



CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

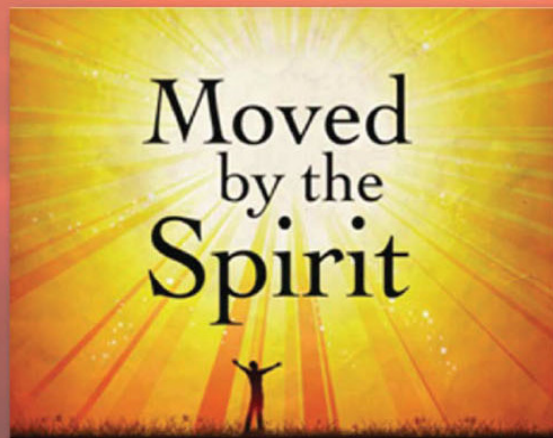
13th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

For the period: 1st January 2015 – 31st December 2015

Theme: **MOVED BY THE SPIRIT**

“*The Church needs ‘passionate missionaries’, consumed by zeal to bring the consoling Word of Jesus and his grace to everyone. This is the fire of the Holy Spirit. If the Church does not receive this fire, or allow it to enter, it becomes a cold or lukewarm Church, incapable of giving life, since it is made of cold or lukewarm Christians.*”

(Pope Francis, Aug 2016).



Wednesday 22nd March 2017

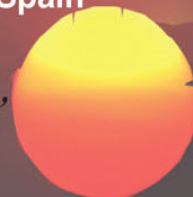
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE

27 Maraval Road, Port of Spain

“If you want peace, work for justice”

(Pope Paul VI)



CCSJ's 13th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 2017 (covering period 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2015)

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CCSJ's 13th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (on 29 March 2017)

CCSJ's 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:

- 5:30 p.m. Opening prayer, welcome and apologies for absence:
Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ.
- 5:40 p.m. Minutes of CCSJ's AGM for period 2014 held on Wed 28 October 2015 & Matters arising from Minutes.
- 5:50 p.m. Presentation of Annual Report on CCSJ's work in 2015:
Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ
- 6:10 p.m. Adoption of Annual Report and Questions/comments.
- 6:15 p.m. Treasurer's Report for 2015 & Presentation of Audited Accounts 2015
- 6:25 p.m. Adoption of Accounts for 2015; Audited Accounts for 2015; and Questions/comments.
- 6:30 p.m. Appointment of Auditors
- 6:35 p.m. Election of Officers/Management Committee – See By Laws: 7.1 (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary).
- 6:40 p.m. Closing Prayer and refreshment

1. MISSION STATEMENT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF POS

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, and
- Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society.

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.

2. INTRODUCTION BY CCSJ'S CHAIR

2.1 *"The Church's social doctrine proclaims and bears witness to faith. It is an instrument and an indispensable setting for formation in faith."* (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, 15)

CCSJ is pleased to present its annual report for 2015. The Theme for CCSJ's AGM, which covers activities undertaken during 2015, is: **MOVED BY THE SPIRIT.**

Membership of the Commission during 2015 was as follows:

Leela Ramdeen, Episcopal Delegate/Chair of CCSJ,

Clive Belgrave, Deputy Chair (died on 18 December)

Annette des Iles, Member,

Nadine Bushell, Secretary,

Jo-Ann Taylor-Smith, Member

Sr Roberta O'Flaherty, Member,

Annette McKenzie, Treasurer,

Eldon Warner, Member

Dianne Wells, Member

* It is to be noted that at the expiration of their contracts in 2015 (3 at the end of May and 1 at the end of August 2015), the posts of all Parish Link Coordinators (PLCs) were discontinued. Two PLC members, Jo Anne Smith and Dianne Wells, offered to serve as members of CCSJ's Management Team, and the Team welcomed them with great enthusiasm. The posts of Vicariate Link Coordinators (VLC) were also discontinued in 2015.

Parish Link Coordinators (PLCs) were initially appointed to assist CCSJ in implementing the Commission's Pastoral Plan which included the Archdiocese's Pastoral Priorities.

The PLCs were:

Deborah Ann Boos: Eastern Vicariate

Jo-Ann Taylor-Smith: Southern Vicariate

Mikkel Trestrail: Northern Vicariate & Tobago

Dianne Wells: Suburban & Central Vicariates

CCSJ records its thanks to them, and to the VLCs for sharing their expertise so readily and for the work in which they were engaged to further the aims of the Archdiocese.

CCSJ also records its thanks to Lorna Chee-Wah and Cheryl Wallace, CCSJ's Administrative Assistants, who, through a job-share, provide tremendous support to the Commission. I would like to thank all members of CCSJ most sincerely for their commitment to the social imperatives of the Gospel. We thank also those persons and organisations that have contributed to the Commission's work and to Archbishop Joseph Harris for his leadership.

CCSJ is extremely grateful to Annette des Iles who so readily agreed to take on the role as Deputy Chair when Clive Belgrave passed in December 2015.

2.2 Tribute to Clive Belgrave:



Clive Belgrave and Leela Ramdeen with 3 of CCSJ's Parish Link Coordinators when they were appointed in 2013. From left to right: Jo Ann Smith, Dianne Wells and Deborah Boos

CCSJ's Deputy Chair, Clive Belgrave, died on December 18, 2015, after being hospitalised in Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at the Port-of-Spain General Hospital. His funeral took place at St Finbar's RC Church, Diego Martin. Clive had been a member of CCSJ since its inception in 2003 and had served tirelessly and faithfully, not only as a member of CCSJ, but in a number of organizations, for example, he was:

- Chair of Trinidad and Tobago Reintegration Foundation/Anthony Pantin Reintegration Foundation which runs a rehabilitation facility in San Raphael for former prison inmates – on land that is owned by CCSJ;
- Honorary Secretary of the Society of St Vincent De Paul (SVDP) in Trinidad and Project Coordinator for the North and South America and the Caribbean regions. As reported in the Newsday on 26 December, “Belgrave, has been a long time member with more than 50 years of service in support of the many homes and activities the Society operates and performs in service of those in need in Trinidad and Tobago.” Speaking at the ceremony, his eldest son, Valder, said: “Dad gave of his time very generously and supported various SVP, United Way, Archdiocese of PoS, alma mater Fatima College reps from swimming and horse racing and the advertising community as well...”

Archbishop Joseph Harris delivered the sermon. Inter alia, he said that “Clive’s life was a life spent helping people, feeding the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, and imprisoned. ‘So as much as sadness has hit me, as it has hit all of us, there is profound peace because I know the man who walked was a person who was prepared because his whole life was a preparation for this moment,’ he said. His Grace said the St Vincent de Paul Society of which Clive was honorary secretary for so many years has surely lost a champion, but hoped and prayed from above Clive will intercede with the Father, for everyone. ‘Clive will talk to the Father for us, so that God can raise up other people whose lives can be characterised by the good which they have done for those who live on the margins.’”

May our dear colleague and friend, Clive, rest in peace. You have served well in the Lord’s Vineyard.

2.3 The role of the Synod Implementation Team (SIT) comes to an end

As readers of this Report may know, on April 13, 2015, His Grace wrote a letter to all members of the Synod Implementation Team (SIT) thanking members for their contribution during the 6 years that SIT had worked to implement the Goals, Resolutions and Implementation Proposals of Synod. His Grace’s letter to CCSJ’s Chair regarding this issue is included in **APPENDIX I** for information.

3. REFLECTION ON CCSJ'S AGM THEME: Moved by the Spirit

This theme is appropriate, particularly as we live in a time when so many Christians in TT and around the world fail to acknowledge the power of the Holy Spirit to transform our lives and the world. We need the Holy Spirit in our lives if we are to meet the many challenges that confront us and which threaten to overwhelm us. We are the Body of Christ in the world and each of us must strive to live our faith by acting on the biblical mandate given to us in Luke 4:18-19:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” Do you remember the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit?



Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2-3)

- ✦ We need to be **open** to receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - ✦ We need a **proper understanding** of our need for God’s help, especially through grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - ✦ We need to realize we cannot obtain these gifts on our own and need to be able to **trust God** to give these to us so we can do things far above what we are able to do on our own
 - ✦ The gifts help perfect the **Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity**
 - ✦ Help us to better know and love God
 - ✦ Help us to more perfectly follow the Holy Spirit

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

- ✦ There are many fruits of the Holy Spirit. The tradition of the Church lists **twelve** of them: “charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity.”
- ✦ When we are experiencing these fruits in our lives, we begin to understand more fully the gift of the Holy Spirit.

“Come Holy Spirit” ~ Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Goal : To receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit



What has the Holy Father been saying about the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives? The reporter, Ann Schneible (CNA/EWTN), said, that in his weekly Angelus address on 14 August 2016 at St Peter's Square, the Holy Father made it clear that The Church does not need 'cold or lukewarm Christians' who are held back by fear; it needs Christians who are on fire with the Holy Spirit and committed to proclaiming the Gospel, even if it costs them their lives.

"The pontiff reflected on the themes of the day's Gospel reading, specifically on Jesus' words: 'I have come to set the earth on fire.' He explained how the fire about which Jesus speaks is that of the 'Holy Spirit, the living and working presence in us from the day of our Baptism.'" "This fire is a 'creative force which purifies and renews,' as it burns away every human misery, egoism, and sin, he said. 'It transforms us from within, regenerates us, and makes us capable of love. Jesus wants the Holy Spirit to burn like fire in our hearts, because it is only from the heart that the fire of Divine love can strengthen and advance the Kingdom of God,' he said.

"By opening ourselves completely to the Holy Spirit, we will be given the 'courage and zeal to proclaim to everyone Jesus, and his consoling message of mercy and salvation. 'The Holy Spirit keeps the Church from being 'held back by fear and calculations' or becoming accustomed to staying within secure confines, The Apostolic courage which the Holy Spirit ignites in us as a fire helps us overcome walls and barriers, makes us creative,' and spurs us along 'unexplored or uncomfortable paths, offering hope to those we meet. We are called to become ever more a community of persons who are guided and transformed by the Holy Spirit.

"Pope Francis said the fire of the Holy Spirit brings us to those who suffer from various miseries and problems, including migrants and refugees. Now more than ever there is a need for priests, consecrated men and women, and lay faithful, the

Pope said, 'who, throughout the world, are dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel with great love and loyalty, often even at the cost of their lives.'

" 'Their exemplary witness reminds us that the Church does not need bureaucrats or meticulous officials," Pope Francis said. Rather, it needs 'passionate missionaries, consumed by zeal to bring the consoling Word of Jesus and his grace to everyone. This is the fire of the Holy Spirit. If the Church does not receive this fire, or allow it to enter, it becomes a cold or only Church, incapable of giving life, since it is made of cold or lukewarm Christians."

"The Pope encouraged those present to take five minutes to ask themselves whether their own hearts are cold or lukewarm, and if they are capable of receiving this fire of the Holy Spirit. Concluding his address, Pope Francis appealed to the Virgin Mary's intercession that the Holy Spirit might pour on all believers the 'Divine fire which ignites hearts, and helps us be in solidarity with the joys and sufferings of our brothers and sisters.'"

On October 6 2016, during Mass at St Martha's House, Pope Francis reminded us that "In order to understand and to embrace Jesus' words, we need to open up to the power of the Holy Spirit. And when a man or a woman opens up to the Holy Spirit, they are like sailing boats that are pushed along by the wind and they just keep on going". But, as Domenico Agasso Jr said in his report, the Pope reminded the faithful that we need "to pray to open up to the Holy Spirit".

The Holy Father invited the faithful to examine their consciences: "Let us find some time in the day to ask ourselves: do I neglect the Holy Spirit?...is my life a constant prayer that I may open up to the Holy Spirit so that He can drive me forward with the joy of the Gospel and help me understand Jesus' doctrine, the true doctrine, which does not bewitch us, does not make us act foolishly? That He may help us to see where our weakness lies, the weakness that saddens Him; and move us forward, carrying Jesus' name with us and teaching the way of salvation."

And way back on May 9 2016, Linda Bordoni reported that Pope Francis, during his homily at Mass at Casa Santa Marta, "drawing inspiration from the reading of the day which recounts the dialogue between Paul and the first disciples in Ephesus, recalled that the disciples told Paul that they had 'not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit'.

“This is something, he said, that happens today as well as many who believe in Jesus do not know the Holy Spirit. Many, he said, say they have ‘learnt through Catechism’ that the Holy Spirit is ‘in the Trinity’ but they do not know anything more and they wonder what the Spirit does: ‘The Holy Spirit is the one who moves the Church, he said, the one who works in the Church and in our hearts’ making each Christian unique and yet, together with other Christians, a unit.

“The Holy Spirit, the Pope continued, opens the doors and invites us to bear witness to Jesus. ‘At the beginning of Mass we heard the words: you will receive the Holy Spirit and you will be my witnesses in the world. The Holy Spirit is the one who moves us to praise God, to pray the Lord, the one who is within us and teaches us to see the Father and to call him *Father*. The Holy Spirit frees us from this *orphan-like* condition which the spirit of the world wants to put us in” he said.

“Pope Francis said the Holy Spirit is ‘the protagonist of the living Church’ and he warned against the danger of not living up to this mission of the Holy Spirit thereby reducing faith to ‘morals and ethics’. It is not enough, he said, to just respect the Commandments and do ‘nothing more’. Christian life, Francis reiterated, ‘is not just an ethical life: it is an encounter with Jesus Christ.’ And it is thanks to the Holy Spirit that this encounter takes place:

‘But we keep the Holy Spirit as a ‘luxury prisoner’ in our hearts: we do not allow the Spirit to push us forward, to move us. The Spirit does everything, knows everything, reminds us of what Jesus said, can explain all about Jesus. There is only one thing the Holy Spirit can’t do: make us *parlour* Christians ... The Holy Spirit cannot make us *virtual* Christians who are not virtuous. The Holy Spirit makes real Christians. The Spirit takes life as it is and prophetically reads the signs of the times pushing us forward ..., the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity” he said...He urged believers to allow themselves to be propelled by the Holy Spirit whom, he said, shows us the way to freedom”.

CCSJ members are committed to raising awareness of the Faithful that, as the Holy Father said, without the Holy Spirit we are all at risk of being “armchair Christians” who recite “a cold morality” without actually living out the Gospel. The following quotations are taken from statements made by Pope Francis. They will assist us in our **reflection** on the role that the Holy Spirit should play in our

lives as we seek to promote God's Kingdom here on earth. Let us welcome the Holy Spirit so that he may enlighten our minds that we may see God's action in our lives:

- The Holy Spirit helps us to view others with fresh eyes, seeing them always as brothers and sisters in Jesus, to be respected and loved.
- Let us never give in to pessimism, to that bitterness that the devil offers us every day. Do not give in to pessimism and discouragement. We have the firm certainty that the Holy Spirit gives the Church with His mighty breath, the courage to persevere and also to seek new methods of evangelization, to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth.
- The Holy Spirit transforms and renews us, creates harmony and unity, and gives us courage and joy for mission.
- I would like to ask you a question: how many of you pray to the Holy Spirit every day? Probably few, but we must satisfy this desire of Jesus and pray every day to the Holy Spirit, so that he opens our heart towards Jesus.
- Let's ask ourselves: are we open to the Holy Spirit, do I pray to him to enlighten me, to make me more sensitive to the things of God? And this is a prayer we need to pray every day, every day: Holy Spirit may my heart be open to the Word of God, may my heart be open to good, may my heart be open to the beauty of God, every day.
- Do we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, so as to be an active part of our communities, or do we close in on ourselves, saying 'I have so many things to do, that's not my job'?
- The Holy Spirit truly transforms us. With our cooperation, he also wants to transform the world we live in.
- Let yourselves be led by the Holy Spirit, with freedom and, please, do not cage the Holy Spirit.
- Breathing is made up of two stages: inhaling, the intake of air, and exhaling, the letting out of air. The spiritual life is fed, nourished, by prayer and is expressed outwardly through mission: inhaling and exhaling. When we inhale, by prayer, we receive the fresh air of the Holy Spirit.
- It is the Paraclete Spirit, the "Comforter", who grants us the courage to take to the streets of the world, bringing the Gospel! The Holy Spirit makes us look to the horizon and drive us to the very outskirts of existence in order to proclaim life

in Jesus Christ. Let us ask ourselves: do we tend to stay closed in on ourselves, on our group, or do we let the Holy Spirit open us to mission?

- Do I guard myself, my heart, my feelings, my thoughts? Do I guard the treasure of grace? Do I guard the presence of the Holy Spirit in me? Or do I let go, feeling secure, believing that all is going well?

- Forgiveness is not a result of our efforts, but is a gift. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit who showers us with mercy and grace that pours forth unceasingly from the open heart of Christ crucified and risen.

- There is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, they are persons, they are not some vague idea in the clouds. This God spray does not exist! The three persons exist!

- The Holy Spirit, in the variety of his gifts, unites us and enables us to contribute to the building up of the Church in holiness. In this great work, each of us has a part to play; each of us, as a "living stone", is needed for the growth and the beauty of God's holy temple. Let us ask the Lord to help us to take an ever more active part in the Church's life and mission, guided by the Holy Spirit and with Jesus as our cornerstone.

- Let us open the doors to the Spirit, let ourselves be guided by him, and allow God's constant help to make us new men and women, inspired by the love of God which the Holy Spirit bestows on us! How beautiful it would be if each of you, every evening, could say: Today at school, at home, at work, guided by God, I showed a sign of love towards one of my friends, my parents, an older person! How beautiful!

- The Holy Spirit is a great worker, not a 'trade unionist.' He is a great worker, and He works in us, always. He does this work of explaining the mystery of Jesus, and of giving us this sense of Christ.

- Today too, as at her origins, the Church... cries out: "Veni, Sancte Spiritus! Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love!" Amen.

- Let us ask the Holy Spirit for the grace to live daily according to the mind of Jesus and his Gospel.

- Dear friends, sometimes we may be tempted to allow ourselves be overtaken by laziness or despondency, especially when faced with the hardships and trials of life. In these cases, do not lose heart, but invoke the Holy Spirit, so that with the gift of fortitude He can lift our hearts and communicate new vigor and enthusiasm to our lives and our following Jesus.

- We often pray to Jesus; we pray to the Father, especially in the 'Our Father'; but not often to the Holy Spirit....Pray often to the Holy Spirit so that He may help us, give us the strength, give us the inspiration and lead us forward.
- Be dispensers of God's grace, not controllers. Don't be the Holy Spirit's customs agents.

CCSJ Members recognize the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We will continue to open our hearts to Him so that we can be dispensers of God's grace. Our work continues as we seek to promote the pillars of peace: justice, truth, love, freedom, and forgiveness. We recognize, as Caritas states, that: "Catholic social teaching applies Gospel values such as love, peace, justice, compassion, reconciliation, service and community to modern social problems. It continually develops through observation, analysis, and action."
<http://www.caritas.org.nz/catholic-social-teaching>.

Pope Emeritus Benedict said in his encyclical: *God is Love*, the Church "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper." CCSJ prays that more Catholics will embrace the Church's social teaching, which, "is about how our faith touches the social dimension of our lives. It is the teaching of the Catholic Church on matters of justice between groups in society. Catholic Social Teaching calls us to work towards the justice of God's Reign in the complex network of relationships in which we live. It provides us with touchstones that help us to live in right relationship with ourselves, others, with God, and with the whole of God's creation".

<http://www.faithdoingjustice.com.au/catholic-social-teaching/introduction.html>

4. AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR 2015:

CCSJ's Audited Accounts can be accessed via CCSJ's Office. The firm of Accountants - L. Dave Lopez & Co. has been preparing CCSJ's Annual Audited Accounts free of charge since 2014. CCSJ is a Limited Liability Company under the Company's Act and is expected to produce Audited Accounts. Mr. Lopez is also a Catholic.

St Pope John Paul II said: "...a community needs a soul if it is to become a true home for human beings. You, the people, must give it this soul." In our selfish, materialistic world in which the financial bottom line is the primary consideration of many in the business world, individuals such as those above stand out as persons who are prepared to "plough back" their expertise into society, free of charge.

This is how we will build the civilization of love – together. The words of Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, in his document: *The Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection*, are noteworthy. Inter alia, he said:

"While profitability is an indicator of organisational health, it is neither the only one, nor the most important by which business should be judged... Profit is like food. An organism must eat, but that is not the overriding purpose of its existence. Profit is a good servant, but it makes a poor master."

He reminded us that St. Pope John Paul II stated that business "is not simply to make a profit, but is to be found in its very existence as *a community of persons* who in various ways are endeavouring to satisfy their basic needs, and who form a particular group at the service of the whole of society."

CCSJ records its thanks to all those who give so generously of their time, talent and treasure freely to enable the Commission/the Church to build God's Kingdom here on earth.

5. SOME IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE CHURCH DURING 2015:

5.1 Pope Francis' 2nd Encyclical: On 18 June 2015 Pope Francis released his second encyclical, *Laudato Si (Praise be to you): On Care For Our Common Home*. This is the first encyclical by a Pope on ecology and climate change. In it Pope Francis names the problem, analyzes the causes of our problem, and calls each of us to conversion and action; it is a call to us to change our view of creation and our habits. Following on St. John Paul II, he points out the need for "ecological conversion"; an integral ecology: "For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion." (217).

The encyclical contains 90 pages and 6 chapters and is easy to read. Tim Stanley of the UK Telegraph called it a "Gift to humanity."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11684962/Pope-Francis-green-encyclical-is-a-gift-to-humanity.-Left-and-Right-can-be-enlightened-by-it.html>

The UK Guardian stated that it is "the most astonishing and perhaps the most ambitious papal document of the past 100 years, since it is addressed not just to Catholics, or Christians, but to everyone on earth. It sets out a programme for change that is rooted in human needs but it makes the radical claim that these needs are not primarily greedy and selfish ones."

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/18/guardian-view-on-laudato-si-pope-francis-cultural-revolution>

The title of the encyclical is taken from St Francis' Prayer: The Canticle of the Creatures. We are reminded that the earth is "like a sister with whom we share our life (1)... This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters." (2)

Sadly, even among Catholics, there are sceptics who fail to acknowledge humanity's contribution to the problems we face. Reflect on Pope Francis' words in his encyclical, *'Laudato Si – On care for our Common Home'* (LS): "It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an 'ecological conversion', whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.

"We know how unsustainable is the behaviour of those who constantly consume and destroy, while others are not yet able to live in a way worthy of their human dignity ...Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us" (LS, 217, 159, 193).

Pope Francis rightly reminds us that "a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (LS, 49). Although the poor normally tend to bear the brunt of environmental harm, we are all in danger if there is no multi-country co-operation to pull back from the brink.

CCSJ was particularly pleased to welcome this encyclical which complements the Commission's document on God's Creation/the environment. See CCSJ's Website: <http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/special-focus/environment/> CCSJ's document contains tips about what you can do. For example:

- * Evaluate the impact of your activities on the environment. This will involve an examination and assessment of your lifestyle and consumption.
- * Pledge to make changes that will improve the ways in which you impact on and interact with the environment.

- * Strive to live simply so that others may simply live.
- * Practice the 4 R's for sustainable living: Reuse, Recycle, Reduce, Restore.
- * Become an advocate for God's creation.
- * Enjoy nature and live in harmony with it.
- * Consider establishing/supporting the establishment of an agricultural programme in your parish/school.

There are many practical suggestions in Pope Francis' encyclical - like the need to replace fossil fuels (165). The Holy Father reminds us in his encyclical that the Bible commands us to look after God's Creation. A key question that the Holy Father asks in this encyclical is: "What kind of world do you want to leave to those who come after us?"(160). Creation is God's gift to us and we must take more responsibility to be good stewards of this gift. Pope Francis does not mince his words. He says: "The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth."

He reminds us of the wider context in which care of creation is located: "A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

There is a sense of hope in his encyclical. Inter alia, he says: "Humanity still has the ability to work together to build our common home (13). We are capable of rising above ourselves. Choosing again what is good and making a new start."(205).

CCSJ raised awareness of the encyclical in a number of ways e.g. via the Commission's Newsletter which was circulated widely, CCSJ's column in Catholic News, radio programmes, and during presentation at a number of schools, the Commission's Ask Why TV programme, and on Shepherd's Corner.

Archbishop Harris asked CCSJ's Chair to work with Fr Matthew D'Hereaux to 'educate' the Faithful about Laudato Si – chapter by chapter – over a 6-week

period on his Shepherd's Corner 'spot' on TCN. Fr John Persaud focused on the Introduction and on Ch 1 on Thurs 2 July. The other Chapters were covered by the following individuals:

July 9	Ch 2	Fr Matthew and Leela (CCSJ's Chair)
July 16	Ch 3	Mikkel Trestrail and Leela
July 23	Ch 4	Shenelle Boyce and Leela
July 30	Ch 5	Fr Matthew and Mikkel
August 6	Ch 6	Fr Matthew and Shenelle

This was a call-in programme, so viewers were able to call to express their views and ask questions.

<http://www.fromthepulpitofmylife.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Summary-Laudato-Si.jpg>

5.2 Jubilee Year of Mercy: CCSJ welcomed Pope Francis' declaration on March 13, 2015 – the second anniversary of his pontificate – of a “Jubilee Year of Mercy”. On Dec. 8, 2015, he officially inaugurated the Year of Mercy by opening a holy door at St. Peter's Basilica. “As well, as a sign of communion of the whole Church, the pope has requested that every diocese in the world open a similar ‘Door of Mercy’ for the local celebrations of the Jubilee”. The motto of the Holy Year was “Merciful like the Father.”

The Holy Year of Mercy started on **8 December 2015** - to commemorate both the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, “which called the Church to proclaim the Gospel to the world in new ways, bringing God's mercy to everyone,” and ended on the Feast of Christ the King on **20 November 2016**. Robert Moynihan's insight is noteworthy: “What Pope Francis is doing by calling for this Jubilee Year of Mercy is to offer to all Christians the blessing of obtaining mercy by having and showing mercy to others.”

On 11 April, 2015, Pope Francis presented a 28-page Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, titled “**Misericordiae Vultus**” or “The Face of Mercy”. As the Vatican radio stated: “The bull is the fundamental document for the Holy Year that outlines the overall spirit and intentions for the Jubilee, as well as the spiritual fruits that are hoped for”. In the document, Pope Francis said the

Holy Year is “dedicated to living out in our daily lives the mercy” which God “constantly extends to all of us.”

Interestingly, the third theme of the document calls for justice and conversion. Pope Francis “asks members of criminal organizations and those involved in corruption to change their lives and to embrace God’s mercy... He also recalls the relationship between justice and mercy as ‘two dimensions of a single reality that...culminates in the fullness of love. God does not deny justice. He rather envelopes it and surpasses it with an even greater event (mercy) in which we experience love as the foundation of true justice.’” <http://www.missionsandiego.org>
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html

Pope Francis urged us, on New Year’s Day 2015, to recognise that: “This is the time of mercy. It is important that the lay faithful live it and bring it into different social environments. Go forth!”

In his Prayer for the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis reminded us that we “are the face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified...Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind”.

Pope Francis said: “It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty.” (And see the encyclical, *God is love* (no.31).

The Vatican announced that “As with all Jubilees, a plenary indulgence is granted during the Holy Year of Mercy for those who fulfill all of the usual requirements”.

5.3 Rededication of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, POS and the opening of 4 Doors of Mercy in the Archdiocese of POS:

On Sat 5 Dec, CCSJ’s Chair and some of the Commission’s Members attended the service for the Rededication of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. On Dec 13, His Grace opened the Door of Mercy at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, POS. Other Doors of Mercy were also opened in San Fernando, Arima

and Tobago. His Grace also appointed a Year of Mercy Committee, headed by Sr. Renee Hall, “to spearhead activities locally to give concrete expression to the mercy of God to all people.” Newsday reported on a release from the Committee, which had as its mission “to facilitate the archdiocese’s participation in the universal celebration; deepen the country’s awareness of how each person can be an agent and recipient of God’s mercy, and its impact on every facet of life and promote the frequent practice of the spiritual and corporal acts of mercy. ‘During the course of the year we will encourage everyone to engage in an active reflection on what is God’s mercy, its relevance to our particular family, to our church and to the country,’ the release said.” Readers can access information about the Committee on its Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/JubileeYearOfMercy2016/>



Door of Mercy at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, POS Photo taken from the Committee’s Facebook page.

5.4 Archbishop Harris’ Pastoral Letter entitled: Merciful like the Father: On 21 November 2015, Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Grace signed a Pastoral Letter for the Jubilee Year of Mercy. It is entitled: Merciful like the Father and is addressed to “The Catholic Faithful and indeed to all people of good will for the Jubilee Year of Mercy.” Readers can access this 21-page document via the following link: <http://www.iubilaeummisericordiae.va/content/dam/gdm/images/mercydoors/cathedral-of-the-immaculate-conception-archdiocese-of-port-of-sp/letter.pdf>

5.5 Code of Ethical Political Conduct & Council for Responsible Political Behaviour:

In 2014, Archbishop Harris, conceptualized the idea of developing a **Code of Ethical Political Conduct** in TT. He invited individuals/organizations to form a Committee, which he led, to produce the Code. The Committee comprised several civil society groups, including: the Inter Religious Organisation (IRO), Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha, the Anjuman Sunnat ul Jamaat Association (ASJA), T&T Chamber of Industry and Commerce, T&T Transparency Institute, Women's Network of NGOs, the T&T Publishers and Broadcasters Association and the Communication Workers' Union. Together they produced a Code of Ethical Political Conduct and established a Council for Responsible Political Behaviour.

The Code states several duties of the Council: to educate the public about the Code; monitor campaign activities; report to the general public; rate the conduct of candidates and parties; network with local, regional and foreign bodies on governance; and engage different networks which can bring moral suasion to bear onto the conduct of political parties. The Code came into being in July 2014 (<http://www.politicaethicstt.org/about>)

The code was endorsed in September 2014 by the United National Congress (UNC), People's National Movement (PNM), Congress of the People (COP), Independent Liberal Party (ILP) and Movement for Social Justice (MSJ). Inter alia, the Code includes signatories' stated commitment to avoid divisive, disruptive or criminal acts; their abhorrence of prohibited conduct such as electoral bribery or intimidation; respect for media access for all; and commitment to lawfulness in campaigning.

The code is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- Fostering of democracy through peaceful, free and fair elections, conducted at regular intervals in which voters are permitted to cast their ballots freely, without interference, fear, intimidation or bribery.

- Promotion of respect for human rights, the pursuit of civil and political liberties, the tolerance of divergent opinions, full and active participation of all in the political process.
- Encouraging participation in the electoral process by the People and to uphold their right to make political choices.
- Promoting an election process free from violence

In December 2014, Archbishop Harris appointed CCSJ's Chair as **Secretary to the Council** and established CCSJ as Secretariat to the Council, whose Chair is Dr. Bishnu Ragoonath, Political Scientist and Head of the Department of Behavioural Studies, UWI.

The Council's responsibility it is to educate the public about the Code of Ethical Political Conduct (<http://chamber.org.tt/media/code-of-ethical-political-conduct/>) as well as to monitor political campaign activities at general elections and Local Government Elections.

On Thurs 5 March, CCSJ's Chair was a guest on the TV programme, *Breakfast with the Deacons*, hosted by Deacon Derek Walcott on TCN, to discuss issues relating to the Code and the Council. This provided an opportunity to raise public awareness of these. On Wed 25 March the Code and the Council were launched at Trinidad Hilton. The Council played a major role in the 2015 general elections - held on 7 September 2015. The various Media houses reported on key aspects of the Council's Media releases. It should be noted that the Council has no power of sanction and functions in the hope that moral suasion will encourage responsible political behaviour.

CCSJ's Chair continues to function as Secretary to the Council, with Jo Anne Lodge as Recording Secretary. The Council's work, which commenced before TT's General Elections, will continue up to and beyond Local Government Elections. At the moment, the Council's Recording Secretary works voluntarily as funds from CCSJ's budget were no longer available to support this expenditure. The Council is seeking to raise funds to remunerate her for her services.

6. REPORT ON OTHER ASPECTS OF CCSJ'S WORK DURING 2015

6.1 INTRODUCTION: CCSJ is one of 19 Departments in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain. As Episcopal Delegate for Social Justice and Chair of CCSJ, CCSJ's Chair is a member of the Archdiocesan Administrative Board.

In keeping with the annual practice, CCSJ submitted its Pastoral Plan for 2015, along with all Departments, parishes, and schools. This plan is available on CCSJ's Website. The plan was amended when the focus of the Archdiocese 'shifted' to *The Church on Mission*. His Grace asked each person to adopt a Missionary Project. (See APPENDIX 1- letter from His Grace – dated April 13, 2015, regarding the end of the task of the Synod Implementation Team).

Vernon Khelawan, media relations officer of Catholic Media Services Limited (Camsel), reported on 25 January that “Archbishop Harris made his desire abundantly clear when he addressed the recent Charismatic Congress. He said ‘It is in your families that children have to learn that they have been sent by almighty God. Therefore, I want every Catholic family in Trinidad and Tobago to have a missionary project.’ This was a challenge to every Catholic family in the archdiocese to get out of the comfort of their homes and indulge in some missionary work.

“The archbishop went a step further and said, ‘I want you, every family, to adopt a family. Have a missionary project and teach your children from now what it means to be a Christian, a disciple of Jesus, somebody sent by the Father, so that others can experience the tremendous love and mercy of Almighty God.’

“After telling his audience that people would know the God of mercy by ‘our love,’ he continued, ‘Your home has to be a school of authentic gospel living.’ He said two places where Catholics must be present were at home and in the workplace.

“He also called on Catholic families to go to other places where people ‘have not heard the message; heard it and forgotten it; scarcely heard it; and heard it in a distorted way.’ He admonished, ‘I want you to find the time to go to these places where God’s love and mercy are not experienced.’”

Given the fact that the contracts of CCSJ's Parish Link Coordinators were not renewed when they expired (3 at the end of May and 1 at the end of August 2015), Members of the Commission revised the Commission's Pastoral Plan to take this into account. It was also necessary to do so in order to take into account the change of priorities at the end of the implementation of the 3rd Pastoral Priority, and the shift of the focus to The Church on Mission.

In March 2015 CCSJ's Chair was appointed by TT's President, His Excellency Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona, SC, ORTT, as a member of TT's **Equal Opportunity Tribunal** (see <http://www.tteot.org/>). Having met with His Grace to discuss the implications for her position as Episcopal Delegate for Social Justice/Chair of CCSJ, it was agreed with His Grace that her part-time work as Chair of CCSJ should continue.

6.2 THE WORK OF THE 4 PARISH LINK COORDINATORS:

As stated earlier, CCSJ wishes to thank the 4 Parish Link Coordinators (PLCs) (Deborah Boos, Jo-Ann Taylor-Smith, Mikkel Trestrail, and Dianne Wells) for their sterling contribution to the Commission's work. CCSJ's Chair had produced a Form to facilitate the completion of their reports to the Commission. Headings on the Form were as follows:

VICARIATE

REPORTING FOR THE MONTH OF:

TOTAL NO. OF PARISHES: 11

NO. OF PARISHES VISITED THIS MONTH:

NATURE OF VISIT:

NATURE OF TRAINING:

NO. OF PARISHES ATTENDING:

NO. OF PEOPLE ATTENDING:

OVERALL EVALUATION:

MEETINGS

NATURE OF MEETING: To discuss

NO. OF PARISHES ATTENDING:

NO. OF PEOPLE ATTENDING:

OVERALL EVALUATION:

OTHER

PROJECTIONS AND TARGETS

CHALLENGES

Reports from all 4 PLCs can be read in **APPENDIX III**. They are useful in that they highlight some of the areas of activity on which Parishes can focus as they seek to promote social justice.

6.3 CCSJ's Chair attended an International Conference in Rome:

CCSJ's Chair was invited by Cardinal Peter Turkson, the then President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (PCJP) (now Prefect of the Congregation for Integral Human Development – since Jan 1, 2017) to attend an International Conference in Rome from **May 21 – 24** entitled: *Women and the post-2015 development agenda – The challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals*.

The World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) and the World Women's Alliance for Life and Family (WWALF) partnered with the PCJP to organise the Conference. This followed the Conference organised by the PCJP in 2009. CCSJ's Chair had also attended that Conference which was entitled: *Life, family and development: the role of women in the promotion of human rights*. She had also attended the PCJP Conference held in Rome in 2005 entitled *Women, Development and Peace*.

As Cardinal Turkson wrote in his letter of invitation: "2015 is a crucial year for the international *community*. Indeed, the UN is elaborating a new post-2015 development agenda, which will be carried out through a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All the currently proposed SDGs have relevant implications for women."

At that time the UN website stated that "The United Nations is in the process of defining a post-2015 development agenda. This agenda will be launched at a Summit in September 2015, which is the target date for realising the MDGs. It is currently being elaborated through informal consultations of the UN General Assembly."

This Conference in Rome enabled participants to reflect on the issues from a Catholic perspective and ensured that our voices were heard as part of the global consultation.

The Agenda for the Conference in Rome included sessions on:

- Women as agents of change (Anthropology of women and modern culture. Semantic changes in the basic terms of reference; Women's role in Education today; Interreligious dialogue, road to a lasting peace –the women's role)
- New millennium slaveries
- Women and Work
- Education and Work
- Poverty and environment
- Peace and Development
- Human Ecology and women's dignity.

At the end of the Conference, participants agreed on the contents of a Document which was drawn up by all present and which was submitted to the Holy Father, via Cardinal Turkson, to inform the Holy See's preparation for the UN Meeting. Participants, including CCSJ's Chair, had a private audience with the Holy Father.



(CCSJ's Chair, Leela Ramdeen, met Pope Francis, along with other Participants, at the end of the Conference. Standing next to the Holy Father is Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the then President of the Pontifical Council for the Family. In August 2016, Pope Francis appointed him as Head of the Pontifical Academy for Life and grand chancellor of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family).

On Pentecost Sunday, as the conference came to an end, CCSJ's Chair joined other participants at St Peter's Basilica for Holy Mass at which Pope Francis was the Chief Celebrant. On her return to TT, CCSJ's Chair shared information about the Conference e.g. via CCSJ's column in Catholic News.

UN adopts Sustainable Development Goals: The UN Website states that “On September 25th 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to **end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all** as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years.”

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Goals 1-6 focus on Poverty, Hunger and Food Security, Health, Education, Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, Water and Sanitation.

Goals 7-12 focus on Energy, Economic Growth, Infrastructure, Industrialization, Inequality, Cities, Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Goals 13-17 focus on Climate Change; Oceans; Biodiversity; Forests; Desertification; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; Partnerships.

Catholics are concerned that the SDGs, as written, are, in parts, contrary to the Church’s teaching on life and sexuality. For example, there is real concern that the inclusion of terms such as ‘reproductive health, will lead to further promotion of abortion and contraception, particularly in the developing world.

LifeSiteNews reported last August that, even though some more explicit pro-abortion points were left out of the final version of the SDGs — such as an “international right to abortion” — grave problems still remain. In the words of Peter Balinski of *LifeSiteNews*: “Despite this [the omission of the “international right to abortion”], life-and-family critics say it is only a small win for the pro-life movement since the SDGs include ‘sexual and reproductive health’ language that is already used to fund abortion worldwide.”

“The SDGs were adopted following Pope Francis’ address to the 193-member UN General Assembly. Inter alia, Pope Francis said the best and simplest measures to implementing the goals will be “effective, practical and immediate access” for all to housing, dignified work, adequate food and drinking water, education, and religious and spiritual freedom. These pillars of integral human development have a common foundation, which is the right to life and, more generally, what we could call the right to existence of human nature itself.” Governments, then, must do everything possible to provide conditions that allow for people to create and support families, at minimum through access to lodging, labor, land and spiritual freedom. He also spoke against financial agencies that imposed “oppressive

lending systems” on people that generate greater poverty, exclusion and dependence.

“Political and economic activity, he added, is only effective when guided by the concept of justice and in “constant conscious of the fact that, above and beyond our plans and programs, we are dealing with real men and women who live, struggle and suffer, and are often forced to live in great poverty, deprived of all rights. “To enable these real men and women to escape from extreme poverty, we must allow them to be dignified agents of their own destiny.” Praising the many humanitarian accomplishments of the UN, the Pope said, “All these achievements are lights which help to dispel the darkness of the disorder caused by unrestrained ambitions and collective forms of selfishness,” Francis said.

Pope Francis’ address to the UN can be accessed on: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150925_onu-visita.html

He also stated that: “The dramatic reality this whole situation of exclusion and inequality, with its evident effects, has led me, in union with the entire Christian people and many others, to take stock of my grave responsibility in this regard and to speak out, together with all those who are seeking urgently-needed and effective solutions. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the World Summit, which opens today, is an important sign of hope. I am similarly confident that the Paris Conference on Climatic Change will secure fundamental and effective agreements. Solemn commitments, however, are not enough, although they are certainly a necessary step toward solutions.”

6.4 CCSJ’S Chair was part of the Archdiocesan Team at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia (22-27 September):

From September 22 to 27, 2015, families from around the world gathered in Philadelphia, USA to pray, learn, and celebrate the gift of the family at the Eighth World Meeting of Families (WMOF). The theme of the 8th WMOF was *Love is our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*.

The Archdiocese of Port of Spain was represented by Auxiliary Bishop Robert Llanos, Tricia Syms, executive coordinator at the Archdiocesan Family Life

Commission, and CCSJ's Chair. Dinna Rajpaul-Bainey, Executive Asst. to Bishop Llanos, also accompanied the group.

The AEC Bishops' Website includes an article entitled: The struggle for Family Life, by Associate Editor, Raymond Syms - taken from TT Catholic News, dated Sunday September 6, 2015 (<http://aecrc.org/wp/the-struggle-for-family-life/>) He states that: "Bishop Francis Alleyne of Georgetown, Guyana, who chairs the Family and Life Commission of the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC), is the official AEC delegate to the September 22–25 convention, and for the September 26–27 visit to the US by Pope Francis.

Cardinal Kelvin Felix, Archbishop Emeritus of Castries, St Lucia, will also be making the trip. Two couples, one each from Jamaica and Guyana, will also represent the AEC, but there will be other participants from English, Dutch and French-speaking Caribbean dioceses, including the Archdiocese of Port Spain.

Auxiliary Bishop Robert Llanos, Chair of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice Leela Ramdeen, and Tricia Syms, executive coordinator at the Archdiocesan Family Life Commission, will represent the Archdiocese.

Bishop Llanos has been invited by organisers to serve as "session chair" at an hour-long talk on September 24 titled, "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord: The Heartbreak of Infertility." He will moderate a three-member panel comprising US obstetrician/gynaecologist Dr. Kyle A Beiter; Cardinal Willem Jacobus Eijk, Archbishop of Utrecht, Holland; and Dr. Gianna Emanuela Molla of Italy, daughter of St Gianna Beretta Molla, one of the patron saints of the WMOF 2015.

Bishop Llanos told the *Catholic News* last Wednesday in a brief telephone interview that the conference would likely "treat with issues that affect the building up of the family, attending more to pastoral concerns than theological issues".

Besides being a good opportunity to network with the international Church, he hoped Caribbean participants would return to their dioceses and share their experience and knowledge and so "have it affect the pastoral ministry to family life in the Caribbean".

Bishop Llanos said while it would be his first time attending a WMOF, he believed the conference would offer participants “a sense of the struggle for family life worldwide” and present ideas on a way forward.

The CCSJ’s Ramdeen, meanwhile, told *Catholic News*: “If we read the signs of the times, we would know that today the family, the bedrock of society, ‘the original cell of social life’ (CCC 2207), is under threat around the world. We here should heed the words of Pope Francis who said to the people of the Philippines in January that ‘every threat to the family is a threat to society itself’.”

She said Pope Francis – who will be attending the Festival of Families – had already highlighted the need for “good and strong families to overcome these threats,” and reminded the faithful of their Christian duty “to be prophetic voices in the midst of our communities”.

Expressing concern that the sanctity of human life and human dignity were being compromised daily, and that family life and its values were often debased, Ramdeen said: “Yet we must not give up. This World Meeting will be faith-filled and will provide many opportunities for families from around the world to worship, network, share ideas/strategies for strengthening family life and promoting respect for all life – from conception to natural death.”

According to the WMOF website (worldmeeting2015.org), the purpose of the congress is “to explore the critical role the family plays in society and to give families opportunities to talk about the challenges and blessings that all families have” under the theme *Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive*.

Archbishop Charles J Chaput of Philadelphia said in the welcome letter that the theme was inspired by the early Church Father St Irenaeus, who wrote “the Glory of God is man fully alive.”

“The glory of men and women is their capacity to love as God loves – and no better means exists to teach the meaning of love than the family,” said Archbishop Chaput. “His Holiness Pope Francis also inspired the theme. He embodies the message of mercy, joy and love at the heart of the Gospel.”

The WMOF is a week-long international event of prayer, catechesis, and celebration. It consists of a Theological Adult Congress, and a concurrent Youth Congress, followed by The Festival of Families and the Papal Mass.

The Adult Congress consists of six keynote addresses presented by international speakers, followed by multiple breakout sessions. Workshop topics include: “Married and Celibate Love”; “Can society exist without the family?”; “Forgiveness in family life”; “The prophetic character of *Humanae Vitae*”; “Building a just society – Catholic social teachings in your life”; “Embracing the struggles and blessings of disabilities in families”; “Always consider the person – Homosexuality in the family”; “Interfaith Marriage”; “Struggling with Divorce”; and “The place of the family in the Ecology and the Environment.” According to the website, the Youth Congress is an interactive programme where young people can build, create, play, listen, serve and embrace the mission of love that brings families fully alive.

The Festival of Families, a celebratory event for families that will include different types of cultural and musical performances, takes place on September 26, and the Papal Mass is the following day.

The WMOF was conceptualised by St John Paul II in 1992; the first Meeting was held in Rome in 1994, the International Year of the Family, and has been held every three years thereafter.”– *Raymond Syms, Associate Editor, TT Catholic News.*

On Oct 11, CCSJ’s Chair shared the following via CCSJ’s Column in Catholic News:

Family – the world’s greatest resource

“Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love. That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life, and life to grow in faith...I leave you with this question, for each one of you to respond to. In my home, do we yell, or do we speak with love and tenderness? This is a good way to recognise our love...Love is seen and felt in everyday gestures” (Pope Francis).

These profound words uttered by Pope Francis in his homily at the Mass for the conclusion of the recently held 8th World Meeting of Families (WMOF) (Sun 27 Sept) encapsulate the heart of his message to us and to the world. The night before

the Mass, in the midst of the amazing Festival of Families, he reminded us that: “Love is something we learn; love is something we live; love grows as it is ‘forged’ by the concrete situations which each particular family experiences. Love is born and constantly develops amid lights and shadows.”

I feel truly blessed to have been part of the Archdiocesan team, led by Bishop Robert Llanos and also including Tricia Syms of the Family Life Commission, which attended the WMOF held September 22–25 in Philadelphia – the city of brotherly love and sisterly affection – and to witness the Holy Father’s visit to that city from September 26–27 as he ended his six-day visit to the United States.

The theme of the WMOF was *Love is our Mission: The Family Fully Alive* and Archbishop Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Philadelphia, informed us that this 8th WMOF was the largest ever, with representatives from more than 100 countries.

There were about 130 speakers for keynote and breakout sessions, including from different faith communities. Each day, as I watched the procession of cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests and deacons to the altar for Mass, and felt the warmth of the thousands of religious, lay men and women, and persons of different faiths in the hall, I was filled with hope knowing that there are people of goodwill who will forever strive to build up the family – the sanctuary of life and love.



CCSJ Chair Leela Ramdeen and Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia at the 8th WMOF.

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, reminded us that “God created the world for the family of humanity. No family can live for itself alone. Every family must dream of a better world, particularly for the

most vulnerable among us. The family is our most important resource. If the family is fully alive, society is fully alive.”

Space does not permit me to share the many nuggets of wisdom from the various speakers or from Pope Francis’ catechesis during his time in the US. During the final Mass, it was announced that the next WMOF would take place in Dublin, Ireland in 2018. It will be the ninth time it has been celebrated since 1994, when St Pope John Paul II launched the event in Rome.



From left, Tricia Syms, Dinna Baine, Bishop Robert Llanos and Leela Ramdeen at WMOF

I cannot help but compare the catechesis of our Holy Father to the unfortunate, unjust suggestions by some individuals about the way in which we should deal with some of the challenges we face. While Pope Francis was urging us to open our hearts to embrace virtues such as love, compassion, solidarity, and care for the sexually abused, immigrants, the unborn, the elderly, the incarcerated and so on, here in T&T an unsuccessful candidate in our recent general elections has suggested that the way to reduce crime is to arm the nation – to allow each person to be able to access guns so that, together, we will be able to defend ourselves against those who will do us harm. Violence begets violence!

On September 27, the day on which Pope Francis closed the WMOF, I read in the *Newsday* a suggestion by a letter writer that “the only way to solve the crime problem is to adopt a long-term view, so I think the family planning organisations should start giving out condoms on every street corner (by one, get three free) and abortions should be made readily available”. And in Mexico, a Councillor suggested that it would be kinder to give the homeless lethal injections “to solve the problem of beggars”.

Now is the time for us to be prophetic witnesses in fidelity to Christ. Bishop Robert Barron said at the WMOF: “There are objective moral values. We need to keep saying this to the world which has grown deaf to it...Moral demand – all the way! Mercy –all the way! That is the prophetic speech of the Church.”

6.5 CCSJ’S RETREAT: Ongoing spiritual formation is essential for all members/staff involved with CCSJ. As the US Bishops said in their document: *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*:

“Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith... Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice. It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came "to bring glad tidings to the poor . . . liberty to captives . . . recovery of sight to the blind"(Lk 4:18-19), and who identified himself with "the least of these," the hungry and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:45). Catholic social teaching is built on a commitment to the poor. This commitment arises from our experiences of Christ in the eucharist. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains, “To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren” (no. 1397)...

“Our commitment to the Catholic social mission must be rooted in and strengthened by our spiritual lives. In our relationship with God we experience the conversion of heart that is necessary to truly love one another as God has loved us... this commitment to social justice is at the heart of who we are and what we believe...”

One of the main annual events organised by the Commission is its Annual Retreat. Too often we get caught up with the many activities of our daily lives and do not take enough time to withdraw in prayer to ask God for spiritual direction. Over the years, CCSJ members and staff have found that annual retreats provide an opportunity for us to refresh ourselves; to reflect on our goals; and to draw closer to God – asking Him for His grace – to open our hearts to the gifts of the Holy Spirit as we seek to promote His reign here in T&T.

On **Friday 3 July**, members of CCSJ met for our annual retreat – together with CCSJ’s two part-time Administrative Assistants and Mikkel Trestrail, who was at

that time CCSJ's last remaining Parish Link Coordinator. He demitted office in August 2015.

The theme for the Retreat was: *Freely you have received, freely [you must] give* - taken from the Beatitudes. Certain individuals on the team were allocated periods of time during the day to share with those gathered their perspectives on the theme and to link these to CCSJ's vision and mission. Deacon Derek Walcott addressed the Team, sharing his insights on the theme and praying with those present. The retreat also included a Lectio Divina session on the theme.

In his 2013 Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis highlighted the importance of Lectio Divina. He said: "There is one particular way of listening to what the Lord wishes to tell us in His Word and of letting ourselves be transformed by the Spirit. It is what we call *lectio divina*. It consists of reading God's Word in a moment of prayer and allowing it to enlighten and renew us..."

In the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to ask, for example: 'Lord, what does this text say *to me*? What is it about my life that you want to change by this text? What troubles me about this text? Why am I not interested in this? Or perhaps: What do I find pleasant in this text? What is it about this word that moves me? What attracts me? Why does it attract me?' When we make an effort to listen to the Lord, temptations usually arise. One of them is simply to feel troubled or burdened, and to turn away.

"Another common temptation is to think about what the text means for other people, and so avoid applying it to our own life. It can also happen that we look for excuses to water down the clear meaning of the text. Or we can wonder if God is demanding too much of us, asking for a decision which we are not yet prepared to make. This leads many people to stop taking pleasure in the encounter with God's word; but this would mean forgetting that no one is more patient than God our Father, that no one is more understanding and willing to wait.

"He always invites us to take a step forward, but does not demand a full response if we are not yet ready. He simply asks that we sincerely look at our life and present ourselves honestly before him, and that we be willing to continue to grow, asking from him what we ourselves cannot as yet achieve." (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 152-153).

Feedback from those who attended the retreat was positive. The Team was energized and revitalized by the retreat. Those who made presentations had prepared well and the group participated fully during the course of the day. We thank Vanessa once again for opening the doors of her home and her heart to all of us and for her kind hospitality in providing refreshments for us throughout the day free of charge.

6.6 The Jubilee Year of Mercy (see p.18 above): CCSJ was represented at the opening of the Door of Mercy at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in POS. The Commission also shared information about the year in its column in Catholic News. Most of CCSJ's activities to observe the year will be included in the Commission's 2016 AGM report. These activities include presentations by the Chair during Lenten Retreats, Seminars, and discussion of the theme on Ask Why TV programme.

6.7 Integration of Pastoral Priorities and the Church on Mission:

As CCSJ worked to implement the 3rd Pastoral Priority, Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of TT's Society, during the first part of the year, members and staff continued to stress the need for the Faithful to acknowledge the centrality of morals and values to the followers of Christ. CCSJ's message to the Faithful has been that to regenerate the morals and values of TT's society, we must all commit ourselves to be active in Ministry. An integral part of Ministry must be a commitment to promote justice:

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

The message which CCSJ members also convey to the Faithful in our work is that, the Church's mission will only be achieved if everyone stands in solidarity with each other and with the wider community to:

- protect and promote the sanctity of life and the dignity of each human person (this means being vigilant and speaking on SJ issues when necessary);

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

It should be noted that although the focus of the Archdiocese has “changed”, the 3 Pastoral Priorities are embedded in the theme: The Church on Mission. This is reflected in His Grace’s presentation in Jan 2015 to those gathered at the Charismatic Congress. As Camsel reported, he said:

“‘It is in your families that children have to learn that they have been sent by almighty God. Therefore, I want every Catholic family in Trinidad and Tobago to have a missionary project.’ This was a challenge to every Catholic family in the archdiocese to get out of the comfort of their homes and indulge in some missionary work. “The archbishop went a step further and said, ‘I want you, every family, to adopt a family. Have a missionary project and teach your children from now what it means to be a Christian, a disciple of Jesus, somebody sent by the Father, so that others can experience the tremendous love and mercy of Almighty God.’ “After telling his audience that people would know the God of mercy by ‘our love,’ he continued, ‘Your home has to be a school of authentic gospel living.’ He said two places where Catholics must be present were at home and in the workplace. “He also called on Catholic families to go to other places where people ‘have not heard the message; heard it and forgotten it; scarcely heard it; and heard

it in a distorted way.’ He admonished, ‘I want you to find the time to go to these places where God’s love and mercy are not experienced.’”

6.8 VIRTUS Programme: Protecting children from child sexual abuse: (www.virtus.org)

Before his appointment as Bishop of Antigua in 2016, Bishop Llanos, one area of responsibility that he had in the Archdiocese of POS was to oversee the implementation of the VIRTUS programme – aimed at protecting God’s children from child sexual abuse. The programme falls within the remit of The Archdiocese’s Family Life Commission which works in collaboration with CCSJ, to continue training the Faithful using the helpful resources provided in this programme: “Protecting God’s Children”.

Protecting God’s Children is one of several VIRTUS Programmes conceived, developed, and financed by the US-based National Catholic Risk Retention Group Inc. According to the VIRTUS website, Protecting God’s Children focuses on the “education and training of clergy, staff, volunteers, parents, and other adults about the nature of child abuse, child sexual abuse, and how adults can help prevent harm to children...The Protecting God’s Children programme turns every parish into a child-safe haven”.

The programme includes two awareness videos (“A Time to Protect God’s Children” and “A Plan to Protect God’s Children”), as well as group work with the aid of a handbook and workbook. The first AEC training workshop was hosted by the Georgetown diocese, Guyana, on October 5, 2010. CCSJ’s Chair attended on behalf of this Archdiocese. VIRTUS Training Officer Pat Neil (USA) was a Facilitator at that event. The programme is being implemented in Archdioceses and Dioceses of the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC), following a commitment by the AEC Bishops “to do all in their power to protect the children of the region from sexual abuse”. (CN, 20 Mar 2011).

All adults working with children at Catholic institutions are required to participate in this sexual abuse awareness/prevention programme. Continuous education and training is offered through VIRTUS Online, a web-based training platform. CCSJ’s Chair is one of the Facilitators. Tricia Syms and the FLC Team take responsibility for organizing the training events and registering persons who have attended the

programme. A number of other Facilitators have joined the team to speed up the training process. Tricia is in regular contact with VIRTUS's Trainer, Pat Neal, in America via Skype about issues relating to the VIRTUS programme - seeking answers to some of the problems we face in TT and accessing new material to enhance the Archdiocese's programme. From 2011 to the end of 2015 training sessions have been organized for: Priests, Deacons, Administrators, Heads of Department in Secondary Schools, Staff/Religious, Catholic Institutions, Volunteers, Ecclesial Communities and Prayer Groups, Catholic Primary and Secondary Principals and staff in some schools, Catechists, Administrators/Staff of convalescent children's homes, the wider Catholic community in some parishes, First Communion and Confirmation classes in a number of Vicariates

In 2015, the following training sessions have been held:

Feb 28 – Training session for Catechists, held at St Finbar's

Oct 17 – Training session for parishioners of St Francis of Assisi, Sangre Grande, and neighbouring parishes; First Communion, Confirmation and RCIA Candidates, and Catechists.

6.9 Pro-Life work and Mary Care Centre: Human life is sacred. It is worth recalling the statement contained in the Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), no. 2. "All offenses against life itself, such as murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and willful suicide; all violations of the integrity of the human person...all offenses against human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, degrading working conditions where men are treated as mere tools for profit rather than free and responsible persons: all these and the like are criminal: they poison civilization...and militate against the honour of the creator."

And our Catechism tells us that: "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person—among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life." (2270) CCSJ continues to promote and defend life in all forms and at all stages: from conception until natural death. Other issues that are on the front burner are the death penalty, abortion, human sexuality, assisted suicide, euthanasia and those listed above. CCSJ is

committed to build a culture of life. There is an urgent need to promote the fundamental value of life from conception to natural death.

Inter alia, CCSJ's education programmes and pastoral work throughout the Archdiocese aim to raise awareness of the need for each of us "to respect, protect, love and serve life, every human life." — The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae), n.5. Promoting integral human development is the work of everyone. CCSJ continues to maintain vigilance to ensure that our laws against abortion remain intact.

The Commission expresses the views of the Catholic Church on prolife issues fearlessly in the market place. Where Draft Government Policies contain clauses/provisions that, from a Catholic perspective, will not help to promote a culture of life or to build the common good, CCSJ works with other faith communities, where necessary, to urge that these clauses and provisions are excised from the Draft Policies. In relation to the Mary Care Centre (MCC):

"The Church, in its commitment to promote and defend life in all circumstances and at all stages, and to promote integral human development, continues to offer opportunities for young women to have their babies and to live in 29 dignity e.g. through the work of MCC, a sanctuary in Woodbrook for unmarried, pregnant, young women.

"MCC was founded in 1980 by the late Archbishop of Port of Spain, Reverend Gordon Anthony Pantin, in his concern for and commitment to the preservation of life. On 22 June 29, 2011, MCC was rededicated by the then-Archbishop, Edward Gilbert. The spiritual, physical and psychological needs of young women at MCC are nurtured towards self-development and growth. MCC is a non-profit organisation funded by donations received from the private and public sector.

"The Centre opens wide its door to young, pregnant, unmarried women from throughout the region regardless of their background or religious beliefs and tries to impart to them that the value of life is sacred. The following is a report from MCC for 2014: "All staff at Mary Care Centre (MCC) continue to maintain the objectives of MCC which are two-fold:

*To provide a safe and secure environment for the pregnant mother to give birth to her child.

*To enable the young mother to be employable at the end of her stay at the Centre.”

In 2015, four (4) girls between the ages of fourteen (14) and seventeen (17) were admitted to the home. They were brought through recommendations, by the Community Police and Social Workers. Mary Care partners with CHOICES which is under the umbrella of the Child Welfare League. The girls are schooled there and are taught social and life skills. They are prepared for the school Leaving Examinations, taught Computer skills as well as Cookery, and Beauty Culture, which includes nails and Hairdressing.

At the Centre, the girls are supervised by two (2) Caregivers who work twenty four hours a day, seven days a week on a shift basis. The day starts and ends with prayer. At the Centre the young women are “rostered” to undertake chore. The girls work under the supervision of the Caregiver.

Readers will recall that in 2014, Mary Care received ‘The Medal for the Development of Women’ (gold) from the President of the Republic, His Excellency, Anthony Thomas Aquinas for “Outstanding Contribution to the Development of Women’s Rights and Issues in Trinidad and Tobago in the Sphere of Community Service.”

MCC also received the Faith Wiltshire Award. Mary Care continues to depend on donations from their Angels.

Funds have been depleted drastically with the downturn in the economy. Nevertheless, as Deborah says: “Mary Care continues to extend its services to all who come seeking their assistance.” MCC falls within the remit of CCSJ but is run on a daily basis by Deborah de Rosia, Eternal Light Community (ELC).

The Archdiocese contributes towards the running cost of MCC and is responsible for any Capital expenditure on the property which belongs to the Archdiocese. ELC raises funds to run the Centre. A number of individuals contribute on a monthly basis. They responded to ELC’s Advert in Catholic News for “Mary Care Angels”. Donations received by MCC include money, furniture such as cribs, baby-walkers and clothes. Due to the economic downturn, the level of donations has dropped but the Centre continues its fundraising efforts.

ELC has appointed a Board, led by Deborah, to ensure the effective running of the Centre. There are 7 Board members. They meet on a monthly basis. MCC keeps in touch with the young women's families and discuss with them pertinent issues as they arise. The Centre ensures that the young women keep all their hospital appointments.

CCSJ wishes to affirm Deborah and her team at MCC for their dedication and commitment to this important area of pro-life work. The MCC Team faces many challenges but do so joyfully to build God's Kingdom here on Earth.

6.0 Justice, Peace and Community Week (JPCW):

Sat 24 October –Sat 31 OCTOBER 2015

In response to Archbishop Harris' suggestion that CCSJ should change the title of Respect for Life Week to Justice, Peace and Community Week (JPCW), CCSJ embraced this suggestion and 2015 was the first year that JPCW was celebrated.

The theme for Justice, Peace and Community Week in 2015 was: **Let's Build Inclusive Communities**. All Archdiocesan Departments, Catholic Schools and Catholic organizations were encouraged to plan activities to observe the week and to use the Prayer Supplement that was published in Catholic News. Once again, as far as possible, all activities for the week were planned and implemented in collaboration with other Departments in the Archdiocese e.g. Sr. Juliet Rajah, Directress of the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office, prepared the Prayer Supplement which was printed in Catholic News at the beginning of the week. The Poster, Prayer Card and Newsletter which CCSJ prepared and distributed were appreciated by many.

This year, CCSJ held its first **Spoken Word Competition**, in collaboration with the Youth Commission – instead of an Essay Competition - to engage youths in the theme for the week. The theme of the Competition was: Building Inclusive Communities. This initiative proved to be a real treat. Thanks to the 17 young contestants who 'fired-up' TCN's studio on Friday October 30. Each received a Medal of Participation.

The three winners were: 1st prize: Michael Logie, Tunapuna; 2nd prize: Shineque Saunders, Princes Town; and 3rd prize: Darrion Narine, St Joseph. The

contribution of the first and second prize winners were published in CCSJ's column in Catholic News. See the link hereunder for the contribution by Michael and Shineque:

<http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/2015/11/07/let-us-be-concerned-for-each-other/>

<http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/2015/11/14/putting-god-back-into-our-lives/>



Photo of Michael and Shineque

CCSJ is committed to acknowledging/promoting the talent of our young people.

Calendar of events for Justice, Peace and Community Week 2015:

The following are some of the other activities that were organised during the week. Parish Priests/Parish Administrators were asked to offer up relevant intercessory prayers at all Masses during the week, to encourage the Faithful to pray the Rosary during the week, and to allow Youths to lead holy hour in parishes before Mass on Sat 31 October – at the end of JPCW.

On **Sat 24 October**, the opening Seminar on the theme was aired live by TCN. Fr Matthew D'Hereaux, Rhonda Maingot and CCSJ's Chair were Panellists. See CCSJ's Chair's presentation at: <http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/2015/10/26/lets-build-inclusive-communities/>

On **Monday 26 October**, CCSJ's Chair made a presentation on the theme to a packed Church during Eternal Light Community's weekly Prayer Session at St. Charles RC Church, Tunapuna.

On **Tuesday 27 October**, Fr Robert Christo, Gary Tagallie, Nadine Bushell, and CCSJ's Chair, focused on the theme during CCSJ's monthly TV programme: Ask Why, on TCN. This is a call-in programme and viewers were able to call-in to express their views/make recommendations on the theme.

On **Wed 28 October**, Family Life Commission supported the week by organizing a Panel discussion at the Catholic Centre, Chaguanas, to discuss the theme: *Pornography, the enemy of Justice, Peace and Community*. Bishop Robert Llanos was a member of the Panel.

On **Thursday 29 October**, Sr. Juliet Rajah and the Catechetical team organized a session at St Theresa's RC Church, Woodbrook entitled: Integral ecology, as outlined in Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si.

And on **Friday 30 October**, Emmanuel Community held a Vigil on the theme: Let's build inclusive communities – from conception to natural death.

6.11 CCSJ'S Communications strategy: Local and International

Resource Production:

6.11.1 CCSJ's 2015 Parish Link Newsletters (See all Newsletters at: <http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/parishlink>). It should be noted that hard copies of these Newsletters are printed free of charge by a generous Catholic who owns a printer. The Newsletters are distributed widely to all parishes, schools, and Archdiocesan Departments. Each one can be accessed on CCSJ's Website. Four Newsletters were produced in 2015:

January 2015 : CCSJ shared Pope Francis' second World Day of Peace Message (Jan 1, 2015) – entitled: *No Longer Slaves, But Brothers and Sisters*. The Holy Father called for an end to human trafficking and slavery. He has called human trafficking “a crime against humanity” and “an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ.”

February 2015: CCSJ shared Pope Francis' Lenten Message for 2015, which reflected on the theme: *Make your hearts firm* (James 5:8).

May 2015: CCSJ shared a summary of Pope Francis' Papal Bull /bull of indiction or proclamation of the extraordinary Holy/Jubilee Year of Mercy: *Misericordiae*

Vultus (The face of Mercy). CCSJ welcomed the Holy Father's declaration, made during a penitential service in St. Peter's basilica on March 13 – the second anniversary of his pontificate – of a “Jubilee Year of Mercy”.

June 2015: CCSJ shared a summary of some of the key issues that Pope Francis dealt with in his 192-page encyclical on ecology '*Laudato Si' – Praised be to You: On the Care for Our Common Home.*' The encyclical was released on Thursday 18 June. The title is taken from St Francis of Assisi's Canticum of the Creatures which reminds us that the earth, our common home “is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.”

6.11.2 CCSJ's 2015 Calendar focused on the theme: *Wake up the World! – 2015 Year of Consecrated Life (30 Nov 2014 – 2 Feb 2016).* The quotation on CCSJ's calendar included a quotation from Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter to all Consecrated People on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life (21 Nov. 2014): “The Year for Consecrated Life concerns not only consecrated persons, but the entire Church. Consequently, I ask the whole Christian people to be increasingly aware of the gift which is the presence of our many consecrated men and women, heirs of the great saints who have written the history of Christianity... I urge you, as laity, to live this Year for Consecrated Life as a grace which can make you more aware of the gift you yourselves have received. Celebrate it with your entire ‘family’, so that you can grow and respond together to the promptings of the Spirit in society today.”

6.11.3 CCSJ's Take-a-Bite series: A few years ago CCSJ arranged for 5 DVDs to be produced on the following 5 themes:

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

The DVDs were copied and circulated in packs of 5 to parishes as an educational tool. Further copies of the DVDs are available from CCSJ's Office

6.11.4 Nine Leaflets focusing on various social justice themes were distributed via the Parish Link Coordinators to raise awareness of the issues among the Faithful.

6.11.5 Bumper stickers: As part of CCSJ's efforts to raise the Faithful's awareness of the requirements of our Faith, the Commission has previously produced and distributed bumper stickers with captions e.g. *Just DO it – For JESUS, Catholic and Committed, Let your Christian Values Guide You*. In 2015, CCSJ's bumper sticker read: *It doesn't matter if you can quote the Bible, if you live like you've never opened it.* (David Alan Campbell).

6.11.6 Pocket cards: During the early part of 2015, CCSJ distributed the pocket cards with the wording: "My little card of values and virtues to guide me when I have to make choices. Lord, help me to develop qualities of moral goodness and excellence and grow in holiness." The card also included a list of about 35 values/virtues. These cards were produced and distributed by the Commission as part of our efforts to promote the 3rd Pastoral Priority.

6.11.7 Booklet containing prayers on various virtues and values: CCSJ's Parish Link Coordinators had worked with CCSJ's Chair to produce a booklet containing prayers on various virtues and values - as part of CCSJ's contribution to the implementation of the 3rd Pastoral Priority: Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society. Some of the booklets were also distributed during the early part of 2015.

6.11.8 Facebook and Website - (<http://rcsocialjusticett.org>): CCSJ records its thanks to Jo Ann Smith who manages CCSJ's Facebook page and keeps it up-to-date. CCSJ also owes an enormous debt of gratitude to Raymond Syms, who does an excellent job as the Commission's Webmaster. Statistics relating to the number of persons who visited our website during 2014 are available in **APPENDIX III**.

CCSJ's website is regularly updated. Feedback received from visitors to the website continues to inform the Commission's work. New content is added on a weekly basis. The variety of topics covered is of interest to many. Indeed, some individuals/organizations continue to ask for permission to use material contained on CCSJ's website.

For example, a Religious Order that was celebrating its 150th Anniversary in the USA, wrote to CCSJ's Chair asking for permission to include 3 of the Commission's articles in a document the Sisters were producing to mark the Order's Anniversary. Also, enclosed hereunder, for information, is one of the e-mails CCSJ received requesting permission to use material from the Commission's Website: **Tasmanian Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (TCJPC)** <tcjpc@aohtas.org.au Date: Mon, Mar 16, 2015 at 10:29 PM Subject: Permission to use Material on Your Website. To: "socialjustice@rcpos.org" <socialjustice@rcpos.org

Hello,

I was looking for some social justice information to use during Lent and came across your website. I want to say what a brilliant website you have with lots of relevant information.

I would like to use some information from a Lenten Reflection by Leela Ramdeen, published on March 21st, 2014, in the monthly newsletter we send out to parishes. I would definitely acknowledge the CCSS in our newsletter. I would also like to pass on the link for the web address for the booklet on Lenten Reflections. I know we are into the second half of Lent but I feel this booklet would be a good resource for people to have and use in Lent and throughout the year.

Kind regards,

Margaret (Margaret Donaghy, Resource Officer Tasmanian Catholic J&P Commission

tcjpc@aohtas.org.au<http://www.hobart.catholic.org.au/sites/TCJPC/TCJPC.html>

GPO Box 62, Hobart Tas 7001, Australia Phone: (03) 6208 6271

The following are some of the information that readers can access on the website:

6.11.9 Speeches and presentations delivered during 2015: posted on website

- * The value of a Past-Pupils' Association– Feature address at Holy Faith Convent Past Pupils Association dinner on Saturday December 5
- * Leela Ramdeen on the Death Penalty–
- * Women as agents of change – Presentation delivered at Women of Grace session on Saturday 30 May.
- * Presentation for the Thematic Hearing for 154th Session of Hearings before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights – March 16, 2015

6.11.10 Papers posted under: Special Focus on CCSJ's website:

- * Trafficking in Persons
- * Health: Diabetes
- * Environment: 3 documents produced by CCSJ on this issue
- * Capital Punishment
- * Restorative Justice and Parole
- * Restorative Justice and Post Prison Support (CCSJ was invited to produce/submit a paper to the then Ministry of Justice in March 2014 on the Church's view on the Ministry of Justice's Discussion Paper on Restorative Justice)
- * Social Justice: Presentation delivered at Laventille Devotions in 2008
- * Family Life
- * Women

6.11.11 CCSJ's Ask Why monthly TV programmes are available on DVDs to support social justice Ministry in parishes. The programme is aired live on Trinity Communications Network on the 4th Tuesday of each month. It is repeated on the Sunday after it is initially aired. During 2015, the following topics were addressed on these programmes:

27 Jan: Theme: Pope's Peace Message: No longer slaves but brothers and sisters.

Moderator: Nadine Bushell

Panellists: Deborah Boos, Jo-Anne Smith, Lewis Martineaux

24 Feb: Theme: Make your hearts firm (focusing on Pope Francis' Lenten Message)

Moderator: Nadine Bushell

Panellists: Dianne Wells, Nigel Cassimire

28 Apl: Theme: Code of Ethical Political Conduct:

Moderator: Leela Ramdeen

Panellists: Ferdinand Ferreira, Lisa Henzell and Br Noble Khan

26 May: Theme: Voter Education Part I

Moderator: Nadine Bushell

Panellists: Deryck Murray and Tony Fraser.

23 June: Theme: Laudato Si

Moderator: Leela Ramdeen. Co-Moderator: Nadine Bushell

Panellists: Fr Robert Christo, Chennelle Boyce, Mikkell Trestrail

28 Jul: Theme: Voter Education Part II

Moderator: Leela Ramdeen

Panellists: Mary King and Mikkell Trestrail

25 August: Theme: Voter Education Part III

Moderator: Nadine Bushell

Panellists: Winston Garcia, Mikkell Trestrail, Hollis Liverpool.

29 September: Theme: Book: The Eucharist of the Poor

Moderator: Nadine Bushell

Panellist: Bishop Malzaire, Bishop of Roseau, Dominica and Author of a book on this theme

27 October: Theme: Building inclusive communities:

Moderator: Leela Ramdeen. Co-Moderator: Nadine Bushell

Panellists: Fr Robert Christo and Gary Tagallie

24 November: Theme: Bullying in Schools and Society

Moderator: Nadine Bushell

Panellists: Mrs. Sally Rago, St Joseph's Convent, St Joseph; Keirra Hackett, Alexandra Jones and Dina Rialdo, students at St Joseph's Convent

6.11.12 Media Releases – Part of CCSJ's Communication Strategy is to issue media releases when necessary. CCSJ also uses every opportunity to spread the Good News via the Media e.g. by accepting invitations to appear on radio and TV programmes. CCSJ's Media releases are all available on the Commission's Website. On Dec 4, 2015 the Commission's Media Released focused on Christmas: *CCSJ says: "Let's Parang the right houses this Christmas!"*

6.11.13 Weekly articles in Catholic News during 2015: CCSJ continues to produce weekly articles in Catholic News – focusing on social justice issues. These can be accessed on CCSJ's website. Inter alia, the articles seek to educate the Faithful about justice issues and to point them in the direction of documents from the Magisterium that will strengthen their Faith.

6.11.14 Social Justice Quotations published in Catholic News weekly – to raise awareness of the richness of the social doctrine of the Church; to motivate readers to educate themselves on this issue; and to assist them to see and analyse from our Faith perspective, and then to act to promote Gospel values. CCSJ wishes to thank Mr. Rene Wihby who remains dedicated to the joyful task of submitting a brief quotation - weekly - on the social doctrine of the Church for publication in Catholic News.

The following are some of the quotations that he submitted during 2015. The entire list can be accessed via CCSJ's website:

January 4 – “Peace can only exist when each human being recognises every other person as a brother or sister with the same dignity. ...the inviolable dignity of every person must be recognised above all.” *Pope Francis, World Day of Peace 2015*

February 1 – “There is a need for just laws which are centred on the human person, uphold fundamental rights and restore those rights when they have been violated.” (5) *Pope Francis, World Day of Peace 2015*

May 10 – “God destined the earth and all it contains for all people and nations so that all created things would be shared fairly by all humankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity.” (69) *Gaudium et Spes: The Church in the Modern World, Vatican Council II*

August 2 – “Parents are called to teach their children to defend life, beginning with life in the womb, recognising that life is a gift from God and an assurance for the future of humanity.” *Pope Francis, Message for National Week of the Family in Brazil*

September 6 – “Just as goodness tends to spread, the toleration of evil, which is injustice, tends to expand its baneful influence and quietly to undermine any political and social system, no matter how solid it may appear.” (59) *Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium*

October 18 – “Evangelisers thus take on the ‘smell of the sheep’ and the sheep are willing to hear their voice.” (24) *Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium*

December 6 – “I am convinced that the whole church — that has much need to receive mercy because we are sinners — will find in this jubilee the joy to rediscover and render fruitful the mercy of God, with which we are all called to give consolation to every man and woman of our time,” *Pope Francis (Announces Jubilee Year of Mercy 2016.*

6.11.15 Some examples of collaboration with others, including Archdiocesan Departments, Parishes, Schools, Government Ministries, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, regional and international organizations, the Media etc.:

As the saying goes, there is strength in unity. CCSJ participates in/responds to national consultations related to social issues in an effort to share Catholic Social Teaching and to ensure that these morals and principles are included in national policy – for example, on Restorative Justice, Local Government and so on. CCSJ takes the opportunity to work collaboratively with others, both within the Archdiocese, and in the wider community e.g.

6.11.16 As stated earlier (p.30) , CCSJ’s Chair joined former Bishop Robert Llanos; Tricia Syms, Family Life Commission; and Dinna- Rajpaul-Bainey, to attend the *World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia* - from 22-27 Sept, 2015. The theme for the celebration was: *Love is our Mission – the Family fully alive*. Pope Francis also attended this memorable event from 25 to 27 Sept. and, inter alia, celebrated Mass on 27 Sept to close the week. CCSJ’s Chair reported on the event in CCSJ’s Catholic News column.

6.11.17 Meeting on homelessness in TT: On Thurs 12 March CCSJ's Chair attended a meeting arranged by Living Water Community (LWC) on the issue of socially displaced persons in TT. Present at the meeting was the then Minister of People and Social Development, Hon Christine Newallo-Hosein; the then Mayor of POS, His Worship, Raymond Tim Kee; Gregory Aboud (DOMA); various Government Ministry Officials; representatives from Catholic organizations; and other invited guests. The aim of the meeting was to mobilize support from Government, Local Government, Business, Church and Community to address the scandal of homelessness in TT. LWC shared information about a Centre in the USA which is an example of good practice from which TT can draw as we seek to promote the dignity of our homeless brothers and sisters. There was a general commitment to take appropriate action to address the issues raised. Sadly, at the time of writing this report, homelessness remains a national scandal.

6.11.18 On Sat 25 April, CCSJ's Chair and 2 PLCs, Mikkell and Jo-Ann, attended the *Catholic Youth Expo 2015*, held at the Centre of Excellence from 9 am to 6.30 pm. The theme was: *Mission in Motion*. CCSJ's booth was staffed throughout the day. Materials were distributed to participants who visited the booth e.g. leaflets on the 2 feet of social justice, principles of social justice, Lenten Reflection booklets, 'rulers' made for this event and so on. CCSJ also organised a justice competition which required participants to place 15 quotations in biblical order. The event was well attended - mainly by Confirmation students. The lively programme was aimed at raising their awareness of the Mission in Motion movement, as well as extending an invitation to those who wished to participate in the 14th International World Youth Day, which was due to be held in Krakow, Poland from July 25 to August 1. Pope Francis said in his message to young people on 17 Feb 2015: "This year we will reflect on the sixth beatitude: *'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'*" (Mt 5:8).

6.11.19 CCSJ's work to abolish the Death Penalty: CCSJ's Chair is also Chair of the Greater Caribbean for Life (GCL) –), a regional civil society organization that is striving to encourage retentionist countries in the Caribbean region to abolish the death penalty and to adopt non-lethal means of dealing with crime and violence. GCL was constituted on October 2, 2013, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago during a 2-day International Conference (2nd and 3 Oct) which was attended by 55 activists and organisations from 12 Caribbean countries, as well as

from other parts of the world. The Conference was organised in partnership with The Catholic Commission for Social Justice, Trinidad and Tobago; Alpha Chambers, Trinidad and Tobago; the World Coalition against the Death Penalty; Community of Sant'Egidio, Italy; and the Puerto Rican Coalition against the Death Penalty. It was held at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus .

On October 2 2013, GCL held a meeting at Normandie Hotel, Trinidad, at which meeting those present adopted GCL's Constitution, elected members to form its Executive Committee, and agreed on a Final Declaration. GCL's main aim is to campaign for and work towards the permanent abolition of the death penalty in the Greater Caribbean and to support Caribbean abolitionist activists and organizations in this region. GCL is concerned to promote the dignity of each person and respect for all life. On 31 January 2014, GCL was incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of Puerto Rico.

The death penalty remains on the statute books of the following 12 Caribbean countries – mainly English-speaking countries: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago.

As the World Coalition against the Death Penalty states: “The Greater Caribbean consists of 25 independent nations and 14 territories of France, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and the United States and includes: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Costa Rica, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, French Guyana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Island of St. Bart's, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, Venezuela, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. A majority of the countries located in the Greater Caribbean have abolished the death penalty, either in law or in practice. Only a few of the retentionist countries in the Caribbean have signed or ratified international treaties.

“Currently, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados are the only countries in the Greater Caribbean that retain the mandatory death penalty. Barbados has

reportedly been in the process of abolishing the mandatory death penalty since it pledged to do so in 2009 to comply with the Inter-American Court's decisions. However, the country's legislation remains unchanged. Trinidad and Tobago retains the mandatory death penalty.”

Pope Francis continues to express the Church's opposition to the death penalty. Collaboration with organisations such as GCL is helpful and raises awareness locally, regionally and globally of the Church's social doctrine on this and other issues.

6.11.20 On Monday, 16 March 2015, **CCSJ's Chair, as Chair of GCL, and also GCL's Deputy, addressed the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)** on issues relating to the death penalty in the Greater Caribbean, during a dedicated thematic hearing held at the Organisation of American States (OAS) headquarters in Washington, D.C., USA. As well as sharing information about GCL's work, they highlighted the main human rights challenges linked to the continued presence of capital punishment in the legal systems of thirteen countries of the Greater Caribbean Region.

The one hour presentation and contributions by the IACHR Commissioners can be accessed on: <http://www.worldcoalition.org/greater-caribbean-life-gcl-inter-american-commission-human-rights-iachr-death-penalty.html>

GCL urged the Commission to issue the following recommendations targeted at all Member States of the Organisation of American States (OAS), particularly those that still retain the death penalty: * Sign and/or ratify the international and regional instruments which aim at the abolition of the death penalty.

* Strengthen the criminal justice systems in our countries by, among others actions, improving their law enforcement agencies, their detection and conviction rates, their forensic capabilities, and Court facilities which may serve to improve efficiency and processing of cases.

* Request retentionist Member States of the OAS to provide accurate and ongoing information to the IACHR about the persons sentenced to death and their demographic characteristics.

* Build on the positive developments in the region and establish a moratorium on executions, with a view to abolish capital punishment and commute all death sentences to terms of imprisonment.

* For the special case of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, request that the Government of the United States immediately declares a moratorium in the application of the Federal Death Penalty Act in Puerto Rico and prohibits their use in court proceedings.

* Take appropriate action to address the root causes of crime, employ innovative and effective strategies to reduce crime, address the needs of the victims of crime, and find non-lethal means to protect society from offenders.

During the visit to Washington, GCL's representatives also met with officials of the IACHR, as well as with representatives of permanent missions to the OAS and abolitionist organisations located in the US capital. In all her discussions, CCSJ's Chair took the opportunity to share information about the Catholic Church's views on the issue of Capital Punishment.

6.11.21 Conference in Guyana on the Death Penalty:

CCSJ's Chair participated in a Conference in Guyana on the Death Penalty. In November 2015, the European Union (EU), in collaboration with the International Commission against the Abolition of the Death Penalty, organized a Caribbean regional Conference on the Death Penalty. It was funded by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the British High Commission in Guyana and was held at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, Georgetown, Guyana on 23/24 November 2015.

CCSJ's Chair was invited to present a paper at this Conference, in her capacity as Chair of the Greater Caribbean for Life, but incorporated her work as Chair of CCSJ in her presentation – sharing, in particular, a Catholic perspective on the issue. Her presentation entitled: *The Death Penalty as a Deterrent: Does It Work?* Can be accessed via the following link: <https://gcforlife.org/2015/11/27/eu-conference-in-guyana-for-the-abolition-of-the-death-penalty/>



From left to right: Ms. Melinda Janki (Justice Institute), Ms. Leela Maria Goretti Ramdeen (Greater Caribbean for Life & the Catholic Commission for Social Justice, Trinidad & Tobago), Lord Navnit Dholakia (UKAPG) and Mr. Andrew Pilgrim (Barbados)

The conference was funded by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the British High Commission in Guyana. The 25 participants came from Europe and the Caribbean region. Participants in the conference included:

Lord Navnit Dholakia, UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Abolition of the Death Penalty; Ms. Ruth Wijdenbosch, former Deputy Chair of the National Assembly of Suriname; Ms. Asunta Vivó Cavaller, Secretary-General, International Commission against the Death Penalty; as well as representatives from organisations such as Greater Caribbean for Life, Guyana Human Rights Association, Justice Institute Guyana, Human Rights Commission Belize, National Human Rights Defence Network Haiti; the European External Action Service; Parliamentarians for Global Action, and the Ministry of Legal Affairs of Guyana.

At the end of the Conference, the EU issued a Statement containing the conclusions and recommendations arising out of the Conference. They are as follows:

Conference in Guyana - Conclusions:

The risk of executing innocent people exists in any justice system: There have been and always will be cases of executions of innocent people. No matter how developed a justice system is, it will always remain susceptible to human failure. Unlike prison sentences, the death penalty is irreversible and irreparable.

The arbitrary application of the death penalty can never be ruled out: The death penalty is often used in a disproportional manner against the poor, minorities and members of racial, ethnic, political and religious groups.

The death penalty is incompatible with human rights and human dignity: The death penalty violates the right to life, which happens to be the most basic of all human rights. It also violates the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. Furthermore, the death penalty undermines human dignity, which is inherent to every human being.

The death penalty does not deter crime effectively: The death penalty lacks the deterrent effect, which is commonly referred to by its advocates. As recently stated by the General Assembly of the United Nations, “there is no conclusive evidence of the deterrent value of the death penalty” (UNGA Resolution 65/206). It is noteworthy that in many retentionist states, the effectiveness of the death penalty in order to prevent crime is being seriously questioned by a continuously increasing number of law enforcement professionals.

Public opinion is not a major stumbling block for abolition: Public support for the death penalty does not necessarily mean that taking away the life of a human being by the state is right. There are undisputed historical precedents where gross human rights violations had had the support of a majority of the people, but which were condemned vigorously later on. It is the job of leading figures and politicians to underline the incompatibility of capital punishment with human rights and human dignity. It needs to be pointed out that public support for the death penalty is inextricably linked to the desire of the people to be free from crime. However, there exist more effective ways to prevent crime.

Recommendations:

*Formalize an unofficial moratorium of the death penalty in countries in the Caribbean region that retain capital punishment;

*Respect international and regional human rights law and standards relating to the death penalty;

*Engage in constructive dialogue with governments in the Caribbean region as they take steps towards eventual abolition of the death penalty;

*Strengthen justice system structures, ensuring that they are sufficiently resourced and that they have the capacity to investigate crimes effectively; that victims are supported; and that there is adequate legal assistance to vulnerable sections of society;

*Advance human rights education as part of the curriculum for citizenship studies.

6.11.22 CCSJ's Chair/Chair of the Greater Caribbean for Life (GCL) organises Speaking Tour:

Following GCL's successful Speaking Tour in 2014 to Antigua, Jamaica, St Lucia, Grenada, Barbados and Nassau, Bahamas in October 2014, GCL's/CCSJ's Chair played a key role in planning a second Speaking Tour which took place in November 2015.

Speakers during the 2014 Tour were:

Leela Ramdeen, Chair of GCL and also Chair of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice in Trinidad and Tobago;

Renny Cushing, member of the House of Representatives of the State of New Hampshire, USA, and founder and Executive Director of Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (an organization that comprises of families of murder victims who oppose capital punishment); and Juan Melendez, a Puerto Rican who spent nearly 18 years on death row in Florida for a crime he did not commit. He was exonerated in 2002.

Speakers for the 2015 Tour were:

Bill Pelke – founder of an organization that is led by murder victim family members who are opposed to the death penalty. He is also the author of a book entitled: *Journey of Hope...From Violence to Healing*.

Carmelo Campos-Cruz – is an Attorney-at-Law, Deputy Chair of GCL, human rights activist and professor of Criminal Justice. Mr. Campos was the President of the Commission on the Rights of the Crime's Victims of the Puerto Rico Bar Association and founder of the Puerto Rican Coalition against Death Penalty. He has given lectures on various human rights issues in the Dominican Republic, France, Guatemala, Jordan, the Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Spain, Switzerland,

Trinidad and Tobago, the United States and Venezuela. He is a PhD candidate in International Law at Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

The Schedule for the Tour was as follows:

Barbados: Nov 8-11

SVG: Nov 11-12

St. Kitts & Nevis: 12-14

Guyana: 22-26 (NB: CCSJ's Chair was present during this 'leg' of the Tour. The objectives of the Tour were:

*To raise awareness of the inhumanity of the death penalty and of its ineffectiveness as a crime reduction strategy.

*To share alternative strategies for crime reduction.

*To encourage governments to vote for a moratorium at the UN.

*To mobilise support from organisations and individual for the fight against the death penalty.

For further information on the Tour see: <https://gcforlife.org/2015-speaking-tour/>

6.11.23 CCSJ maintains personal contact with individuals/groups. For example, many persons who come to Archbishop's House for assistance are seen by CCSJ's Chair or Administrative Assistant(s). As well as giving a small sum of money to those in need, relevant advice is also given and, where necessary, individuals are pointed in the right direction to seek further assistance.

6.11.24 During the year, CCSJ has sought to observe certain **UN World Days** in a variety of ways, for example, by working with students in some schools, holding vigils and panel discussions and Seminars, and participating in events organised by other organisations – on World day of Social Justice (20 Feb), International Women's Day (8 Mar), World Health Day (7 Apl), International Mother Earth Day (22 Apl), International Day of Families (15 May), Labour Day (19 Jun), World AIDS Day (1 Dec), International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 Dec) and so on.

NB: It is to be noted that at the 60th Annual Plenary Meeting of the Bishops of the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) held in Trinidad in April 2016, CCSJ's

Chair was invited to present a draft Statement on Capital Punishment, as a follow up to their 2 Pastoral Letters: a. on Capital Punishment (2000) and b. The Gift of Life (2008). Following her presentation, the Bishops asked her to draft 2 statements on this issue – a short version and a longer version, which she prepared for their attention. After the Bishops had made certain amendments to the documents, they agreed to publish the Statements in two formats: a short Statement which was issued on 4 July, 2016, and a long Statement which was issued on 21 September 2016. The long statement contains more technical language for policy makers and all those who can influence change in the laws in our Region. The two Statements have been incorporated in a booklet which CCSJ produced and circulated widely. It gives a Catholic perspective on the on-going debate on this important issue in the Region and globally.

One of the main aims of the Statements which were issued during the Jubilee Year of Mercy is to sensitize the faithful and policy makers in the Region of the importance of ending the Death Penalty in the Caribbean Region. Readers can access the booklet via the following link: <http://www.rcsocialjusticett.org/downloads/capitalpunishmentbooklet.pdf>

7. CCSJ's Links with Trinidad and Tobago Reintegration Foundation/Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre (TTRF/APRC):

CCSJ owns the parcel of land on which this facility is built. CCSJ's former Deputy Chair, Clive Belgrave, now deceased, was the Chair of TTRF/APRC. The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) now has responsibility for the work of the Centre. Clive's nephew, Stephen Belgrave, runs the Centre. At a meeting with His Grace, the then President of SVP, CCSJ's Chair and Deputy Chair, in 2015, it was agreed that CCSJ will arrange for a lease to be prepared to be signed by SVP to lease the land for 30 years for a nominal sum.

At the time of writing this report in February 2017, it is to be noted that a Lease has been prepared by an Attorney-at-Law. To date the lease has not been signed by SVP. CCSJ's Chair understands that another suggestion has been made regarding the land. This will be discussed with CCSJ's Board of Directors. Since CCSJ is a Company, issues relating to this land will have to be approved by the Board.

8. SOME CHALLENGES:

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

8. 2 Given the lack of personnel on the ground, as it were, and given the Chair's other commitment at the Equal Opportunity Tribunal and on the Council for Responsible Political Behaviour, it is proving difficult to engage in the kind of fund-raising events that the Commission organised in the past e.g. Annual Christmas Dinners.

It must be noted, however, that CCSJ receives funding 'in kind' from a number of individual and their contributions are substantial. For example:

- A Catholic who owns a printing firm, prints between 800 to 1000 copies of CCSJ's Newsletters, Prayer Books, Prayer Cards, and Posters pro-bono. This 'gift' is worth thousands of dollars per annum.

- A Catholic who is Director/Owner of a Company provides free graphics and layout of CCSJ Materials, when necessary. Each year his work for the Commission is worth thousands of dollars;

- Since 2014 the Accounting firm of Mr. L. Dave Lopez & Co. has been producing CCSJ's Annual Audited Accounts free of charge. CCSJ is a Limited Liability Company under the Company's Act and is expected to produce Audited Accounts. Mr. Lopez is also a Catholic;

- Vanessa (surname withheld) kindly hosts about 10 CCSJ members and volunteers for the Commission's annual retreat each year. The sessions are held at her home and she provides all refreshments for the day. The last theme was: "*Freely you have received, freely [you must] give*" - taken from one of Pope Francis' homilies.

Such retreats are essential to support the spiritual development of CCSJ members and volunteers.

St Pope John Paul II said: "...a community needs a soul if it is to become a true home for human beings. You, the people, must give it this soul." In our selfish, materialistic world in which the financial bottom line is the primary consideration of many in the business world, individuals such as those above stand out as persons who are prepared to "plough back" their expertise into society, free of charge.

This is how we will build the civilization of love – together. The words of Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, in his document: *The Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection*, are noteworthy. Inter alia, he said:

"While profitability is an indicator of organisational health, it is neither the only one, nor the most important by which business should be judged... Profit is like food. An organism must eat, but that is not the overriding purpose of its existence. Profit is a good servant, but it makes a poor master."

He reminded us that St. Pope John Paul II stated that business "is not simply to make a profit, but is to be found in its very existence as *a community of persons* who in various ways are endeavouring to satisfy their basic needs, and who form a particular group at the service of the whole of society."

CCSJ records its thanks to those above and to all those who give so generously their time, talent and treasure freely to enable the Commission/the Church to build God's Kingdom here on earth.

For some reason, the Commission has been unable to attract large numbers of Catholic at many of the various events that it has organised - in spite of wide publicity and efforts to mobilise support. However, it is noted that when parish priests take the lead in inviting parishioners to attend events, the Commission manages to draw a larger crowd – for example, at the Lenten sessions held in Chaguanas at St Philip and St James RC Church.

9. CONCLUSION: CCSJ continues to play its part in sharing what some believe to be the Church's "best kept secret" - Catholic Social Teaching. As the US Bishops stated in their 1998 document - *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*: "The most urgent ecclesial task of our times is the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. A vital element of this new evangelization is sharing our social tradition with all Catholics so clearly that they may be engaged and challenged, encouraged and empowered to live their faith every day."

Being a Christian involves more than prayer. We are called to walk with the "two feet of Christian service." Works of mercy/charity and works of social action - the promotion of justice, are integral elements of the Christian way of life. As the late Cardinal Basil Hume (UK) said:

"...the deepening of the spiritual life must go hand in hand with practical concern for our neighbour, and thus with social action."

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

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

We must all be committed to do what Saint Pope John Paul II asked and be "communicators of hope." CCSJ members agree with Thomas Massaro who said in his book: *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*,

"Catholic Social Teaching can serve as a unifying force, a banner under which believers may rally..."

It is our sincere hope that the Faithful will rally under this banner.

10. APPENDICES:

APPENDIX I: Archbishop Harris' letter to SIT Members



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN
Office of the Archbishop
27 Maraval Road, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, W.I.

ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE
Telephone: (868)-622-1103
Fax: (868)-622-1165
Email: archbishopharris@rpos.org
Website: www.rpos.org

April 13, 2015

Ms. Leela Ramdeen
Catholic Commission for Social Justice
Archbishop's House
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Leela:

By letter dated February 03, 2009 from then Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert, you were appointed as a member of the Synod Implementation Team (SIT). The scope of SIT's mandate as enunciated by Archbishop Gilbert was the approved Goals, Resolutions and Implementation Proposals of Synod.

Over the past six (6) years, you have been faithful to your mandate and given selflessly when required. Our church is all the better for having had that spiritually-rooted commitment that has seen the Synod implementation process to its conclusion.

Therefore, given that the Third Priority - *Revitalising Moral and Spiritual Values* - has been completed, I write to inform you that the task of the Synod Implementation Team has ended and I thank you for your generosity of spirit in giving freely of your time and talent.

May you continue to work in the Lord's vineyard in service to His people and our Church!

Sincerely yours

Most Reverend Joseph E. Harris
Archbishop of Port of Spain

JEH/mf-w

APPENDIX: II

PARISH LINK COORDINATORS' REPORTS

DEBORAH BOOS: PLC FOR EASTERN VICARIATE

Reporting for the Month of: December 2014 to April 2015

TOTAL NO. OF PARISHES: 11

- December - UN Day Of Human Rights – panel discussion hosted at Santa Rosa Parish
- January – prepared reflections for Lenten booklet for SJ
- Panel member for Ask Why - discussed Pope Francis World Day of Peace document –“Slaves no more but Brothers and Sisters”
- February – World Day of Social Justice - prepared power point presentation on Human trafficking- presented at *Precious Blood* Prayer Meeting on Thursday February and also at *People of Praise* Prayer meeting. The entire meeting at POP was dedicated to SJ together with prayers, intercession and dramatisation. Presentations at both meetings were very well received and increased awareness.
- February 28-April 4 - Attended 6 week workshop hosted by Family Life Commission, in conjunction with the Cotton Tree Foundation on Internet Safety and Security at Arima Girls RC School. The two presenters were Dr. Karen Moore, psychologist, and Ken Rodrigues, IT specialist.

Dr Moore looked at the different ages and stages of child development from 0-18 years and discussed ways of introducing and initiating conversation with our children on sensitive topics such as pornography, sexual activity, bullying and other ‘hot’ topics, and appropriate ways of managing such discussions without blaming, shaming or embarrassing our children.

Mr. Rodrigues discussed the pros and cons of the internet – safety issues, dangers and security. The workshop will be repeated at Arima Girls RC from May 10 for 6 weeks.

- March: meetings with Principals of Holy Cross College and Arima North Secondary Schools to take power point presentation on *human trafficking* to schools. Holy Cross scheduled the entire day on March 23. Unfortunately that was the day of total policing and so school was closed early and a new date has not been rescheduled. Arima North had to refer to the School Supervisor and no date has yet been scheduled.

- April 18- attended meeting of Eastern Vicariate Pastoral Council. The Council had not met for two years. Out of 11 parishes, only 5 were represented: Manzanilla, Sangre Grande, San Rafael, Maloney and Santa Rosa – so there was no quorum. Agenda included: Missionary Movement, Youth Confirmation, VIRTUS, RCIA Confirmation, Archbishop Appeal & Youth Expo.

- April 25 – assisted with *manning* CCSJ booth at Catholic Youth Expo held at Centre of Excellence. We disseminated info on CCSJ and about the work of Commission.

Deborah Boos April 29, 2015

**PARISH LINK COORDINATORS' REPORTING FORM
DEBORAH BOOS:**

VICARIATE: **EASTERN**: Reporting for the Month of: **May 2015**

TOTAL NO. OF PARISHES: 11

NO. OF PARISHES VISITED THIS MONTH: 7

NATURE OF VISIT: To inform Parish Priests/Administrators about end of my contract and to get update on parishes.

NATURE OF MEETING: To discuss SJ issues.

OTHER

Priests/Administrator appreciated being informed and was pleased with the work of the PLC.

San Rafael - Fr Taylor

- Introducing Theology of Body for Teens in Confirmation programme, in addition to Values and Virtues programme.

- Youths attended Mission in Motion in Curepe, Youth Expo and Youth Encounter in Guaico.

- Riders for Christ – initiative in the parish – cyclists evangelizing person to person.

- Young person in Aruba for 2 weeks on Mission and evangelization and other young persons from parish doing the same throughout Trinidad. Offered young persons to assist in evangelization in Toco/Matelot, but Fr Ransome said he was not ready as yet.

- Fr. Taylor uses the John Paul II approach – being with youth in activities – so parish offers cycling, basketball football and track.

Sangre Grande – Fr. Derek Anton

- No SJ Committee. Focus on Youth and Mission. Will be sending 3-4 young persons to Eastern Vicariate training in June.

Manzanilla – Fr. Joseph Phuong Ngo, O’Carm.

- A tremendous amount of work has been done on the Church, surroundings in Manzanilla to make the place more welcoming to parishioners. Attendance initially was 50-60 persons on regular weekends now around 100-120 and up to 200 persons on *big* occasions.
- Fr. Joseph visited and continues to engage in home by home visitation and, where necessary, to invite people back to church in all three communities
- Feels social justice must be inside the church and that rich parishes should assist poor parishes e.g. Fishing Pond community was totally neglected – large hole in roof of chapel, broken flagstones and high grass. Attendance 6-7 persons. Today new roof installed, church painted, attendance up to 100 persons
- Invited PLC to attend First Communion in Fishing Pond on Sunday 24 May, 2015 – Pentecost Sunday. I attended and was happy to do so. 18 young people received the Sacrament.

Mayaro – Fr. Trevor Nathasingh

- The day I was due to visit Sangre Grande, I had hoped to meet with Fr. Nathasingh, but he was in Mayaro that day.

Malabar – Deacon Paul Bousignac

- Fr. Dwight Black, O.P. will not be returning to Malabar so that parish is now a vacant parish. Deacon Paul will be meeting with all leaders of groups and ministries on June 1 to discuss the way forward
- On June 10 Deacon Paul will be meeting with Service ministries – SVP, Legion of Mary, Sick Ministry as new aspect of Sick Ministry has evolved where visitations will include evaluations and needs of sick persons and ways of meeting those needs.
- Sending 4 persons to Mission in Motion training.

Maloney – Fr. George Lewis

- Fund Raiser/Harvest carded for Saturday 30 May, 2015 – proceeds will go towards the upkeep of church and buildings at Parish and communities and Archbishop Appeal.
- Culture of death in young men in East Trinidad. Want some event to witness to life such as a procession, possibly on Republic Day maybe at Santa Rosa or Malabar. Discussion needed with clergy of Vicariate.

Toco/Matelot – Fr. Steve Ransome

- Not ready for evangelization (Mission in Motion).

Santa Rosa – Fr. Ferdinand Warner, O.P.

- Much work is being done at Santa Rosa and Valencia to become OSHA compliant and to make surroundings more welcoming.
- During Feast of Christ the King 2014 weekend, Fr. Warner allowed parishioners who had small businesses to offer their goods and services at reasonable prices to the community. That has become *Bargain Saturdays* on the 1st Saturday of every month from 6 am to 12 noon.
- May was a month of many activities to encourage community building. For example, Friday 22 May was Karaoke night, Saturday 23 May was movie night and Sunday 24 May was Family Picnic with games.
- Work at the Home work Centre, which opened its doors in January 2015 under Mrs. Hazel Reis and other retired teachers, continues. Approx. 45 young persons attend Mondays to Fridays: 3pm to 5 pm.

Arouca – Fr. Ashton Pierre, C.S. Sp.

Visited his office and waited over an hour and a half but due to Fr's time availability- was unable to meet with him.

La Horquetta – Fr. Benedict Hilaire

- Had scheduled an appointment with Fr. Bunty on the same afternoon as with Fr. Pierre, but due to over run on time at Arouca, I had to cancel the appointment
- Deborah Boos, May 27, 2015

JO-ANN TAYLOR-SMITH: PLC FOR SOUTHERN VICARIATE

NO. OF PARISHES: 16

REPORTING FOR THE MONTH OF: January-April 2015

- Saturday January 31st 2015: attended Southern Vicariate Pastoral Meeting and promoted the UN days. I suggested that parishes could promote these days through their Prayers of Intercession at Masses. Mention was made of 4 days in

February : Feb 4 “World Cancer Day”, Feb 8th “Human Trafficking”, Feb 11th “Sick”, Feb 20th “World Social Justice Day.”

- On Feb 8th Siparia Devotion: The theme was Communication in the Family, I spoke on how as a parent proper communication practices with my children encouraged peace and faithfulness.
- Feb. 9th: visited Fr Jose, the new priest at La Brea. I was invited to address parishioners at Mass on the Church’s Social Teaching - at a later date.
- Ash Wednesday 18th February: facilitated a retreat workshop on Moral and spiritual values for Cicero RC School, along with the Vicariate Link Coordinator.
- February 25th: part of panel discussion at Holy Faith Convent as part of their Lenten Retreat. I focused on *Marriage as consecrated living*.
- March: visited parishes: Siparia, La Brea, Princess Town and Point Fortin.
- Attended the Southern Vicariate Pastoral Meeting held on Saturday April 18th 2015. Shared our Parish Link Newsletters. Informed Council that my contract will end in May and will not be renewed. Therefore that would have been my last meeting. However, I was asked to stay on as a member of the Pastoral Team. Southern Vicariate Youth Ministries are willing to start a mentorship programme. I can assist.
- I will be running a 4 weeks workshop with Holy Name Convent in Point Fortin. Starting date May 8th.
- Working with the principal and staff of South Oropouche RC to run a programme that will integrate Social Justice Themes in the curriculum. Vicariate Link Coordinator, Richard Smith, made a presentation for the staff at their staff meeting on strategies for incorporating values into the curriculum.

CHALLENGES: December period proved difficult to organize meetings, because of Christmas functions and activities in church. Lent was also a challenge for organizing activities, unless it was a part of Lenten retreats.

OTHER:

- Continued management of CCSJ’s Face book page with Mikkel.

We have reached 150+ likes.

- Attended the Youth Expo on Saturday 25th April where CCSJ had a booth.
- NB: An updated contact list for key individuals in the Southern Vicariate has been submitted to CCSJ’s Office

Report for May 2015

School: Holy Name Convent Point Fortin, Principal: Sr Teresa

No. of Student in attendance: 45+

Topic: Teen dating violence Time: 12:30-2:30 pm

DATES: Friday 15th May, 2015

I made a power-point presentation to students on domestic violence.

Discussion of the information followed.

Friday 22nd May, 2015: Students were given a review of the topic and at 1:30. Brenda (I would not give her surname for privacy reason) a Domestic Violence Survivor shared her story with the girls.

She was warmly received by them and many questions were asked. For example: When did she realize it was time to leave? When she left, how hard was it to trust and to form any relationship again with someone of the opposite sex?

Today Friday 29th May, 2015: We will be wrapping up and the girls are to do a skit and 2 posters on the topic which will be displayed at the school. We will take photos to share.

Next term we will engage students in another form for 3 wks also.

The Social Action Group of South Oropouche Church, of which I am a member, is assisting the Principal and staff of South Oropouche RC in "Changing the culture of the school." By assisting in projects such as a mediation room (The Peace table) where students can play an active role in solving their own problems by talking it out. I will remain active on this project and send updates.

On Friday June 5th it is World Environmental Day and I will be giving a presentation on *Help the Environment* and will participate in a tree planting exercise at Pepper Village Primary School.

I would like to continue to manage the Facebook page with Mikkel because it is doing quite well.

I would continue to do Social Justice work as a volunteer in my free time with the Parishes, as I am staying on with the Southern Vicariate Council as the SJ rep.

Thank you for the opportunity.

*Regards,
Jo-Ann Taylor-Smith*

When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me'. Erma Bombeck

**PARISH LINK COORDINATORS' REPORTING FORM
MIKKEL TRESTRAIL – PLC FOR THE NORTHERN & TOBAGO
VICARIATES**

Reporting for the Months: December 2014 – April 2015

TOTAL NO. OF PARISHES: 16

NO. OF PARISHES VISITED THIS MONTH: 2

NATURE OF VISIT: TRAINING

Both the Cathedral parish and Rosary have postponed their training. I am awaiting new dates from both.

MEETINGS

Meetings with the Principal and Vice-Principal of Diego Martin Boys RC.

I was part of a meeting in which the possibility of starting an after home-work programme for the boys of this school was discussed. It is hoped that this programme will also help to equip boys with the life-skills that are needed to live as contributors to their community and society. This programme has the potential to involve the parish community and other groups in order to make a significant impact on the life of the boys in the programme and in the wider community.

Skype Meetings: I attended our weekly Skype meetings once my schedule did not allow me to do so.

1:30pm – 2:30pm April 18th 2015

I Met with Diane and Debra to prepare for our booth at the expo.

OTHER

Advent Reflections

Time was allotted to prepare and upload a brief reflection on the reading of the day during the Advent season. Each reflection tried to focus on a value or theme of Catholic Social Teaching and took on average 2.5 hours to prepare. These reflections were also emailed to the members of CCSJ. Based on the feedback that I received from persons who followed them on Facebook, they were well received and they helped persons to reflect on the themes of Catholic Social Teaching in a simple and 'everyday' way.

Lenten Reflections Booklet

In collaboration with the other PLC's I helped to prepare ten of the reflections for the CCSJ Lenten booklet.

World Social Justice Day

With assistance from Diane, I prepared a Way of the Cross booklet for use on World Social Justice Day in parishes and schools. Each station focused on the values and virtues that are needed in order to see, judge and act in accordance with Catholic Social Teaching.

It was emailed to parishes and secondary schools in my Vicariate. The following parishes and schools advised that it be used:

St. Finbar's, St. John's, St. Mary's, St. Ann's (the following week), St. Joseph's Convent POS,

St. Joseph's Convent and St. Finbar's gave feedback on the experience. The principal of St. Joseph's said "many commented on how meaningful it was. It made a huge impression on many in our school community".

Leela has asked for the World Day for Social Justice title to be removed so that it can be published as a general CCSJ Lenten resource.

Retreats

During the Lenten season I assisted in delivering various retreats to schools in my vicariate. These retreats helped to address the topic of renewing morals and values in the lives of those who participated.

They were as follows:

Std. 3 girls of Newtown Girls Primary- 9:00am – 11:30am on February 20th. This retreat focused on prayer and the importance of forgiveness. Students were helped to express their difficulties with forgiving family members and others who have wronged them and they were also taught various ways in which they could pray in order to find the grace that they need to grow to live as God's daughters.

Std. 5 girls of St. Theresa's Primary- 9:00am – 1:30pm on February 23rd 2015
3 girls of St. Theresa's Primary- 9:00am – 1:30pm on February 23rd 2015

These retreats focused on helping the girls to recognize their dignity as children of God, and what it means for them to think and behave as God's children. They were also encouraged to affirm each other's dignity through positive affirmations of each other's gifts, talents, and good qualities.

Corpus Christi College

I assisted in facilitating the following retreats at the school. The theme for each day focused on helping students to recognize that, with God's help, they can overcome all of the situations in their lives that they feel are "against them". They were helped to see how they can wrongly perceive that persons or situations may be "against them", and given tools to deal with these situations. They were also helped to identify situations and persons that really were "against them", and helped to see how God could help them to turn around these situations or heal these relationships through communication, prayer, and support. The retreats were as follows:

- 1 Form 2 class- 9:00am – 2:00pm on February 26th 2015
- 1 Form 4 class- 9:00am – 2:00pm on February 27th 2015
- 1 Form 1 class- 9:00am – 2:00pm on March 3rd 2015
- 1 Form 3 class- 9:00am – 2:00pm on March 5th 2015
- 1 Form 1 class- 9:00am – 2:00pm on March 6th 2015
- 1 Form 3 class- 9:00am – 2:00pm on March 10th 2015
- 1 Form 1 class- 9:00am – 2:00pm on March 17th 2015
- 1 Form 3 class- 9:00am – 2:00pm on March 19th 2015
- 24 Form 5 students- 5:30pm – 7:00pm on April 28th 2015

Staff of Corpus Christi College- 9:00am – 1:30pm on March 26th 2015: At the request of the school I also helped to facilitate a retreat for their staff. This retreat focused on "The Joy of service as an Educator"

Std. 4 of Diego Martin Boys RC- 12:00pm – 1:30pm on March 6th 2015: I was asked to facilitate a time of prayer for Std. 4 boys that would help them to pray for healing in their lives and for their families. It also afforded the opportunity to challenge the boys to live in ways that will bring life and not death in their school, families and communities.

2:00pm – 4:20pm on April 12th 2015

Divine Mercy Sunday at Mother of Mercy RC Church in River Estate:

I was asked to deliver a message on "Living the message of mercy". This message focused on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and the need for taking on the pain, suffering and injustice in our communities in order to bring about change as ways in which we are called to live the message of Mercy Sunday.

1:45pm – 3:45pm on April 23rd 2015

Round Table Discussion on "Ministering to the Disabled"

Conference: TOWARDS SOCIAL INTEGRATION: Rights, Roles, and

Recognition of Persons with Disabilities.

I presented as a representative of the Roman Catholic Church on the topic of Ministering to the Disabled. The panel also had two other Catholics, a Muslim, and a member of the Baha'i faith. My presentation challenged persons to:

1. Begin with the right attitude and theological understanding of disability in order to have a proper ministry to persons with disabilities.
2. This foundation is the inherent dignity of every person.
3. This means that a ministry to the disabled does not only seek to help persons to accept and cope with disabilities, it seeks to develop each person's full potential.
4. One mark of this is a ministry that ministers with persons with disabilities and encourages persons with disabilities to bring their gifts to the entire community.
5. The ministry should also have a component that seeks to advocate for inclusion in the society, and a change in the culture of society with respect to how it treats persons with disabilities.

7:30am – 9:30am, 11:30am – 1:30pm April 25th 2015

Archdiocesan Catholic Youth Expo

I helped to run our booth at the expo. During the second period this entailed answering questions and explaining the bible game to visitors.

PROJECTIONS AND TARGETS: In the last few months of my contract I hope to increase the number of parishes that have direct links to the commission and help to prepare a final newsletter to showcase the work of all PLC's

Signature: Mikkel Trestrail, Date: 29th April 2015

PARISH LINK COORDINATORS' REPORTING FORM

MIKKEL TRESTRAIL: North and Tobago VICARIATES

Reporting for the Period: May-June 2015

TOTAL NO. OF PARISHES: 16

NO. OF PARISHES VISITED: 2

NATURE OF VISIT: MEETINGS

3:15pm – 3:45pm Friday June 5th 2015

Meeting with Leela

NATURE OF MEETING: to discuss plans and targets for the last three months of my contracted period with CCSJ

OVERALL EVALUATION: we decided to focus on the following areas:

- a. Preparation for Justice, Peace, and Community Week
- b. Promotion of Laudato Si
- c. The publication of a newsletter that showcases the work of the PLC's
- d. Completion of new training material and reworking the advent reflections for general consumption.

OTHER: Preparation For Ask Why on June 30th 2015

I am carded to be on Ask Why Panel on June 30th to discuss Pope Francis' encyclical - Laudato Si. In preparation for this show and all of the other promotions that will happen later in the year, I am studying the document and the various summaries and videos that have been released on it.

Afterschool Programme at Diego Martin Boys RC

Each week I have been giving two hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to assisting with the pilot phase of this new initiative between the Diego Martin Boys RC School, the Companions of the Transfigured Christ, and other stakeholders to provide 16-20 boys with afterschool supervision, developmental sessions, life skills coaching, music appreciation, and basic computer literacy.

Through this programme the various stake-holders hope to impact on the lives of the boys and their families. Once the pilot phase goes well the programme will be expanded to include other classes and schools.

The school has also requested a vacation camp for the boys. This will be conducted in July. I am helping to source the funding and personnel that will be required to facilitate this camp at no cost to the boys.

Two weeks leave: From May 11th to May 25th 2015 I used my vacation days and therefore I was not active during this period.

Ecumenical Panel Discussion on Laudato Si

I approached Sr. Juliet to work with her commission to plan a panel discussion on the topic of the environment as addressed in Laudato Si. This discussion will be arranged to take place during JPC Week in October.

Facebook and Twitter – I continue to work with Jo-Ann on these social media CCSJ initiatives.

PROJECTIONS AND TARGETS: JPC Week

In July I will be following up with all of my parishes in order to ensure that they are preparing for JPC week and I will see how I can assist them in commemorating this week.

Creation of Promotional Material on Laudato Si

Other than our Newsletter I am working on different ways in which we can promote the document using our social media. One example will be dedicating a month to the document on our social media where we will place quotations, photos, and encourage discussion around the posts to help sensitize persons to the document.

I have also been given the idea for us to prepare short videos that address topics covered in the document.

Signature: Mikkel Trestrail Date: 26th June 2015

PARISH LINK COORDINATORS' REPORTING FORM

MIKKEL TRESTRAIL - North and Tobago Vicariates

Reporting for the Period: May-June 2015

TOTAL NO. OF PARISHES: 16

NO. OF PARISHES VISITED: 1

NATURE OF VISIT:

MEETINGS: Monthly Meeting on July 29th 2015

OTHER: Ask Why on June 30th 2015

I was a member of the panel on the Ask Why show on June 30th 2015.

9:30am – 2:00pm July 3rd 2015: I attended and led the first session of our CCSJ retreat.

July 6th-7th 2015: On July 6th I represented CCSJ at the training workshop put on by the Faith Based Network of Trinidad and Tobago on sexual and reproductive health.

I was carded to present on the Church's Virtues and Values programme on the 7th but I was not able to make the second day because I injured myself on night of the 6th and was unable to function on the next day.

Shepherd's Corner on July 16th 2015

Along with Leela, I helped to explain Chapter 3 of Laudato Si for the listeners and viewers of this programme.

I will also be on Shepherd's Corner on July 30th 2015 to help with teaching on Chapter 5 of the document.

July 8th-July31st 2015: Diego Martin Boys RC Camp for At-risk Students

I helped to mobilize the parish community of St. John's to provide support for the boys' camp being run at the Diego Martin Boys RC School by CTC Community for the month of July.

I also worked to coordinate and facilitate various sessions each week with the boys.

I devoted about 16 hours per week to coordinating and facilitating at this camp which served between 14-18 boys.

The camp exposed the boys to music, dance, art and craft, media literacy and group therapy, cooking, sports, etiquette training, and value formation and spiritual development.

PROJECTIONS AND TARGETS: In August I will be aiming to:

1. Represent CCSJ on a panel discussion at Liturgy School on August 7th. I will have to present on "What is Social Justice"
2. Represent CCSJ on CFC's show on August 11th to share on our role in politics as Catholics.
3. Complete training manuals and other documents as requested for JPC week and Advent.

JPC Week

Signature: Mikkel Trestrail

Date: 29th July 2015

DIANNE WELLS: PLC for VICARIATE: Central & Suburban Vicariates_

Reporting for the months of Jan to April 2015

TOTAL NO. OF PARISHES: 15

NO. OF PARISHES VISITED JANUARY TO APRIL, 2015: 8

1. NATURE OF VISIT: To provide ongoing SJ support for parishes
2. Create awareness about Social Justice and plan for the establishment of committees in those parishes where none existed
3. Attend Mass
4. Attended Vicariate meeting Suburban Area
5. Meeting
6. Attend SJ events

TRAINING - CARAPICHAIMA

MEETINGS- 5

1. NATURE OF MEETING: Suburban Vicariate – February and April 2015

NO. OF PARISHES ATTENDING: 7

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2015 IN ORDER TO BE MORE PROACTIVE REGARDING PLANNING OF EVENTS TO ENSURE SUCCESS AND PARTICIPATION.

2. NATURE OF MEETING: CARAPICHAIMA

Follow up meeting to plan for the introduction of SJ training immediately after Lent 2015

NO. OF PERSONS ATTENDING MASS: 4

3. NATURE OF MEETING – BARATARIA – FEB 2015

A parish community outreach has started. So far community meetings have been held at the Barataria Housing Scheme.

A review of the parish data collected at the last census is currently being done to review needs of persons in the Saturday morning feeding programme to develop a *two feet* SJ program

No. of persons attending – 5.

4. NATURE OF MEETING – FATIMA CUREPE – JANUARY 2015

Strategic plans for implementing SJ objectives in 2015 as a result of initial planning meetings in October and November 2014

No. of persons attending - 6

5. NATURE OF MEETING – SANTA CRUZ – FEB & APRIL 2015

New Parish Priest, Fr. Jason Khan, introduced and met to look at implementation of SJ team in Santa Cruz/Maracas communities.

In Maracas Bay, a program to provide assistance mainly to school children and victims of unfortunate events has started. Also, limited food supplies will be provided on a monthly basis. However, a more systematic service

plan must be introduced. Further ongoing planning needed. Fr. Jason needs some time to organize the three areas under his care.

6. NATURE OF MEETING – MARACAS ST. JOSEPH – FEB & APRIL 2015
Planning Committee for Catholic Business Expo 2015
Back to Church mission to Caura Valley.....Develop a SJ component in Mission
Planning Human Development Series. No. of persons attending – 6 & 6
7. NATURE OF MEETING – MAYO – JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2015
Planning World Day of Social Justice (WSJ) 2015 and Lenten School retreat
No. of persons attending – 5 & 6
8. NATURE OF MEETING – TABAQUITE – JAN & FEB 2015
Planning WSJ 2015 and Lenten School retreat.
No. of persons attending – 4 & 4
9. NATURE OF MEETING – COUVA – FEB 2015
Planning Lenten retreat which was incorporated into the weekly prayer meeting. No. of persons attending – 4 & 4
10. NATURE OF MEETING – MALONEY – JAN & FEB 2015
Planning WSJ 2015 and Lenten retreat. No. of persons attending – 3 & 4

OTHER

LENTEN REFLECTION PRAYER BOOK

Prepared 10 Social Justice Principles

Assisted in editing and completing the manuscript for the printer

SOCIAL JUSTICE DAY: Feb 20, 2015

Commemorated in Mayo, Tabaquite and Maloney. Pictures submitted of SJ walk in Maloney. Since SJ Day was the first Friday in Lent, Mikkell selected a Social Justice theme and prepared a Stations of the Cross meditation which was sent to schools for use on Feb 20, 2015. CREATED MESSAGE FOR WSJD which was sent to schools and Parishes

Calendar 2015

Prepared in conjunction with other PLC's a draft calendar which includes United Nation days, Public Holidays and other days of observations.

Objective is to have enough advance planning and notification time to ensure participation and attendance.

ASK WHY FEB 2015

Pope's Lenten Message. Moderated by Nadine Bushell.

CATHOLICS IN THE WORKPLACE

LENTEN RETREAT BARATARIA

DISTRIBUTION OF LENTEN REFLECTION BOOKS

FARMERS MARKET SANTA CRUZ

NEW PARISH PRIEST SANTA CRUZ: On Friday 9th January, 2015 R.C Parish of Holy Cross welcomed its new priest Fr. David S. Khan, who replaced Fr. Alex Viruthakalangara.

Fr. Gerard Tang Choon, Vicar - Suburban Vicariate Pastoral Council, presided at the Friday evening Mass, which included the installation of Fr. David S. Khan as the new priest for the R.C. Parish of The Holy Cross, including the Community of St. Peter (Maracas Bay) and the R.C. Parish of Mary Immaculate Queen of the Universe - Bourg Mulatresse.

LENTEN RETREATS: March Adult Lenten retreat – prayer groups Mayo, Couva and D'abadie, Maracas St Joseph (March 17) Barataria (March 09)

CATHOLIC YOUTH COMMISSION YOUTH EXPO

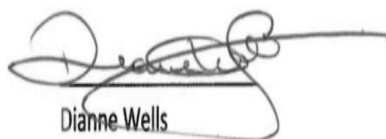
Youth Expo...attended planning meeting

Planned with PLC's logistics for CCSJ booth

PROJECTIONS AND TARGETS

FORMALISE SJ TEAMS IN PARISHES OF SANTA CRUZ, CARAPICHAIMA AND CUREPE

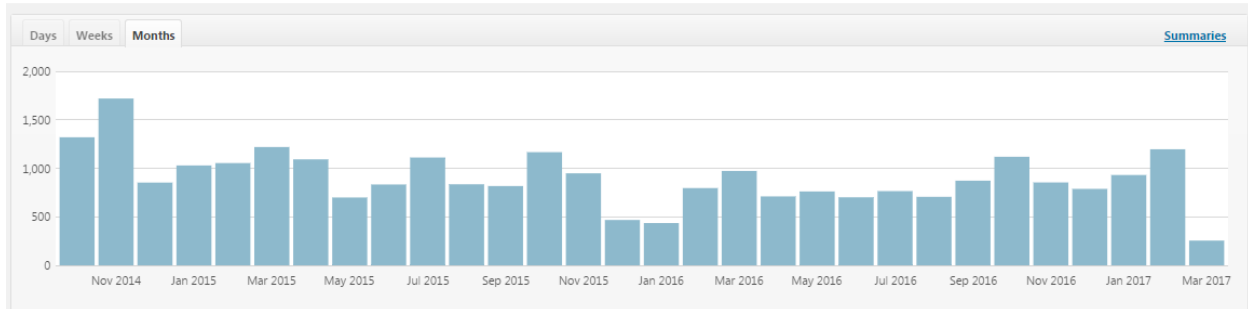
CHALLENGES: Given termination of contracts, follow-up with some of the projects will be based on the availability of time.



Dianne Wells

April 30, 2015

APPENDIX III: WEB STATISTICS



Months and Years

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2009							3	36	12	44	538	605	1,238
2010	430	555	616	540	411	423	688	831	1,239	833	981	779	8,326
2011	858	896	854	903	651	894	1,273	1,275	1,104	1,146	1,776	1,055	12,685
2012	1,491	1,858	1,906	1,068	1,477	1,389	1,752	1,239	1,948	1,965	1,275	899	18,267
2013	1,389	1,226	1,313	1,437	1,439	1,006	1,226	917	1,019	1,362	1,155	992	14,481
2014	1,001	1,059	1,350	962	1,038	918	853	1,425	1,448	1,320	1,719	853	13,946
2015	1,029	1,054	1,219	1,092	699	833	1,111	835	817	1,166	948	467	11,270
2016	436	796	973	710	761	701	765	706	872	1,119	854	788	9,481
2017	931	1,196	255										2,382