CEBM, CAMSEL

GOAL: That each Catholic, as a committed disciple of Christ, knows, lives and witnesses to the rich moral teaching of the Church and actively partners with people of goodwill towards the moral and spiritual renewal of Trinidad and Tobago.

RESOLUTION #1a: *Be it resolved that the Archdiocese develop a comprehensive strategy to educate the People of God in values and virtuous living, based on the rich tradition of magisterial teaching and theological heritage of the Catholic moral tradition.*

Res 1a:1: Identify performance indicators to inform a system of monitoring and evaluation of all the proposed strategies under this Pastoral Priority.

Res 1a:2: Conduct an analysis of factors which have contributed to the decline of values in the society

a. Production of baseline study;

b. Determine what programmes have worked in society. Determine what more can be done in terms of programmes to address social problems.

Res 1a:3: Develop a comprehensive programme on values, virtues and social justice for dissemination to parishes using a "Train the Trainer" approach (post SEA Formation being one aspect of the comprehensive programme).

Res 1a:4: Collaborate with other Christian denominations and faith communities in authentic and meaningful dialogue to foster the development of moral and spiritual values and in the promotion of social justice in society.

Res 1a:5: Use the media to promote the values of the Catholic Church.

Res 1a:6: Address social justice issues such as those outlined in the Vatican II document - The Church in the Modern World (“...whatsoever is opposed to life itself such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are supreme dishonour to the Creator.” (n 27, *Vatican II document. The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*)).

NB: This is the theological foundation for implementation of Resolution #3b re pro-life work.

And see Res #5:8 Review/develop outreach programmes to address social justice issues such as those outlined in The Church in the Modern World – work in progress – responding to local, national and international issues: works of mercy and works of social action.

Res 1a:7: Develop guidelines to ensure that persons working with the Archdiocese and in Ministry understand the values and virtues of the Catholic Church. This can be used as a guide when hiring individuals or screening persons to lead in Ministry in the Parish.

RESOLUTION #1b: Lead Dept.:Catechetical Team

Be it resolved that the Catholic parishes and schools, as well as the Archdiocesan Departments, be responsible for the implementation of the comprehensive strategy of #1a.

Res 1b:1: Establish parish and school based discipleship formation programmes.

Res 1b:2: Emphasize Praxis in the Catechetical programme in schools and Parishes and encourage and assist teachers to include this as an essential element of their religious formation programme.

Res 1b:5 Develop an approach to having Catholics in all spheres of life understand the values and virtues of the Catholic Church.

Res 1b:7: Address parish and community issues with relevant outreach programmes.

RESOLUTION #2: Lead Department – Family Life Commission

Be it resolved that the Archdiocese develop a comprehensive strategy for the formation of families as the domestic Church – the first moral community, for the moral and spiritual renewal of Trinidad and Tobago.

RESOLUTION #3a: *Be it resolved that each Catholic parish and school become a community celebrating the dignity of human life, from conception to natural death, affirming and developing the whole person.*

Res 3a:1 The Archdiocese to dedicate a week every year to the theme of ‘**respect for life**’ (see **Res #1a:6**).

Res 3a:2 Develop programmes to educate all Catholics in schools and parishes on the Church’s teaching on the death penalty, abortion, euthanasia, artificial birth control (and other pro-life issues).

Res 3a:3 Each parish to conscientiously, honestly assess how it respects life, in terms of facilities for and service to persons from all walks of life and implement systems accordingly.

RESOLUTION #3b: *Be it resolved that the Archdiocese develop a comprehensive programme as it relates to pro-life (including the topical issues of abortion and contraception) given our belief in, and our celebration of, the sanctity of life.*

Res 3b:1 The Archdiocese to promote the teaching of the Catholic Church's position on life issues from conception to natural death and to be proactive in promoting a culture of life in T&T.

Res 3b:2 Parishes to host ongoing fora to teach/educate the faithful on the social teaching of the church and encourage youth and community debates on values and counter-values.

Res 3b:3 Develop programmes within the parish to support those young women and men who have chosen life in difficult circumstances.

Res 3b:4: Organize a national concert for life, featuring popular artistes who are pro-life, regardless of religion (Linked to Item 12, Res 3a:1).

RESOLUTION #4: *Be it resolved that Catholic families, schools and parishes commit themselves to spiritual and moral renewal; and that as Church we seek ways to partner with people of good will in the building of a just and harmonious society.*

Res 4:2: Educate the People of God in their responsibility for the transformation of society and implement practical projects in each parish to achieve this purpose.

Res 4:3: Use the Church's teaching on social justice in Homilies.

Res 4:4: Make regular use of Catholic social teachings in lessons and public debates or wherever possible in Catholic schools and parishes and encourage students to incorporate Catholic social teaching in their studies. (Relevant documents to be provided to them).

Res 4:8: Educate the faithful on Chapter IV of the Vatican Council 11 document on the Constitution of the Church. This Chapter focuses on the role of the laity in the Church and its mission.

RESOLUTION #5: *Be it resolved that Catholic parishes, in the spirit of solidarity and stewardship, serve the community by promoting and creating opportunities, structures and programmes to achieve social justice.*

Res #5:1: Parish Priests and all clergy to be made aware of their responsibility to impart the Social Teachings of the Church and to bring social justice values in their parishes and ministries.

Res #5:2: Each parish to establish a data bank of skills and needs and to use the data collected to support its strategies to serve the community.

Res #5:3: The Archdiocese to encourage the active involvement of individual Catholics in the Social cultural and political life of the nation. (By membership in Village/Community Councils, Local and National Government) and to encourage Catholics in decision-making positions to allow their decision-making to be influenced/shaped by Catholic tradition and teaching.

Res 5:4: The Archdiocese to work in collaboration with the relevant Government authority in matters of social Justice.

Res #5:5: Encourage and teach networking and partnering skills using existing structures and where necessary creating new ones for the moral renewal of Trinidad and Tobago.

Res #5:6: Invite rural and urban parishes to engage in twinning arrangements to share time, talent and treasure in the spirit of solidarity.

Res #5:7: Include the work of Couples for Christ as a strategy for providing and creating opportunities, structures and programmes to achieve social justice.

Res #5:8 Create awareness of apprenticeship programmes, cottage industries and other programmes to meet the needs of marginalized persons in challenged areas and encourage parishioners to take advantage of them and support them.

Res #5:9: Parishes to be sensitive to the needs of carers of disabled, very young, aged, persons who are ill and encourage parishioners to support them in practical ways.

RESOLUTION #6: *Be it resolved that in keeping with the Catholic position on Creation, our families, schools and parishes recognize our responsibility as stewards of Creation and express this in relevant tangible ways.*

Res 6:1: The Archdiocese to formulate policy and guidelines on environmental awareness.

Res6:3: Organize/encourage participation in events that promote good stewardship of God's creation e.g. turtle watching, reforestation/replanting of trees, beach cleanup etc.

Res 6:4: The Archdiocese to take action to promote the Church as a 'green' Church, e.g. by raising awareness of how our daily choices affect the environment; encouraging the faithful to avoid being wasteful, to re-use items where necessary, and to re-cycle.

Res 6:5: Establish an agricultural programme in Catholic **Schools** and **Parishes** Identify one or two Parishes that will be willing to establish an agricultural project (CCSJ, CEBM).

RESOLUTION #7: Be it resolved that Catholics be educated and advised concerning matters of respect, reverence and modesty in dress and conduct at all times, particularly during Mass, other religious occasions and parish events. NB: Res. 7 will be achieved if all the other resolutions are achieved.

APPENDIX III

Information about the **Conference in Rome** referred to above on the theme: “*Life, Family, Development: the role of women in the promotion of human rights*”.

1. LETTER OF INVITATION TO CCSJ’S CHAIR (received via e-mail).

Dear Madame,

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, in collaboration with the *World Women’s Alliance for Life and Family* (WWALF) and the *World Union of Catholic Women’s Organizations* (WUCWO), is organizing the **1st International Conference** on the theme: “*Life, Family, Development: the role of women in the promotion of human rights*”. It is my pleasure to extend this invitation to you to attend the Conference which will be held in **Rome, on 20-21 March 2009**.

In order to address the theme, we intend to concentrate on the Christian anthropological outlook, so widely discussed these days, from the perspective of women in today’s world. The goal of the Conference will be to reassert the “alliance” between woman and life in order to examine her position and her role in the heart of the family and society. This will be done as a contribution to the “new feminism” called for by Pope John Paul II. This “new feminism” could make up a substantial portion in presenting the positive aspects of the anthropological vision of the Church.

The Conference will be held in Rome, at the Offices of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Palazzo San Calisto, Piazza San Calisto, 16 (tel. +39.06.698.79911). The language to be used in the Conference will be: English, French, Spanish and Italian (passive). Simultaneous translation will be provided.

Ms. Leela RAMDEEN, Chair of Catholic Commission for Social Justice Trinidad and Tobago E-mail: leela_ramdeen@hotmail.com (enclosures)

Looking forward to a positive response to this invitation, I take this opportunity to extend to you the assurance of my continued high esteem.

Renato Raffaele Cardinal Martino, President

2. Zenit report: **Vatican Congress Focuses on Women and Human Rights**

Calls for a New Feminism in Favour of Life

VATICAN CITY, **MARCH 17**, 2009 (Zenit.org).- The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace is promoting an international conference calling women to give witness to a love for life, especially in the area of human rights.

This congress, the first of its kind, will be held Friday and Saturday in the Vatican and will focus on "Life, Family, Development: The Role of Women in the Promotion of Human Rights."

Along with the council, which will host the conference, the initiative is being promoted by the World Women's Alliance for Life and Family and the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations.

In a note to ZENIT, the organizers recalled Pope John Paul II's words in the encyclical "Evangelium Vitae": "In the cultural change in favor of life women occupy a singular and perhaps determinant place of thought and action.

"They must be the promoters of a new feminism that, without falling into the temptation of copying macho models, is able to recognize and express the true feminine genius in all the manifestations of civil coexistence, working to overcome all forms of discrimination, violence and exploitation."

Feminine genius

The conference will be the first meeting of the World Women's Alliance for Life and Family, an international network of women with headquarters in Rome, created five years ago by the current president, Olimpia Tarzia.

The objective of this network of women "allied for life" from 50 countries worldwide is the promotion of the "feminine genius" in every realm of social organization.

The meeting will also be an occasion to affirm the work of Catholic feminine

organizations brought together in the world union, which will celebrate its first centenary next year, and whose current president is Karen Hurley.

Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, president of the pontifical council, said that "never so much as now the hour has come for women to respond fully to their vocation to witness love for life in every realm of society and in all parts of the world."

"At a time of profound transformations, women, illumined by the evangelical spirit, can do much to help humanity," he added.

Tarzia noted that the present period of crisis "is the time for a new feminism."

She continued, "It is the time of a genuine cultural revolution, to fully appreciate the specifically 'feminine' ways of thought and action in every realm of civil life, for the good of the collectivity and in favour of life, peace, economic development in the respect and defense of human rights."

Conference topics

More than 60 experts and scientists from all over the world are planning to take part in the conference.

On Friday, following the opening addresses by Cardinal Martino and the presidents of the other hosting organizations, there will be a debate on the topic: "Life, Family and Development in the Perspective of the Church." It will be introduced with a report by Lithuanian sociologist and theologian Egle Laumenskaite.

In the afternoon, the following topics will be discussed: "Woman, Family and Maternity: Resources and Conflicts in Contemporary Society" and "Woman, Education and Culture: The Educational Emergency Given the Cultural Challenges in Civil Rights," given respectively by Spanish professor Maria Lacalle and Ivory Coast lawyer Anne Kone.

Saturday's conference topics include: "Woman, Poverty and Marginalization: Feminine Effort in Favor of the Weakest" and "Woman and the Present Challenges of Bioethics: The Perspective of the Social Doctrine of the Church."

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3. CNS report: Women play crucial role in promoting human rights, pope says

Women have a crucial role to play in promoting human rights, the dignity of life and the family, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Given the distinctive influence of women in society, they must be encouraged to embrace the opportunity to uphold the dignity of life through their involvement in education and their participation in political and civic life," the pope said in a written message to participants of the Vatican's first international conference dedicated to women and human rights.

Because of their "unique capacity for the other, women have a crucial part to play in the promotion of human rights, for without their voice the social fabric of society would be weakened," said the message released March 20

The March 20-21 conference, titled "Life, Family, Development: The Role of Women in the Promotion of Human Rights", was organised and sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations and the Rome-based World Women's Alliance for Life and Family.

The pope said that suppressing, manipulating or compromising human life -- especially in its most vulnerable stages -- must be "decried as a violation of human rights," and he urged participants to come up with "a positive and proactive response" to such dangers.

He asked that participants carry on the task of correcting the misconception "that Christianity is simply a collection of commandments and prohibitions."

It is important that people recognize that the Gospel is a message of joy and that Christian faith and ethics makes spousal love "healthy, strong and truly free," he said.

The Ten Commandments "are not a series of 'no's' but a great 'yes' to love and to life," said the pope.

The conference's main aim was to elaborate on Pope John Paul II's call for a "new feminism" that upholds and respects life and has the power to transform today's cultures.

Karen Hurley, president general of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations, said, "The new feminism is motivated by love; there is a spirit of hope and a spirit of joy," which has little to do with radical forms of feminism that seem "to be generated by bitterness and resentment."

Finding guidance and inspiration in their faith in Christ, women can come together to work to improve the lives of women, children and families in their corner of the world, she told [Catholic News Service](#) March 23.

By touching one life at a time and by putting pressure on government leaders, she said women can work to promote even basic human rights at home and abroad "so that everyone can have enough to eat, safe water to drink, be able to have education for women and for children, things that we sometimes take for granted."

Olimpia Tarzia, president of World Women's Alliance for Life and Family, said legalised abortion has spelled defeat for both women and society. Women, families, life and human dignity need to be the focus of the world's attention, she said in her concluding remarks to conference participants.

Today's generation can spark a new liberation movement so that no one -- born or unborn -- is discriminated against and so that there would be equal opportunity for everyone: the strong and weak, the rich and poor, and the healthy and the sick, she said. **(CNS)**

APPENDIX IV

Justice and Peace Seminar ends on positive note

By Leela Ramdeen, Chair of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice

“Let’s keep together.” These were the parting words of Bishop Emmanuel Lafont of the Diocese of Cayenne, French Guiana and Chair of the AEC Justice and Peace (AEC J&P) Commission, to the 19 participants who attended the AEC Justice & Peace Seminar at the Regional Seminary of St John Vianney and the Uganda Martyrs on September 12 and 13.

Inter alia, the seminar provided a wonderful opportunity for fellowship/solidarity/strengthening relationships across the region. Representatives from French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago considered:

- the main issues arising out of Pope Benedict XVI’s third encyclical, *Charity in Truth*; and the challenges and opportunities of applying the encyclical in the context of our various dioceses in the region;
- the role of the AEC in promoting and supporting Diocesan J&P Commissions; the ways in which Diocesan J&P Commissions can better address priority issues – including a concern to promote the integrity of creation – environmental/ecological issues;
- Strategies for strengthening the AEC J&P Commission.
Msgr Jason Gordon and I presented two papers focussing on the applications and challenges of the encyclical for us in Trinidad and Tobago and on the Methodology and Structure of a J&P Commission– using CCSJ as an example. All the other regions also gave comprehensive reports on their activities.

The presence of Gerard Granado (General Secretary, Caribbean Conference of Churches) at the seminar was helpful as we focussed also on ways of strengthening ecumenical arrangements and inter-faith relations.

Those of us who represented our Archdiocese of Port of Spain have agreed to organise a seminar in October to plan how we will address the six main challenges we identified at the seminar – in light of the encyclical and our Synod Resolutions. At the end of the seminar it was agreed that in order to contextualise the encyclical within our Caribbean context, reflections on the following themes will be submitted to Bishop Lafont by March 2010 for consideration by the AEC Bishops at their meeting in April 2010:

T&T: Climate change – taking into consideration issues arising out of the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Dec 7 – 18, 2009;

Jamaica: Racism

Guyana, Suriname and French Guyana: Youth and the challenges they face in the midst of unemployment, HIV/AIDS, crime and violence and so on;
Caribbean Conference of Churches: Economic arrangements impacting on integral human development in the Caribbean e.g. addressing concerns about the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean, in light of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union.

It is to be noted that although specific dioceses have been allocated areas of responsibility above, each diocese, including those that were not represented, will be invited to submit reflections on each of the four areas by March 2010. A report of the discussions that took place over the two days will be produced and circulated to our 20 dioceses across the region.

We should all find time to reflect on the implications of this encyclical for us as individuals and for the archdiocese - see www.coc.org for a précis of the encyclical

and www.usccb.org/jphd/caritasinveritate/ for a useful study guide of the encyclical. Consider: What is the Pope's message to me as an individual about how I should live my life as a Catholic? How will the encyclical help us with our work in the archdiocese as we implement our Synod Resolutions?

The US Bishops state that "Charity in Truth" "provides helpful guidance for finding answers to the social, economic and moral questions of the contemporary world in a search for truth...it is a call to see the relationship between human and environmental ecologies and to link charity and truth in the pursuit of justice, the common good, and authentic human development. In doing so, the Pope points out the responsibilities and limitations of government and the private market, challenges traditional ideologies of right and left, and calls all men and women to think and act anew."

In a world that is becoming more and more secular and in which individualism and moral relativism is rampant, the Pope's words are pertinent: "Without God man neither knows which way to go, nor even understands who he is."

We left the seminar full of hope, encouraged by the Holy Father's wise advice that "the current crisis obliges us to re-plan our journey, to set ourselves new rules and to discover new forms of commitment, to build on positive experiences and to reject negative ones. The crisis thus becomes *an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future.*"

Participants at the AEC Justice and Peace Seminar at the Seminary included: Bishop Emeritus Anthony Dickson, Leela Ramdeen Chair Catholic Commission for Social Justice Commission (CCSJ) TT; Bishop Emmanuel Lafont of Cayenne, French Guiana, chair of AEC J&P Commission; David Brooks, Mandeville Diocese; Gerard Granado, General Secretary Caribbean Conference of Churches, Sr Roberta, CCSJ, Rhonda Maingot, Living Water Community; Fr Peter McIssac, SJ, J&P Commission Kingston, Jamaica; Sr Bernadette Hughes, Mandeville Diocese; attorney Sylvie Compper, Cayenne J&P Commission; Attorney Maureen Tjon Jaw Chong, Suriname J&P Commission; Bishop Neil Tiedemann Mandeville, Jamaica; Deacon Mike James, General Secretary AEC; Msgr Michael Stewart, rector St John Vianney Seminary; attorney Gino Persaud, Guyana J&P Commission. (names in order as the persons appear on CN photograph).

APPENDIX V

Social Justice Online Course: CCSJ, CREDI, and the UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

“Inter alia, the Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ) and the Catholic Religious Education Development Institute (CREDI) are concerned to promote integral human development.

Pope Benedict XVI states in his latest encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, Charity in Truth, that the essential quality of “authentic” development is that it must be “integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man” – every dimension of the person. He says that “The vocation to progress drives us to ‘do more, know more and have more in order to be more’ ... Development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer...Development requires attention to the spiritual life...”

Our vocation to be Catholic requires us to develop our knowledge about the Church’s teaching. Ongoing faith formation requires us to foster learning for life in our Archdiocese. If we are to “know more” we must respond to the challenge outlined by His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert, in his 3rd leaflet which was circulated in Catholic News last week: “Called to be Catholic: Rediscovering the Vocation” (adapted from his Column published in the Catholic News 29 March 2009).

His Grace asks: “How can the Church help people who have been confirmed live their confirmation, i.e. manifest that they have accepted a strengthening of the Spirit, and take up their responsibility to spread and defend the faith as true witnesses of Christ?”

He lists certain action that is required. This includes: “Personal study and reflection on the Faith.” The New Evangelisation requires that we develop our knowledge of our Faith. It is for this reason that CCSJ and CREDI have partnered with the University of Dayton, USA, to run an online course that will help the faithful to develop a spirituality of Justice. One of the positive aspects of modern technology is that the computer can be used to create virtual learning communities.

The Social Justice Online Course, which was advertised in the Catholic News, will be run by the University of Dayton and will be facilitated by CREDI. The Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF), part of the University of Dayton, is “a growing initiative to offer adult religious education and faith formation anytime and anywhere via the internet. The goal is to support the church's professional ministry of religious education and faith formation in cyberspace. The VLCFF is coordinated and sponsored by the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives (IPI) at the University of Dayton - a Catholic Marianist Institution.”

VLCFF's mission is “to mobilize the resources of the University of Dayton for partnerships with the Church that create and implement innovative pastoral initiatives designed to meet the needs of the Church and to articulate faith within the context of contemporary culture.”

The program series currently comprises 11 modules grouped into levels: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. Each module is about 5 weeks long. To complete the program, one must start at the Basic Level and work through to the Advanced Level. Each course is worth 2.5 CEUs (Continuing Education Units) which are based on the International Academic Standards for Continuing Education - 10-12 hours per CEU. Students will be engaged in approximately 25 hours [5 hours per week] with the course material and interacting with the online students and facilitator during the course.

Themes covered on the course are as follows: Conscience, Introduction to Practical Morality, Catholic School Teaching, Marianist Studies: Social Justice, Advanced Catholic Social Teaching, History of Catholic Social Action, Parish and Social Action, Poverty in the US and Around the World, Scripture and Justice, Spirituality and Inclusive Faith Communities.

The cost of each module is TT\$260, and modules will require access to books. At the end of the series, successful participants will be awarded a Certificate by the University of Dayton and the Archdiocese of Port of Spain [CREDI].

Twenty persons have signed up for the first online module: Conscience – 12 women and 8 men from across the Archdiocese. They have had their online orientation via SKYPE with the Institute for Pastoral Initiatives/University of Dayton (IPI/UD).

We wish to thank our Vicars and priests for assisting us in recruiting candidates, as well as IPI/UD for assisting us in reaching this important milestone. We will continue running such courses to develop the knowledge of the faithful in our parishes so that they can spread and defend our faith and promote God's kingdom of love, truth, justice, peace and freedom.

Module 1, which focuses on Conscience, commenced on 12 July 2009. Our Catechism tells us that "A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful...The word of God is a light for our path." (See: Catechism, 1776 – 1802).

We wish our 20 students every success. We hope that they will share with others the knowledge gained from participating in the course and that this knowledge will assist them in their faith journey. (By: CCSJ and CREDI Original Release Date: Jul. 2009)."