



THEME: *SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD*

“The Sunday of the Word of God in the Catholic Church takes place on the third Sunday in Ordinary Time, during January. Pope Francis’ Apostolic Letter, issued *motu proprio* (of his own initiative), *Aperuit illis*, published on 30 September 2019, establishes that each year the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the Word of God. The first celebration took place on 26 January in 2020.

The title of the papal document, "Aperuit illis", is taken from Luke's Gospel, where the Evangelist describes how the Risen Jesus appeared to his disciples, and how “*he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures*”. Francis issued this directive in consequence of his intention to set aside "a Sunday given over entirely to the word of God, so as to appreciate the inexhaustible riches contained in that constant dialogue between the Lord and his people"..." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunday_of_the_Word_of_God)



“The official logo for the Sunday of the Word of God was unveiled at the Vatican Jan. 17. The colorful logo depicts "The Road to Emmaus" and is based on an icon written by the late Benedictine Sister Marie-Paul Farran. The newly established day is being celebrated Jan. 26 and is meant to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God. (CNS logo/courtesy Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization).”

**CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
17th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Covering the period: 1 Jan 2019 – 31 Dec 2019

DATE OF AGM: Wed 2 December 2020

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY

“IF YOU WANT PEACE, WORK FOR JUSTICE” (BLESSED POPE PAUL VI)



CCSJ's 17th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 2 December, 2020 (covering period 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2019)

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CCSJ'S 17th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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 Jan to Dec 2018 held on Wed 27 November 2019 & Matters arising from Minutes

5:50 p.m. Presentation of Annual Report on CCSJ's work in 2019: CCSJ's Chair

6:10 p.m. Adoption of Annual Report and Questions/comments

6:15 p.m. Treasurer's Report & Audited Accounts for 2019 - to be presented at an Extraordinary General Meeting of CCSJ in 2021

6:25 p.m. Appointment of Auditors

6:30 p.m. Election of Officers/Management Committee - See By Laws: 7.1 (Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer, Secretary)

6:40 p.m. Closing Prayer

1. CCSJ'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019

CCSJ'S VISION:

We envision a transformed national/world community where Justice, Peace and Love prevails, 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: The CCSJ is grounded in the Biblical concept of Social Justice and Catholic Social Teaching and is challenged by the Mission of Jesus to bring about a New World Order based on truth, love, justice, peace and freedom.

Our mission is to be a fearless and unified voice to eradicate social injustice in T&T and in the world, a voice infused with Gospel values that will awaken the social conscience of all citizens and create an empowered population so that all can be active participants in bringing about the Kingdom of God here on earth. 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. CCSJ is pleased to present its annual report for 2019. The Theme for CCSJ's AGM, which covers activities undertaken during 2019, is: *“Sunday of the Word of God “*

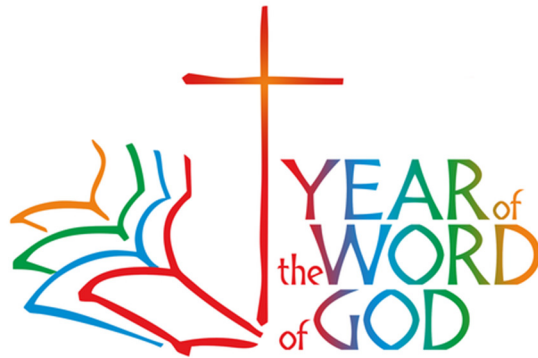
BOARD MEMBERS DURING 2019:

- Leela Ramdeen, Episcopal Delegate/Chair of CCSJ & AMMR
- Annette des Iles, Vice Chair
- Nadine Bushell, Secretary
- Annette McKenzie, Treasurer
- Kirk Bengochea, Member
- Sr Roberta O’Flaherty, Member
- Jo-Ann Taylor-Smith, Member
- Joseph Timothy, Member
- Dianne Wells, Member
- Shania Cuffy

CCSJ members record our thanks to Lorna Chee-Wah and Cheryl Wallace, CCSJ's Administrative Assistants, who, through a job-share, continued during 2019 to provide tremendous support to the Commission. I would also like to thank all members of CCSJ most sincerely for your commitment to the social imperatives of the Gospel. We thank also all those persons and organisations that have contributed to the Commission's work, and to His Grace, Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon, for his inspirational leadership.

CCSJ is grateful for the generosity of a few individuals who continue to lend tremendous in-kind support to the Commission. For example, the following provide services either free of charge or at a reduced rate, thus saving CCSJ a significant amount of money: 1. Andes Printers: CCSJ’s Newsletters, posters etc. are provided at a reduced price by Andes; 2. Hayden Louis’s Company provides CCSJ with free graphic designs; 3. L. Dave Lopez & Co., Auditors, provide their services to CCSJ free of charge. As a Company, CCSJ is required to produce audited reports annually.

3. REFLECTION ON CCSJ'S AGM THEME: *Sunday of the Word of God*



“The Christian faith is not a ‘religion of the book’: Christianity is the ‘religion of the word of God’, not of ‘a written and mute word, but of the incarnate and living Word’” (Verbum Domini N° 7)

Pope Francis’ Apostolic Letter, issued *motu proprio* (of his own initiative), *Aperuit illis*, published on 30 September 2019, establishes that each year "the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the Word of God". The first celebration of this day took place on 26 January in 2020.

The title of the papal document, "Aperuit illis", is taken from Luke's Gospel, where the Evangelist describes how the Risen Jesus appeared to his disciples, and how “he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures”. Francis issued this directive in consequence of his intention to set aside "a Sunday given over entirely to the word of God, so as to appreciate the inexhaustible riches contained in that constant dialogue between the Lord and his people"..."

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunday_of_the_Word_of_God).

As Catholic News Service reported: “An icon of the encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus was chosen as the official logo for the worldwide celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God. The colorful logo is based on an icon written by the late-Benedictine Sister Marie-Paul Farran, a member of the Our Lady of Calvary Congregation, who lived and worked at its monastery on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

“The logo shows the resurrected Christ holding in his left hand a scroll, which is "the sacred Scripture that found its fulfillment in his person," Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization told reporters.

“By his side are two disciples: Clopas and his wife, Mary. They both fix their gaze on Christ while Clopas holds a stick to indicate "a pilgrimage," the archbishop said. Mary is holding one hand upward and with her other hand seems to be touching the Lord, reaffirming that he has fulfilled the ancient promises and is the living Word that must be proclaimed to the world, he said.

“Holding the stick in one hand, Clopas' free hand is pointing the road ahead, which all disciples are called to take in order to bring the Good News to everyone, Archbishop Fisichella said. There is a star overhead symbolizing evangelization and the "permanent light" that guides their journey and shows them the way, he added. “It is also important, he said, to notice the feet of all three are depicted as being in motion, representing that the proclamation of the Risen Christ cannot be accomplished by "tired or lazy disciples" but only by those who are "dynamic" and ready to find new ways to speak so that sacred Scripture may become the living guide of the life of the church and its people.

As the Catholic Biblical Foundation (CBF) states: “The year 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Catholic Biblical Federation. The year 2020 marks the 1600th anniversary of the death of Saint Jerome, the great translator of the Bible, who sought to render the Scriptures into the “common” everyday language of ordinary people, so to make the written Word of God available for all. His zeal to make the Scriptures accessible to people arises from his conviction that “ignorantia Scripturarum ignorantia Christi est” (ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ).

“The happy coincidence of these two anniversaries inspired the Executive Committee of the CBF to encourage the CBF members to mark 2020 as a **“Year of the Word of God”** from the First Sunday of Advent (December 1, 2019) until the feast of Saint Jerome (September 30, 2020). We hope that a year dedicated to the Word of God will help pastors and institutions committed to the Biblical Pastoral Ministry in your countries to renew their efforts to place the Word of God at the center of the life and mission of the Church, as called for by Saint John Paul II (see *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* 36), by Pope Benedict XVI in the light of the 2008 Synod of Bishops (see *Verbum Domini* 73), and most recently by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (see §174).” #DeiVerbiAnnus .For resources for use during the Year of the Word of God, see: <https://c-b-f.org/en/DeiVerbiAnnus/Ressources-EN>

4. TREASURER’S REPORT: AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR 2019

4.1 CCSJ records its sincere thanks to Annette McKenzie who resigned as a Member of CCSJ and as CCSJ's Treasurer on 27 June 2020, having shared her expertise with CCSJ generously for many years.

Joseph Timothy, CCSJ Member, who is an Accountant, was appointed to the position of CCSJ's Treasurer at the Commission's meeting on Wednesday July 8, 2020.

The Audited Accounts for the 2019 period are yet to be submitted to CCSJ by our Auditors. In light of this, Notice of an Extraordinary General Meeting of CCSJ will be sent to Members in 2021 once the Audited Accounts are received – to consider/adopt the said Accounts.

CCSJ'S Auditors: On Mon 2 March 2020 CCSJ's Chair met with Mr Lalbirsingh, who is now the owner of Lopez & Co, CCSJ's Auditors. Mr. Lopez died in 2019. On behalf of CSSJ members, I wrote to express sincere condolences to his family and colleagues. It was necessary for me, as CCSJ's Chair, to meet with the new Owner of the Firm to seek his commitment to continue producing our Audited Reports pro bono. He has agreed to do so. CCSJ's Treasurer liaises with L. Dave Lopez & Co., the Firm of Accountants that has been preparing CCSJ's Annual Audited Accounts free of charge since 2014. CCSJ is a Limited Liability Company under the Company's Act. We wish to record our deep appreciation to Mr. Lopez and his Team for their commitment over the past years to use their knowledge, skills and experience to further the aims of CCSJ, and by extension, the Archdiocese.

NB: It is to be noted that, in terms of CCSJ's Assets, CCSJ's Land in San Raphael has been leased at a pepper-corn rent – TT\$100 p.a. - to Living Water Community for a 10-year period. Timothy Hamel-Smith executed the deed on 28 Sept. 2020.

5. SOME MAJOR EVENTS IN OUR CHURCH IN 2019

5.1 2019: The Year in Review with Pope Francis: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-12/2019-the-year-in-review-with-pope-francis.html>

5.2 Pope Francis' year in pictures: <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/12/pope-francis-in-2019-a-year-in-pictures/>

5.3



“On World Mission Sunday 2017, Pope Francis announced his intention to dedicate the entire month of October 2019 - not just World Mission Sunday - to “the Church’s evangelising activity *ad gentes*,” a phrase meaning “to the nations” and used to describe missionary activity focused on people who still have not heard the Gospel...Francis wanted the monthlong focus on mission because he saw a need to give “fresh evangelical impulse to her work of preaching and bringing to the world the salvation of Jesus Christ.”

The central focus of mission is that “God wills that all people be saved by coming to know the truth and experiencing his mercy through the ministry of the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation,” Francis wrote in his message for the month.

“Catholics must not think that missionary outreach belongs to the Church’s past. Today, as in Jesus’ age, it means hitting the road or, at least, supporting those who do.

“The Church,” the pope wrote, “needs men and women who, by virtue of their baptism, respond generously to the call to leave behind home, family,

country, language and local church, and to be sent forth to the nations, to a world not yet transformed by the sacraments of Jesus Christ and his holy church.”

“Of course, there are people in every neighborhood in every nation who need to hear of God’s love and mercy and be helped to follow Jesus. But the Church distinguishes between “new evangelization” - basically, a new effort to reach out to people who already have heard the Christian message - and the initial proclamation involved in going out *ad gentes*.”

<https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/09/baptized-and-sent-pope-designates-october-as-mission-month/>

The Holy Father reminded all Catholics that by virtue of their baptism, they have been called to full active participation in the Church. Baptism marks our entry into the Church and our call to become ministers.

Following an annual plenary meeting in Rome for the bishops of the AEC, the Bishops decided, in response to Pope Francis request for an extraordinary mission month in October 2019, to host a Mission Congress in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain from September 19 –22. The AEC Mission Congress was guided by the theme of Extraordinary Mission Month—*Sent and Baptized, the Church of Christ on Mission in the world*. The desire was to call the whole Church to mission.

In our workbook for the congress, the bishops gave the rationale for the extraordinary mission month: A hundred years ago, in 1919, Pope Benedict XV published the first encyclical on the missionary nature of the Church: *Maximum Illud*. This is considered to be the Charter of modern Missions. Pope Francis considers this centenary anniversary as a providential occasion to call on the Church to renew itself and become ever more prepared to work, pray and give financial support for our common mission to bring the Gospel of Christ to all peoples (1, Baptised and Sent, AEC).

See Shepherd's Corner:- 6th June 2019
Hosts: Deacon Derek Walcott & Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon.
Theme: Going back to our Baptismal roots. - link to the Congress.

<https://catholicnewstt.com/index.php/2019/05/29/going-back-to-our-baptismal-roots/>

The Mission Congress marked the official opening, in the Antilles, of the Extraordinary Mission Month 2019 called for by Pope Francis; and sought to bring

together people from the whole of the AEC region i.e. the English, Dutch & French Caribbean people, as we strive to understand what MISSION means for us in the AEC region. The general aim of this first missionary congress was to give an important impulse to the process of strengthening Church life throughout the AEC dioceses in accordance with Pope Francis' vision of an active Church that powerfully witnesses to Christ and that has a missionary zeal.

The Bishops called us to become more aware that in our changing societies, we will need new ways of being Church, ways that will inspire our modern Caribbean people, especially our young people, to be part of the Church. We need new ways of organizing our Church life that speak to them and call them to faith and commitment to Christ. In this we must first try to understand the digital technology and the social media, and then learn ever more to use them in order to reach those who do not yet know Christ and the many who know Christ only in a formal way but not intimately.

The Bishops said they are committed to an intentional partnership in realising the mission of the Church with a special emphasis on accompanying young people. This commitment was marked by activities in all the dioceses in preparation for the 1st Mission Congress of the AEC in TT.

For six months, the AEC Mission Congress 2019 planning team met to strategise and implement plans for the Mission Congress. All primary and secondary schools were invited to send school teachers and students to participate in the children's/schools' rally. The opening ceremony included dance, drama, Spoken Word, steel band music

As Catholic News reported, the Trinidad students' rally for the Mission Congress at the Centre of Excellence, Tunapuna "was so well attended that there were not enough seats for the multitude. More than 5,000 students and teachers attended. The energy was high as the programme got underway after 9 a.m. with the theme Baptised and Sent. Through dance, drumming, song, spoken word, and other displays, the children of RC schools gave a rousing start to the programme. The bishops of the AEC and the Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu were well entertained."

Catholic News also reported that the AEC President, Bishop Gabriel Malzaire of Roseau, Dominica, in his address to persons gathered at the Centre of Excellence on Sunday September 22 for the close of the Mission Congress, said:

“I am not everybody but I am somebody; I cannot do everything but I can do something; what I can do I ought to do; what I ought to do I will do by the grace of God.” He said that these words were said to him by the late Bishop Emeritus Charles Gaget FMI when he received the Sacrament of Confirmation, 50 years before, at age 12.

For your information, I include hereunder, extracts from Archbishop Jason’s Catholic News article on Sun 2 June, 2019, in relation to the Mission Congress:

“The workbook (p 5) quotes Pope Francis:

‘Looking at the People of God is remembering that we all enter the Church as laypeople. The first sacrament, which seals our identity forever, and of which we should always be proud, is baptism. Through baptism and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the faithful are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood. Our first and fundamental consecration is rooted in our baptism. No one has been baptised a priest or a bishop. They baptised us as lay people and it is the indelible sign that no one can ever erase. (*Letter to Cardinal Ouellet*, March 19, 2016)’ .

“By recovering the theology of baptism, the Holy Father is rekindling that grace that we all received when we became part of God’s household; when we were anointed with Holy Chrism to become prophets, priests and kings/queens in God’s household. In baptism we become a new person in Jesus Christ and are sent on mission. Our call to mission is rooted in baptism, hence the theme, **Baptised and Sent**.

Over several generations, we have lost the missionary dimension of the Church. We have become complacent and so transformed Catholicism into a culture—‘We born, live and will die a Catholic’.

“We may not go to church, our lives may not witness the values of Catholicism, we may not even have a vital relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit, but nonetheless we see ourselves as Catholic. This is not Catholicism, not ‘a living faith’.

“Saint Paul VI, in his now classic and prophetic text *Evangelli Nuntiandi* (EN) 1975, says:

‘Evangelising is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection’ (EN, 14).

“To be Catholic is to be on mission for God. If evangelising is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, then we all must participate in this grace. Evangelisation is not an optional extra for the Christian. We are being called back to our baptismal roots. From these roots of faith, we are being sent into the world. Pope Paul VI describes this mission as:

“...bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: ‘Now I am making the whole of creation new.’ But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel” (EN, 18).

“This is an interior process of conversion, requiring us to yield our will to the will of God. It is a renewal that transforms society. He continues: “[The] Church evangelises when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs” (EN, 18).

“Quoting the pastoral letter, *New Ways of Being Church in a Digital Milieu*, the workbook says:

‘Good News to the poor is the mission and goal of all pastoral communications (see Luke 4:18). Through signs, gestures, words, books, moving images, audio, and social communications, the Church has sought to proclaim her message so that all people will hear it in their own native language (see Acts 2:11). To be faithful to this mission of evangelizing communications to the people of the Caribbean today, we will need a new missionary spirit, one that is built upon participation, dialogue, and collaboration and one that speaks to the heart, soul, and religious imagination of our Antillean people. We need a new way of being Church!’ (1)

“The New Evangelisation that St John Paul II launched is new in its ardour, methods and expression. We need to proclaim the age-old message in a way that is new, that touches the soul and fires the imagination of our Antillean people. This is vital. This is the purpose of the congress.”

5.4 On Sun 27 Jan I attended a Mass and Reception at Benet Hall, St Benedict, to say farewell to Winston Garcia, Episcopal Delegate for Youth. He has been succeeded by Taresa Best, who, as some of you may know, worked with CCSJ as a volunteer Researcher during her gap- year some years ago.

5.5 On Sat 23 Feb I attended the ordination to the Order of the Diaconate of Stephan, Alexander, Kwesi Alleyne, Kenwyn Sylvester and Mikkell Trestrail - conferred upon them by Archbishop Jason Gordon at the Church of St Phillip and St James, Chaguanas. It was truly a spiritually uplifting event. On Mon 25 March, Deacons Lindsay John and Jeffrey Supersad were ordained to the priesthood at our Cathedral in POS.

5.6 On Sat 14 September I attended the ordination of: Mikkell Trestrail, Stephan Alexander, Kwesi Alleyne, and Kenwyn Sylvester – at the Cathedral. It was truly a spiritually uplifting experience and His Grace’s homily was powerful. As the media reported, he said, “The last time the Archdiocese witnessed priestly ordinations of more than two or three deacons was on December 6, 2003, when five deacons were ordained by then Archbishop Edward Gilbert. In the last 10 years, only 12 new priests have been ordained in T&T, including four that have been ordained since last August. The last two priests ordained in T&T are not currently in service locally but are currently stationed in Ireland. It takes approximately eight to ten years in the Catholic Seminary to fully complete the process to become a priest.”

6. REPORT ON SOME ASPECTS OF CCSJ’S WORK DURING 2019

6.1 CCSJ is one of 19 **Departments in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain**. In keeping with the annual practice, CCSJ submitted its Pastoral Plan for 2019. This plan is available on CCSJ’s Website. CCSJ’s allocation from the Archdiocese for 2019 covered mainly the salaries of the Chair, the 2 part-time Administrative Assistants (job-share), and the salary of CCSJ’s/AMMR’s Coordinator for the Archdiocese’s Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (appointed in November 2019). Total for salaries and wages and employer NIS Contributions = TT\$221,808.35 (see 6.3.25).

Note that the Archdiocese applied to the Dicastery for Integral Human Development for funding for the Coordinator’s post. On 12 November 2020, His Grace received an email from Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery, informing us that our application was unsuccessful. Throughout 2019, the Coordinator’s salary was paid for by the Archdiocese – from sums allocated in CCSJ’s annual budget.

NB: As of the end of October 2020, Simone Francois-Whitter, CCSJ’s AMMR Coordinator, demitted her position. She did not renew her Contract. She has been appointed Court Administrator for the Civil Court, POS. I wish to place on record our sincere thanks to Simone for the excellent foundation she laid for PMMRs and

the support she continues to give to AMMR and wish her all the best in her new position. His Grace has approved her appointment to AMMR as a volunteer. The post was enhanced: Programme Coordinator. It was advertised and Darrion Narine was appointed to the position on 1 December 2020.

Collaboration with other Departments and organisations allowed CCSJ to optimize the use of its limited resources. Also, CCSJ is grateful for the generosity of a few individuals who continue to lend tremendous support to the Commission - in kind. For example, the cost of all the Newsletters, posters etc. that are provided at a reduced rate to CCSJ would leave the Commission in the "red" if CCSJ had to pay for them; and the Auditors, Dave Lopez & Co. who have provided their services to CCSJ free of charge since 2014, are also to be thanked for their unstinting support of the Commission. Sadly, Mr Lopez died during the latter part of 2019 and, as stated in Section 4, I met with Mr Lalbirsingh, his successor and successfully negotiated continuation of this free service. We thank those at the Company for their continued support.

CCSJ encourages the Faithful to let the Church's social doctrine guide our path. The Commission continues its efforts to raise awareness of the Faithful/Citizens of the social doctrine of the Church, and to encourage them and the wider community:

- to demonstrate our love for God, for our neighbour and for all creation by reaching out in solidarity e.g. to those who are poor/socially excluded and to build the common good;

- to be true witnesses to our faith by integrating our faith with our daily lives. An integral part of our Ministry is 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).

We will achieve our mission if all Catholic organisations partner with each other to:

- protect and promote the sanctity of life and the dignity of each human person (this means being vigilant and speaking out against attempts to liberalize laws that will allow abortions, homosexuality, and striving to abolish the death penalty);

- 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.

6.2 In the latter part of 2018, a **Draft Pastoral Plan** was circulated by Archbishop Jason Gordon and Parishes, Departments etc. have been asked to comment on this. See Catholic News article by His Grace in CN on 4 August 2018: <https://catholicnewstt.com/index.php/2018/08/04/moving-towards-pastoral-plan/>

And see the full draft Plan: [Draft Pastoral Plan for the POS Archdiocese 2019-2023](https://catholicct.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Draft-Pastoral-Plan-for-the-POS-Archdiocese-2019-2023) <https://catholicct.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Draft-Pastoral-Plan-for-the-POS-Archdiocese-2019-2023>.

NB: At the time of writing this AGM report, His Grace has decided to focus on the Domestic Church on Mission – see Catholic News <https://catholicnewstt.com/index.php/2020/06/02/family-on-mission-become-what-you-are/>

See extract below:

“Domestic Church

“Family, become what you are!” is a phrase used by St John Paul II in his encyclical letter *Familiaris Consortio* (1982). By understanding what the family is, the family is pressed into mission. This is what the Holy Father is saying:

The family finds in the plan of God the Creator and Redeemer not only its identity, what it is, but also its mission, what it can and should do. The role that God calls the family to perform in history derives from what the family is; its role represents the dynamic and existential development of what it is. Each family finds within itself a summons that cannot be ignored, and that specifies both its dignity and its responsibility: family, become what you are (*Familiaris Consortio*) 17.

Missioning the family first requires that we help the family understand and live its identity. It is in this discovery that the family also discovers its mission and finds the path to live the mission. This is the process of missioning.

We are not sending the family to some far-off place. We are asking the family to discover again its core and principle for existence. By this discovery of what the family is, the family will also discover its mission.

This is subtle but very important. If we had a mission to Catholic families, we may help them discover their identity. But we will still need to mission them to live it and become fellow workers in the mission that is Christ.

What is the family? First of all, it is a domestic church. Everything we do in the Church, parish or universal, we also do in the family. There is mission, sacrifice, blessing, calling forth the gifts of others; there is prayer and daily offering and encouraging each other to sacrifice.

Key Message:

By finding its identity, the family lives its mission. This is the process of missioning.

Action Step:

Reflect on the experience of the family you grew up in, was it a domestic church? How could you help your family to become what it should be?

Scripture Reading:

Ephesians 3:14–21”

6.2.4 SUMMARY OF WORK IN 2019 - OUTLINED BELOW: (in no particular order)

AMMR/PMMR

ASK WHY: CCSJ’s monthly one hour TV programme on TCN CCSJ Materials e.g.:

- Newsletters,
- CCSJ’s Take-a-Bite series (DVD),
- Leaflets focusing on various social justice themes,
- CCSJ’s Calendar for 2019

Council for Responsible Political Behaviour

Promoting a culture of life

Facebook and Website

Media Releases

Weekly articles in Catholic News during 2019

Social Justice Quotations published in Catholic News weekly

Collaboration with others, including Archdiocesan Departments, Parishes, Schools, Government Ministries, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, regional and international organizations, and the Media Advocacy.

Promoting the Social Doctrine of the Church:

As stated earlier, CCSJ will continue to educate the Faithful/share the Church's Social Doctrine with the wider community via:

- CCSJ's Monthly TV programme on TCN,
- in weekly articles in Catholic News and TT Guardian. Note that I have been invited by the Independent Catholic News in the UK, as Chair of CCSJ, to submit articles to be published in that online Newspaper. To date 32 such articles have been published.
- CCSJ's Parish Link Newsletters
- Presentations at events when invited.

6.3 AMMR/PMMR:

6.3.1 In May 2018, Archbishop Jason established the Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR) and located it within the remit of CCSJ. I am also Chair of the AMMR Committee which comprises Rhonda Maingot, Living Water Community (LWC), Rochelle Nakhid (LWC), and Fr Simon Peter Ango who has studied issues relating to M&R and has worked in Rome with M&Rs.

6.3.2 His Grace entrusted this Ministry to *Our Lady of the Wayside* to intercede for us that this initiative bears much fruit. He mandated that all parishes establish a Parish Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (PMMR). At a meeting with the clergy to introduce this new initiative, Priests/Deacons were given a package of resources from the Committee – including a video containing 5 minute presentations by His Grace, Rochelle, Fr Simon and CCSJ's Chair; AMMR's logo; a poster for display in parishes; para-liturgy and a Newsletter containing 20 pastoral action points to assist with the launch/implementation of their Ministries <http://www.rcsocialjusticett.org/downloads/parishlinkmay2018.pdf> . CCSJ's Chair attended PMMR meetings to launch this initiative in some parishes. Further resources, such as a Toolkit and guidelines were circulated to all Parishes (see below).

6.3.3 During 2019 the Committee worked closely with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and some of the agency's employees have been contributing to parish meetings, along with committee members and some LWC staff with responsibility for this area of work - seeking to strengthen the capacity of Catholics in our Archdiocese and by extension, the wider community, to do as Pope Francis has urged us to do in his 2018 Message for World Day of Peace entitled: *Migrants and refugees: men and women in search of peace*. He has asked us to: *welcome, protect, promote, and integrate migrants and refugees*.

6.3.4 A meeting was held with members of the Clergy on 19 June, 2018 and the Ministry was officially launched on World Refugee Day - June 20. On that day CCSJ's Chair attended TCN's News and Views programme to share information about AMMR and PMMRs.

At the end of 2019 20 parishes had launched their PMMRs, and 5 parishes were seeking to establish PMMRs.

6.3.5 On Saturday 23 March, 2019, AMMR organised a meeting/training session for parishes, to assist them as they seek to welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees. It was the first such meeting since Archbishop Jason Gordon established AMMR. 83 persons from 36 parishes participated in the proceedings. They came from all parts of Trinidad, and 2 persons from Tobago were also present.

6.3.6 At this meeting, AMMR launched a **25-page Toolkit** to support PMMR's work - created with the help of AMMR; Living Water Community's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees; and UNHCR. UNHCR met the cost of printing it. It seeks to answer frequently asked questions about migrants and refugees in T&T; outlines community needs and suggestions; shares suggestions on engaging the Church community in conversation; suggests Projects that can be undertaken; offers helpful reflections; includes para-liturgy, a list of resources, and a Code of Conduct, Core values, and Guiding principles for working with migrants and refugees. The toolkit was distributed to all parishes and Ecclesial Communities and is available on CCSJ's Website. This is the link to the Toolkit: <https://we.tl/t-VPifPZC33d>

6.3.7 On Mon 17 June from 2-5pm I attended an event at the Hilton – organised by Living Water Community, to find solutions for addressing the needs of **migrants and refugees**. About 60 persons had been invited by LWC, including Chambers of Industry and Commerce, UNHCR members (including the Head of Mission, Leila Jane Nassif) etc. International speakers joined the discussion via

Zoom link. The session was very informative.

6.3.8 On Tues 18 June, 2019 CCSJ/AMMR held the **screening of the film/documentary, Soufra, at Movietowne** in commemoration of World Refugee Day on 20 June. 'Soufra' was nominated for Best Positive Documentary as part of 2018 Cannes Positive Cinema Week. This initiative sought to raise funds to support the work of Parish Ministries for Migrants and Refugees. The film highlighted the resilience of a group of Refugee women living in a refugee camp in Beirut, and their eventual success in opening a Food Truck.

6.3.9 His Grace was unable to attend as he was Celebrating Mass to mark the 30th Anniversary of priestly ordination of Fr Trevor Nathasingh. He asked me to read a message for him at the opening of the event, which I did. The Catholic organisation, Breaking Bread, based in the USA, paid for the Copyright fee to allow AMMR to screen it in TT and sent us the video to us.

6.3.10 The event helped to raise awareness of issues relating to Migrants and Refugees, including the many challenges they face. Thanks to the UNHCR Team for purchasing 100 tickets and distributing them to the Diplomatic Corp and others. Altogether, there were about 169 persons present at the screening at Movietowne. The Q&A session after the screening was informative.

6.3.11 After expenditure, including paying \$30 per seat to Movietowne (\$3,750), **TT \$20,218** was raised. The price of tickets was TT \$150 each. Some were distributed as complementary tickets. Other costs to be met include obtaining a Certificate from TT's Board of Censors, paying for the DVD to be brought to TT and the eventual cost of returning it. Remaining funds are available to support the work of AMMR e.g. on-going training.

6.3.12 TRAINING FOR PMMRs: In keeping with CCSJ's aim to provide on-going support for Parish Ministries for Migrants and Refugees (PMMRs), the Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR) and Living Water Community's (LWC) Legal Team invited 2 representatives from each Parish to attend a training session on **Saturday 28 September, 2019** at St Phillip and St James Parish Hall, Chaguanas, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The training session aimed to create more community based legal support services so that migrants and refugees can access services within their community.

6.3.13 Parish Priests/PMRs were asked to assist their representatives by making a list of issues/queries they wished to raise at the session, so that we, the trainers, could seek to answer any queries raised. I also wrote to all Parish Priests and Administrators so that those parishes that had not yet established PMRs, would have an opportunity to send representatives to the training session. Forty persons from across the Archdiocese attended. The sessions were run by Rochelle Nakhid, Ganesh Rampersad, Gina Maharaj, and me. Gary Tagallie, who is a member of Chaguanas PMR, and his family kindly assisted by setting up the room before the event and arranging for light refreshments to be made available. CCSJ reimbursed him. Fr Simon Peter Ango, a member of AMMR, joined me in welcoming participants and said the opening prayer. Issues covered included:

- The background to the establishment of AMMR/PMR & the current situation in TT regarding
- migrants and refugees
- Protection and protection information management;
- Common legal challenges
- Overview of key stakeholders
- Referrals and key points of advice

Participants had many questions for which they sought answers during the Q&A session. Overall, they valued the opportunity to clarify issues of concern that they/their parishes had, and look forward to future training sessions.

6.3.14 We know that transformation will not take place overnight. It is important to start a conversation in each parish to raise awareness of the issues involved in building such a Ministry and to ask questions when necessary. Those involved to date are aware of the difference that parishioners can make in the lives of migrants and refugees who come to our shores.

6.3.15 We continue to urge parishes to ensure that this Ministry is not built in isolation from other parish ministries. For example, it is imperative that the **Society of St Vincent de Paul** works collaboratively with PMRs so that tasks are not duplicated. Indeed, the entire parish should work together to welcome the stranger. Matthew 25: 31–46 remains a key scriptural message underpinning this Ministry.

6.3.16 In T&T there are over 30 countries from which migrants and refugees originate. While there is no legislation here in dealing with refugees, there is a National Policy to Address Refugee and Asylum Matters in Trinidad & Tobago, adopted by Cabinet in June 2014. Parishes are being made aware during our sessions of the implications of seeking to meet the needs of migrants and refugees in the absence of domestic legislation. In spite of the challenges that we face in seeking to build this Ministry in the absence of domestic legislation, there is much that we can and must do as Catholics to reach out in love and solidarity as we seek to build bridges of hope and to build an inclusive society.

6.3.17 Parishes have recognised the need to provide: **food, clothing, shelter, basic health care, psycho-social and spiritual support, education for children and adults** e.g. English language instruction, translation services, help in adjusting to T&T's culturally diverse society, friendship, spaces where they can meet to socialise and so on. The positive attitudes being expressed at parish level is an indication that the faithful is up to meeting the challenges and opportunities that exist. Love of neighbour re- quires us to build bridges and not walls.

6.3.18 Some parishes are finding ways of drawing on the skills /talents that M&Rs bring with them. What has been useful also at parish meetings is the presence of individuals who now live here but who came from the countries from which some migrants and refugees originate. Parishes should draw on their knowledge in any needs analysis that is being conducted.

6.3.19 On Thurs 25 July I met with members of the Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees – Rhonda Maingot, Rochelle Nakhid, and Fr Simon Peter Ango. Gary Tagallie also attended the meeting. His Grace had asked us to meet to plan for a **4-day visit by Bishop Jaime José Villarroel Rodríguez from Carupano, Venezuela**. We drew-up a detailed schedule for his visit and the Archdiocese assisted him in obtaining a visa. He is very concerned about the plight of parishioners, some of whom he says are being snatched off the streets and trafficked to TT. His letter to His Grace referred not only to trafficking, but to prostitution and even to organ harvesting. He is willing to work with our Archdiocese to see how we could prevent these crimes from taking place.

6.3.20 His visit took place from August 22–25 I was not present as I was in London. On Friday 23 Aug His Grace organised a reception for him at Assumption parish hall. His Visit to southern vicariate, particularly the parishes of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Penal and la Romaine enabled him to meet migrants, refugees, and parishioners who provide support; to see and hear firsthand how the church is

involved in being hospitable to our neighbours; and to listen to their experiences/concerns.

6.3.21 See report in Catholic News on his visit: “He visited the recently-opened St Therese Center for Education and Training, a space catering to Venezuelan migrants set up by the Living Water Community (LWC) on Friday August 23. Later that day, the Bishop held separate meetings with representatives of the United Nations, the United States Embassy, and the Counter Trafficking Unit, Ministry of National Security.

6.3.22 On Saturday he journeyed to the Southern parishes of La Romaine, Penal and San Fernando to speak with migrants in those communities. Bishop Rodríguez later concelebrated a bilingual Mass at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help RC Church, San Fernando. Before departing Sunday, he concelebrated Mass at the LWC Chapel, Port of Spain and blessed a residence for migrants in Santa Cruz.

6.3.23 Bishop Rodríguez was interviewed on Friday at the LWC-owned Trinity TV by some local media houses. Here is what the bishop had to say through interpreter Michelle Watkins. On the crisis in his homeland: **“The crisis has been going on for 15 years. There is hyperinflation (1 million percent inflation), a lack of productivity, the basic wage for one month is US\$3, and the Public Service has been destroyed. Because of this people have very little hope and leave their families, leave their country to survive the situation.”**

<https://catholicnewstt.com/index.php/2019/08/27/venezuelan-bishop-gracias-tt/>

6.3.24 On 1 Oct 2019 I attended the R4V Review meeting held at Hilton on Tues 1 Oct. R4V – Response for Venezuelans is the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform for Migrants and Refugees (RMRP) from Venezuelans. The aim was to review its work during the past year and consider RMRP’s Plan for 2020. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), predicts: “It is projected that the total number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide will increase from 4.5 million in October 2019 to 6.5 million in December 2020, nearly 85% of whom will be found in the region.” See this links to a helpful report and info on the Caribbean region:

[https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/venezuela/72254.p](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/venezuela/72254.pdf)
[df https://r4v.info/es/documents/download/72254](https://r4v.info/es/documents/download/72254)

CCSJ/AMMR hopes to join the R4V Platform as this will assist us in our efforts to achieve our AMMR/PMMR goals in the Archdiocese.

6.3.25 During 2019 CCSJ/AMMR submitted a grant proposal to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, seeking funding to allow His Grace to appoint a Coordinator to support the work of AMMR and PMMRs. The Archdiocese agreed to fund the post, and to reimburse the cost from any funds received from the Vatican. (See 6.1 on p.14).

6.3.26 On Wed 16 October Rev Toussaint, Ave Maria Belfonte-Rodriguez and I interviewed 5 persons who were shortlisted from a field of 16 persons for the post of **Coordinator of the Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees**. Simone Francois-Whittier was appointed Coordinator of the Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR). She took up her position on 1 November 2019. CCSJ'S Chair prepared a 2-week induction programme for her and a comprehensive list of areas on which AMMR would need to work to achieve our goals over the next year or two. Her report for the last 2 months of 2019 is informative:

AIM

To identify the current status of the Parish Ministries for Migrants and Refugees (PMMRs) across the Archdiocese, to identify their needs, their challenges and map the way forward for the coming year 2020.

PRIORITIES

1. Perform Needs assessment
2. Prepare for and host the Visit of Vatican representative, Fr. Robert Stark S.S.S. , Regional Coordinator, Latin America and the Caribbean, Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development, Migrants and Refugees Section.

ACTIVITIES

1. Visits to and contact made with the following Parishes across the country
2. Carapichaima
3. Chaguanas
4. Couva
5. Arima
6. Mt. Lambert
7. Church of the Nativity (Part of the North West Migrant Ministry)
8. La Romaine
9. Penal
10. Princes Town
11. New Grant / Tableland
12. Point Fortin

13. Curepe (joint with St John's)
14. St Joseph
15. Tobago
16. St. Patrick's/ Newtown
17. St. Ann's
18. Cedros
19. Moruga
20. St. Theresa's/Woodbrook
21. Tortuga
22. San Fernando
23. Tunapuna
24. Preliminary Needs assessment and Mapping of Parish Ministries conducted;
25. Preparation for and execution of the visit of Fr. Robert Stark S.S.S. , Regional Coordinator, Latin America and the Caribbean, Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development, Migrants and Refugees Section.

RESULTS

1. Identification of active and inactive PMMRs
2. Identification of focal points in each parish
3. Clarification of the work of the Parish Ministries
4. Identification of the Challenges facing the Parish Ministries
5. Formulation of recommendations for the work of the AMMR
6. Successful hosting of Fr. Stark during his visit to the Archdiocese

CONSTRAINTS

1. Contact information on some parishes incorrect/missing
2. Inactive Parishes are unaware of the need for them to participate in the ministry
3. No buy-in from some Parish Priests
4. Xenophobia which may prevent wider parish participation
5. Lack of financial and human resources and information-sharing
6. Additional Administrative tasks

LESSONS LEARNT

1. Urgent buy-in is required on the part of Parish Leadership
2. Training and sensitization of Priests is required firstly

3. Training for PMMRs is needed regarding the current legal issues surrounding this matter in Trinidad and Tobago, sensitization on the wider issue of migration
4. Sensitization of all parishes and communities is required to treat with xenophobia etc.
5. Proper database of parish contacts and related information is needed, ALONG with additional Administrative support
6. Sufficient financial and human resources need to be allocated to AMMR
7. Standardized forms and procedures are required to streamline, focus and enhance the work of the PMMRs
8. PMMRs need guidelines to function properly
9. Strong inter-departmental, intra Archdiocese partnerships have to be forged and maintained to successfully implement any initiative of this nature
10. Strong partnerships with the Government and International agencies are also required.

6.3.27 From Tues 17 Dec – Fri 20 Dec CCSJ's Chair and Simone were involved members of AMMR in **meetings with Fr Robert Stark**, Regional Rep of the section dealing with Migrants and Refugees at the Dicastery for Integral Human Development. Since the Archdiocese has applied to the Vatican for funding to support our work with M&Rs, he was sent to listen and learn/assess our needs and report back to his Team, sharing also examples of good practice that he observed. A schedule of visits to parishes etc. was drawn up by AMMR and implemented for the period of time that he was here.

SUMMARY REPORT OF FR ROBERT STARK'S VISIT

DECEMBER 16-21 2019

ARCHDIOCESAN MINISTRY FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (AMMR)

SEE PARAS 1-53

1. Fr Robert Stark arrived on the evening of 16 December 2019.
2. A number of engagements and meeting were planned for him upon his arrival.
3. This Schedule of activities was followed:

Re: Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR) as at 16 Dec. 20

| Draft programme for Fr Robert Stark's visit to Trinidad & Tobago (T&T) from Tues 17 December - Sat 21 December, 2019 | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| Time / period | Tuesday 17 December | Wednesday 18 December | Thursday 19 December | Friday 20 December | Saturday 21 December |
| Morning | Breakfast with His Grace (having arrived at 10pm on Mon night on United Airlines Flight 1457). Welcome and Meeting with Archbishop Jason Gordon | Breakfast with His Grace Leave POS by 7:30 am. | 6.00am Christmas Novena Mass at St. Mary's, St James & Breakfast with His Grace and Fr Emmanuel Pierre | Breakfast with LWC | Fr Stark leaves today on United Airlines Flight 1906 at 2:20 am. Must be at Piarco Airport 3 hours before this time. |
| | Settles-in at Archbishop's House | | 9.00 am -10.30 am: Meeting with PMMR/Migrants and Refugees in Armo - Fr Stark, Simone and Fr Anjo | 9.30am Media Conference at Archbishop's House Conference Room (including brief Interviews with TCN & Catholic News) to be Chaired by His Grace . End by 10.30am | |
| | 10.00am Visit to North West Migrant Ministry - to meet at Carenage with Fr. Imamshah | 10.00am: Penal to meet Fr. Robert Christo, Migrants & Refugees, school, and to have Brunch | 11.45am Meeting with members of the Clergy 15 mins before lunch at 12 noon Our Lady of Fatima Carepe . | 10.45am Meeting: UN & Stakeholders e.g. R4V Platform - relief for Venezuelans, LWC, AMMR & Planning Team - at Archbishop's House, Conference Room - To be Chaired by Rochelle Nakhid, end by 11.30 am. | |
| | LUNCH | LUNCH | Christmas lunch with Clergy and Religious. Leave by 1.30pm | LUNCH | LUNCH |
| Afternoon/ Evening | 1.30 pm Meeting with AMMR and Planning Team - Conference Room at Archbishop's House to be Chaired by Leela Ramdeen | Leave Penal by 11:30 am Visit to Mayaro to meet Fr. Simon, Migrants & Refugees and to have Tea. Leave Mayaro by 3.00pm. | 3.00pm Discussion on Catholic response to Education of the Migrants Meeting: Equal Places, Catholic Education Board of Management (CEBM), T&T Venezuela Solidarity Group (TTVS), AMMR & Planning Team, (Archbishop's House Conference Room) to be Chaired by Leela Ramdeen. End by 4.30pm | 1.00pm Meeting with Government Officials, including the Counter Trafficking Unit, at Archbishop's House Conference Room - Simone Francois-Whittier to Chair End by 2.30pm | |
| | | | | 2.45pm Sight-seeing - Fr Stark and AMMR Team | |
| | 7.30 pm Dinner with Nuncio (His Grace to attend) | 5.00 pm Return to Archbishop House, POS, for Mass and 'volunteers' dinner with His Grace (5pm - 9pm) | 6.00pm Reception at Assumption Parish Hall, Maraval (His Grace to attend, along with other Dignitaries) | | |
| | | | | Depart for Airport by 10.30pm (Office Driver) | |

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December 17, 2019

- Fr Stark met with members of the North West Ministry Migrants and Refugees (NWMMR) at St. Peter's RC, Carenage, hosted by Fr Imamshah and attended a meeting of the AMMR and Planning Team. Fr Stark explained that his role was to listen and learn and hopefully take back some good practices and information to the Department.

NWMMR meeting

- Fr Robert met with members of the PMMRs of the Church of the Nativity, St. Finbar's, St. Peter's and St. John's Parishes. They outlined the work of the

combined PMMRs which form the North West Ministry for Migrants and Refugees. The members discussed the various initiatives they undertook during the past year, inclusive of assistance to the migrants in the form of housing, employment, medical and educational assistance. They highlighted the role that social media, particularly, What'sApp plays in their ministry. They noted that they were also fortunate to have a Spanish Mass every weekend in the cluster. All the PMMRs work together to serve the Migrant community within that geographical area.

6. They identified the following areas of focus, English as a second language programmes for adults and children, employment assistance as well as pastoral care in the form of baptisms and catechesis for all age groups.
7. Fr Stark noted the role that diversity played in the Ministry, he was also quite impressed by the role that social media, What'sApp played in the NWMMR's work. As well as the usage of the members' professional network to achieve the objectives of the Ministry. He encouraged the membership to continue their work.

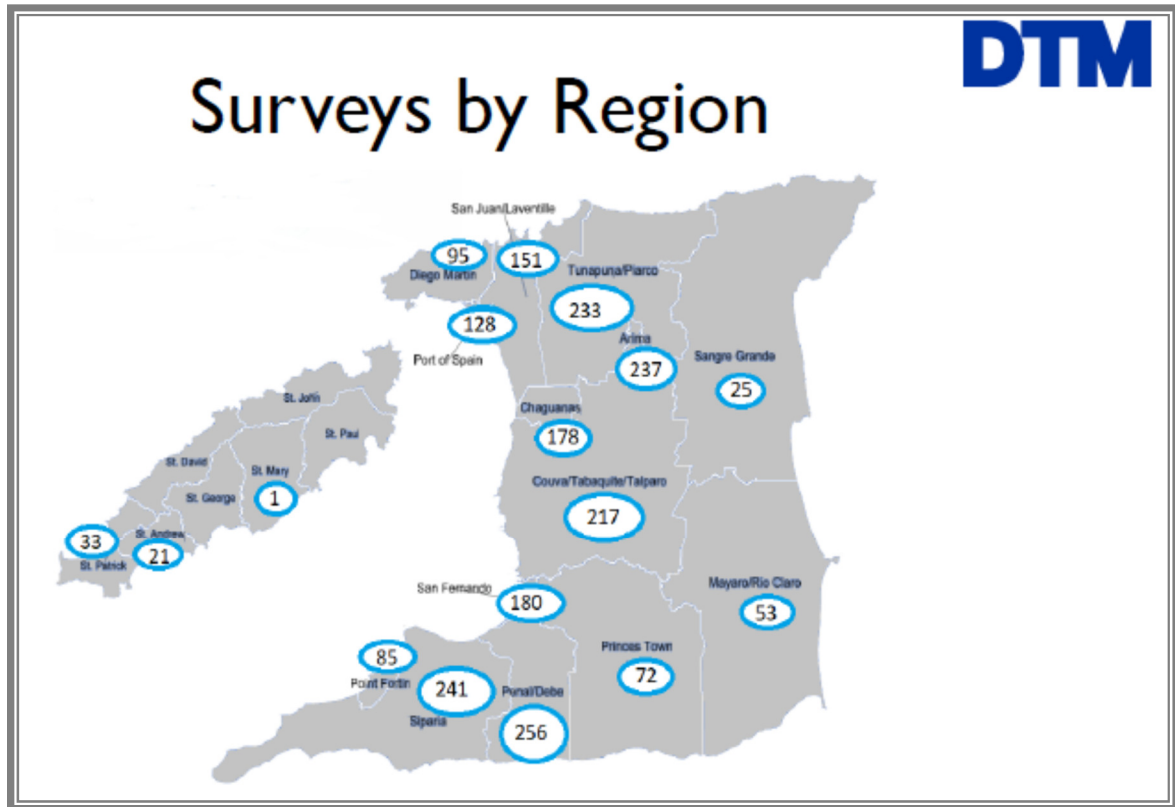


Meeting with AMMR and Planning Team

8. During this meeting, Fr Stark was introduced to the work of the AMMR, a power point presentation of the background and the work of the PMMRs was given by the Coordinator, a copy is attached. The presentation highlighted the main areas of need amongst the migrants, primary areas of geographic concentration as well as the thematic areas of work of the PMMRs – Education, Food and Clothing, Housing, Medical and Pastoral assistance. The presentation also identified 20 active PMMRs, 5 fledgling PMMRs and the Parishes that had yet to establish same. The presentation

also indicated the main challenges faced by the PMMRs as well as recommendations going forward.

9. The IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix 2019 was discussed along with the following map which shows the geographical distribution of the migrants based on a survey carried out in the later half of 2019 by the IOM.



10. The referenced survey also highlighted the areas of need that the migrants identified, which were discussed during the presentation by way of identifying the way forward. These areas of need are, in order of priority:

- Employment/income generation
- Medical care
- Legal assistance (incl. migration & refugee status)/Document assistance
- Food
- Education and training
- Safety and security
- clothes, personal care, etc
- Secure Shelter

11. The main challenges faced by the PMMRs highlighted in the presentation are as follows:

- a. Insufficient Funding and Resources
- b. Language barrier
- c. Lack of appropriate legal infrastructure to enable the regularization of migrants
- d. Data insufficiency
- e. Lack of compassion and empathy from Parishes and some Priests and wider community – xenophobia
- f. Crime situation – human and sex trafficking, smuggling, illicit drugs
- g. Lack of sufficiently and appropriately trained volunteers
- h. Insufficient psycho-social support

12. The recommendations put forward were as follows:

- a. The AMMR/PMMRs need their own source of funding to ensure the sustainability of their efforts.
- b. Policy intervention with the State is needed so that the migrants could be regularized, gain legitimate employment and avoid exploitation.
- c. Synergies with other Parish Ministries need to be cultivated.
- d. The curriculum used in the PMMRs with 'education' initiatives needs to be standardized.
- e. Migrant children should be integrated into the Mainstream education system.
- f. Sensitization training and solidarity campaigns to be undertaken by the AMMR to encourage Parishioners to support the Migrants and the PMMRs.
- g. Provide the Catechism, also, First Communion, Confirmation, RCIA in Spanish. Provide flyers/brochures on the Mass in Spanish.
- h. Provide online support and online Content via FB, CAMSEL App, Archdiocese Website etc in Spanish.

December 18, 2019

13. On December 18, 2019 Fr. Stark was taken to visit the PMMR in Penal as well as some migrant families in the parish in Mayaro.

Penal

14. Fr Stark met with Fr Robert Christo and members the PMMR of Penal and Morne Diablo as well as a number of members of the migrant community in

that parish. Fr Christo reported on the work of the Parish, notably the establishment of a 'school' for migrant children with over 170 children registered. Fr Christo advised that the parish pays for transport for these children to get to and from the parish, the cost of which exceeds TT 12000 per month. Fr also mentioned a number of other initiatives undertaken in Penal such as the assistance provided to migrants in the form of housing assistance, food and clothing provision as well as the provision of small business loans to members of the migrant community.

15. Ms. Helen Salick of the Morne Diablo community also presented on the work of the 'school' in that part of the parish. She noted that the Morne Diablo group hosted a Sunday meal programme as well as classes for the children of the migrants. She explained that they also had ongoing Hamper distribution as well as the distribution of Clothing and Household items. The Morne Diablo Parish the classes taught the students English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Arts and Crafts. She noted that everything that they were able to do in Morne Diablo was based on the donations of concerned parishioners and citizens.



Fr Simon Peter, Leela and Fr Stark



Fr Christo addressing the audience



Helen Salick giving her report



Leela addressing the audience



Fr Stark addressing the audience

Mayaro

16. Fr Stark was then taken to Mayaro by Fr. Simon Peter, Leela, and Simone where he visited a house where migrant families lived. This home in

particular was home to a number (well over a dozen) children ranging in ages from 2 to 18 years old as well as a few adults. Fr Stark the opportunity to speak with them about their experiences and asked them about their needs. One particular need highlighted was that of steady employment and schooling for the children.

17. Fr Stark was also taken to the Church, Fr. Simon Peter advised him that there were no resources, no money to even recruit or pay teachers. He was told that a lot of the migrants were living in very poor conditions often with 20 or more persons in a house, he noted that the parish was trying to help where it could via the provision of food and clothing and job assistance where possible.

18. Fr Stark was then shown the Church Hall, potential uses for the church Hall were discussed, one suggestion was that the Hall could be used as a learning space for the Migrant children or potentially some sort of centre or safe space for them and the wider community. The field across the street from the Church was also pointed out, it was suggested that it could be used as a recreational space for the children and community.



Fr Stark, Fr Simon Peter, Leela looking at the church Hall in Mayaro



The Mayaro Church Hall



Field across the street (Gould St) from the Church

December 19, 2019

19. Fr. Stark was taken to Arima, then onto the Clergy and Religious Christmas Luncheon where he addressed the Priests and invited guests advising them of his mission as well as the work of the Migrants and Refugees Section, he encouraged them to support the Archdiocese's work with migrants and refugees. Fr Stark was then taken to a meeting on Catholic Education with the CEO of the Catholic Education Board of Management, Mrs. Sharon Mungro, members of the LWC education team as well as a representative of the TTVSol-net NGO, Ms. Ruth Albornoz and the AMMR Team. A cocktail reception was held in his honour later on that evening with representatives of the TTPS Victim Support Unit, PMMRs, the office of the Apostolic Nuncio as well the clergy.

Arima

20. Fr Stark meet with two representatives of the Arima Migrant Ministry, Mr. Matthew Pierre, Chair of the Santa Rosa RC PMMR advised Fr Stark of the PMMRs structure and gave some insight into the future plans of the Ministry, he highlighted, a "Welcome the foreigner campaign" and advised that the PMMR did a Migrant census using social media. Mr Pierre also indicated that they have had challenges with regard to, inter alia, fundraising, data management and space. He noted that the PMMR did its own fundraising and that so far they had 65 families registered, he explained that the PMMR

had partnerships with other Parish Ministries and sought further engagement of the migrant families into the parish community.

Clergy and Religious Christmas Luncheon

21. Fr Stark addressed those present and encouraged them to support the Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees, he also gave some insight into the work of the Migrants and Refugees section of the Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development. He advised the audience as to the purpose of his visit and informed them that the Holy Father met personally with his department's leadership twice a month. He noted that the Holy Father would be very moved by what was happening in Trinidad and Tobago.

22. He explained that the Holy Father says that migrants and refugees are gifts, each has different gifts to offer, he mentioned all the examples he'd seen over the past days e.g. The North West, Arima. He stated that the parishes have an opportunity to assist the migrants and he thanked everyone for actually putting welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating into action.

23. A short video presentation conveying a message of the Holy Father on Migrants and Refugees was shown.

Meeting Catholic Education

24. Ms. Sharon Mungro, CEO of the CEBM, advised that the Prime Minister had 'mandated' the Roman Catholic Church to take care of migrants and refugees. She advised that the CEBM met with the Ministry of Education to agree on how to proceed with regard to allowing the migrant children admission to the Catholic Primary Schools, she noted that they were waiting for feedback from the Ministry of National Security regarding same.

25. The English as a Second Language curriculum was raised, it was noted that the LWC has this curriculum which could be used in Parishes, with their assistance. Ms. Mungro advised that the Director of the Early Childhood Education in the Ministry of Education is also onboard with such initiatives.

26. Psycho-social needs were also discussed, it was noted that a great deal of psycho-social support was needed.

27. Ms. Rochelle Nakhid gave the background on some of the education initiatives undertaken by the Living Water Community (LWC). LWC advised that they partnered with the UNHCR and received funding and assistance with regard to the setting up of educational spaces for the migrant children. It was noted that UNICEF was a key partner with their Equal Spaces project.

28. The discussion then turned to ascertaining the total numbers of spaces in the primary schools, then questions were raised regarding the numbers of pre-school spaces and secondary school spaces. A suggestion was even made regarding the possibility of using a second shift in the schools to utilize the spaces available.

29. The representative of the NGO TTVSolnet, Ms. Ruth Alborno then voiced her concerns regarding the appropriate allocation of resources and funds.

30. The meeting was also advised that there were now a number of Venezuelan minors in jail in Erin, the authorities were awaiting the verification of these children and their parents' identities before they were released into the parents' care. It was noted that the Children's Authority had asked the LWC to find accommodation for these children.



Cross-section of the meeting



Selfie with the Holy Father's likeness 😊



Fr Stark addressing the meeting

Cocktail Reception

31. A cocktail reception was held in Fr Stark's honour on the evening of December 19, 2019 at the Hall of Assumption RC Church, Maraval. His Grace hosted the reception and welcomed all those in attendance, including the representatives of the clergy, religious, the Victim and Witness support unit of the TTPS, Children's Authority, as well as representatives of the Parish Ministries for Migrants and Refugees.

32. Fr Stark addressed those present and briefed them on the purpose of his visit as well as an overview of what he had seen thus far. He stated that he was very impressed by how much had been done in such a short space of time and by the generosity of the parishioners.



His Grace and Fr Stark



Fr Stark



Leela, Aisha Corbie (Head, Victim and Witness Support Unit, TTPS), Fr Stark





A cross section of the crowd at the Cocktail Reception

December 20, 2019

Media Conference

33. His Grace and Fr Stark addressed those present advising of the purpose of his visit as well as his findings thus far.
34. His Grace advised that the Church was Welcoming, Protecting, Promoting and Integrating as per the instructions of the Holy Father. He noted that Fr Stark will take information on the Archdiocese's practices back to the Vatican.
35. Fr Stark went on to advise them of his observations regarding the work of the PMMRs, he underscored how impressed he was by the ingenuity and generosity of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.
36. His Grace then answered questions from the journalists, he advised that the Church has to welcome everyone who comes with dignity, there is an opportunity presented for us as church. He noted that the difficulty is that the migrants and refugees will not have the resources to help themselves and if this is not addressed we will be building another problem. He stated that the GOVTT has the responsibility to address the issue.



37. After the media Conference Leela and His Grace presented Fr Stark with a token of the Archdiocese's appreciation



Leela and His Grace presenting Fr Stark with a gift from the Archdiocese
Meeting the UN Agencies, LWC, AMMR

38. Representatives of the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), LWC and the Archdiocesan Migrant Ministry met to discuss the work of the UN pertaining to Migrants and

Refugees in Trinidad and Tobago and to discuss opportunities for partnership in the future.

39. The UNICEF and UNHCR representatives gave Fr Stark an overview of the work of their agencies pertaining to the migrants and refugees in Trinidad and Tobago, they presented power-point presentations which are attached.
40. Discussions were held around the need to avoid duplication. They noted that access to education by the children of migrants was a problem in Trinidad and Tobago but that other countries had similar problems.
41. It was suggested that the needs of the communities had to be addressed along-side the needs of the migrant community.
42. It was learnt that cash-based assistance was given to migrants in need along with gift cards. The Rape-crisis society offered counselling and does interventions in severe cases pertaining to sexual and gender-based violence.
43. The UN representatives noted that the current approach is too centralized and that in 2020 the plan is to be more present with regard to the provision of services, the tackling of xenophobia via a community.
44. The meeting was advised of the AMMRs interest in joining the R4V platform, the need for assistance with the development of material, capacity building, guidance and training was highlighted.
45. UNICEF's representative noted their interest in child protection and flagged the issue of unaccompanied and separated minors as cause for concern, highlighting the need for care arrangements and very sensitive detention issues as the Children's Authority had been struggling to find appropriate spaces to host the children.
46. The issue of education support was then raised, with UNICEF stressing their interest in getting the children into schools and the role that the archdiocese could play in accomplishing same.
47. Other opportunities for partnership were discussed, it was suggested that the AMMR could cooperate with the UN regarding shelter, livelihood support, education, vocational training, occupational health programmes as well as assistance to the Ministry of Health.

Meeting with Government officials



L-R: Cpl Ramnarine, Counter-Trafficking Unit (CTU), Deputy Chief Immigration Kern Penco, Chief Immigration Officer Mrs. Charmaine Gandhi-Andrews and Mrs. Simone Francois-Whittier (Coordinator, AMMR)

48. The Government officials present: Ministry of Health – Dr. Maryam Richards
Chief Immigration Officer – Charmaine Ghandi-Andrews
Deputy Chief Immigration Officer – Kern Penco
Counter-trafficking Unit - Corporal Ramnarine

49. The discussions then flowed with the Chief Immigration officer taking the lead. She noted the role of the current Legislation – Immigration Act and explained that the Immigration Department (ID) did their work bearing in mind the humanitarian side of things.

50. Mrs Gandhi-Andrews then gave Fr Stark some historical context. She explained that the Venezuelans came in late 2016, before that the Cubans were the ones seeking assistance. In 2019, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) recognizing the situation, agreed to have the registration process and registered 16,535 persons aged 16 and over, there were also 2400 children under 16 who were not registered but noted.

51. The CIO and the other officers present then discussed the details of the migrant issue in Trinidad and Tobago and advised Fr Stark of some of their concerns regarding the abuse of the Asylum-seeker process and the inability to verify about 1000 of the migrants who had no paper work. Mention was also made of human trafficking and smugglers and the need to partner with the church to seek appropriate shelter for the unaccompanied minors.

52. The meeting ended with the CIO giving her assurances that the Government was willing to work with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese to address this issue and that she looked forward to future partnerships and collaborations.

End of official portion of the visit

53.Fr Stark was then hosted to a meal and other refreshments with The Archbishop's Appeal team, Jenny Lee, Joanne Miller and Simone. Leela was unable to attend.

6.3.28 On 9 November I met with one Marlon, from the UNHCR. He is creating a database in relation to Migrants and Refugees to determine how best the UNHCR could assist us in TT – in the absence of legislation.

6.3.29 The work of the AMMR, though in its early phase, requires a great deal of planning and foresight. Such work requires financial and human resources and buy-in/support from the leadership in the Archdiocese, especially at the Parish level, in order to succeed.

6.4 ASK WHY: CCSJ's monthly one-hour TV programme on Trinity Communications Network. DVDs are available at CCSJ's Office for use by parishes. Programmes aired during 2018 are as follows:

Tues 22 Jan. 2019 Theme: "GOOD POLITICS IS AT THE SERVICE OF PEACE" - Pope's message, 51st World Day of Peace Celebration -1 Jan 2018 Moderator: Nadine Bushell. Panellists: Leela Ramdeen; Timothy Hamel-Smith: Former President of the Senate, Former Acting President of T&T & Attorney-at-law.

Tues 26 Feb. 2019 Theme: "THE CALL TO PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE" Moderator: Leela Ramdeen. Co-Moderator: Nadine Bushell- CCSJ Secretary. Panellists: Najette Abraham-Catholic Voices; Gregory Delzin, Attorney-at-Law & Chair, TT's Sentencing Commission Commission, and Alloy Youk See - Social Worker, Mediator, former Senior Prisons Officer, Service & Talk Show Host

Tues 26 Mar. 2019 THEME: Christ's Resurrection –True Hope of the World. Moderator: Nadine Bushell. Panellists: Mikkel Trestrail, Deacon /Companions of the Transfigured Christ (now Fr Mikkel), Taresa Best Downes, Episcopal Delegate for Youth.

28th May 2019 THEME: Work is Fundamental to the Dignity of a Person. Moderator: Nadine Bushell. Panellists: Allan Julien (Catholic Men's Ministry), Jodel

Lutchman (Catholic Youth Commission), Robert Giuseppi, Former Trade Union Leader).

25th June 2019 THEME: A Catholic Response to Migrants and Refugees. Moderator: Nadine Bushell. Panellists: Rochelle Nakhid, (Coordinator, Ministry for Migrants and Refugees, Living Water Community) Rhonda Maingot, (Foundress LWC), Taresa Best (Episcopal Delegate for Youth).

23rd July 2019 THEME: Promoting a Healthy Sense of Leisure. Moderator: Leela Ramdeen. Panellists: Deacon Mikkell Trestrail; Daniel Reyes, VP Catholic Student Movement UWI; Susie Gomes, International Umpire; Alexandria Olton, Sports and Exercise Psychologist The feedback has been positive, including an email one Ms Denyse De Bourg who wrote as follows:

“Dear Ms Ramdeen,

I was fortunate to view the programme on Trinity TV on Tuesday 23rd July 2019, which you chaired and dealt with the subject at caption. I was pleased with the way you guided your guests in the discussion, but I was especially intrigued with your quotation from Josef Piefer: "Leisure: the basis of culture", so much so that I had to search out his work on the internet and read further.

This is particularly helpful at this time when I seem to have bitten off more than I can chew and at a late stage of life I have embarked on a grand project to convert **14 acres of agricultural land** on the south coast of Trinidad into a nature park with walking trails among forest, fruit and flowering trees, and most importantly, a meditative maze leading into a mitzpah. I was asking God, why me, why now, and getting a bit despondent because I do not have the financial means to bring the plans to fruition. Yes, I know all the encouraging Bible verses; I have studied the Bible extensively at the Seminary and at the Bible school in Caroni, and I lead the Bible Study Group in Our Lady of Fatima parish, Curepe, but still, I needed encouragement (Hebrews 3:13). So your programme came at the right time, and I am writing to let you know that, and to thank you and the members of the panel. It was not a coincidence.

I am taking the liberty of attaching a draft document from which I plan to create a brochure with which to seek funding for the project. If you can find the time to skim through it, you will see where I have included some terms gleaned from your programme.

Blessings,
Denyse”

I have been in touch with her, to give some advice and support. There are many Catholics, and persons of other faiths, who have wonderful ideas, and who need encouragement to bring them to fruition. Our task is to play our part in supporting our brothers and sisters.

22nd October 2019 THEME: The Dignity of Work. Moderator: Nadine Bushell. Panellists: Joseph Timothy, Shania Cuffy, and Hazel Brown

26th Nov 2019 THEME: Holistic Education/Education and Integral Human Development. Moderator: Nadine Bushell. Panellists: Sharon Mangroo, CEO, Catholic Education Board of Management, Simone Francois–Whittier, Coordinator, Archdiocese’s Ministry for Migrants and Refugees. Once again, we used this opportunity to educate viewers on the theme from a Catholic perspective. The DVDs of each programme are available for use by members, parishes etc.

6.5 CCSJ Materials e.g.:

6.5.1 Newsletters: CCSJ’s Newsletter, *Parish Link* is widely circulated to parishes, Catholic schools, and Archdiocesan departments/organizations. It is also uploaded on CCSJ’s Website and referenced on CCSJ’s Facebook page. These are printed at a reduced rate by Andes (Pat Hernandez). Since we need to transition to a paper-less Archdiocese – as far as possible, CCSJ has significantly reduced the number of copies printed e.g. only 1 copy is printed per parish. The following are the 3 Newsletters that were prepared in 2019. They are also available on CCSJ’s Website at :<http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/parishlink/>

January 2019: Pope Francis’ Message to celebrate the 52nd World Day of Peace – 1 January 2019. Theme: Good politics is at the service of peace

March 2019: Pope Francis’ Message for Lent 2019. Theme: *“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” (Rm 8: 19)*

June 2019: Pope Francis’ Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2019 which was commemorated on 29 Sept. His Message, dated April 30, was released at a press conference held at the Vatican on Monday, May 27 on the **Theme: “It’s not just about Migrants: it is also about our fears”.**

“Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!” (Mt 14:27).

CCSJ has also produced a document summarising the key **Social Justice Principles.** It is available on our Website.

See: <http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/2019/07/09/social-justice-principles/> . It is at the printer and one hard copy will be sent to each parish for reference.

NB: All Newsletters are uploaded on CCSJ's Website. And since 2020, due to the pandemic, none of the Newsletters have been printed. Information has been circulated to ensure that members of the Clergy, HODs etc. know that they can access these online.

6.5.2 CCSJ has also produced a series of **You Tube Clips** - focusing on SJ Principles - to complement the written word. These can be accessed on CCSJ's Website:

April 16: Caring for God's creation

March 29: Rights and Responsibilities

March 8: The Family

February 25: Sanctity of Life and the Dignity of the Human Person

February 11: Poverty and Social Exclusion

January 25: Crime and Non-Violence

January 18: The importance of prayer in our lives.

OTHER THEMES FOR YOU TUBE CLIPS:

Global Solidarity and development

The common good

The dignity of work and the rights of workers

Promotion of peace and disarmament, and

The role of Government and subsidiarity

6.5.3 CCSJ continues to produce weekly articles for **Catholic News** – focusing on social justice issues. These can be accessed on CCSJ's website. Inter alia, the articles seek to educate the Faithful/readers about the social doctrine of the Church and of ways in which this doctrine can be applied to the situation in TT/the world today. They are a call to action by all people of goodwill. During 2019, the 3 main National Newspapers continued to publish some of these articles produced by CCSJ.

6.5.4 Social Justice Quotations published in Catholic News weekly aim 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.

6.5.5 CCSJ's Take-a-Bite series: These DVDs on a number of social justice themes, have been circulated to all parishes and copies are still available at CCSJ's Office for those who wish to order copies.

6.5.6 Nine Leaflets focusing on various social justice themes: These leaflets were printed and distributed a few years ago. A few copies are still available. No further copies will be printed as we go "paper-less".

6.5.7 CCSJ's Calendar for 2019 – on the theme: **Solidarity**. The wording on the Calendar stated: "We are all one family in the world...Solidarity...is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all, and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all...Solidarity must be seen above all in its value as a moral virtue that determines the order of institutions...Peace is the fruit of solidarity." (St. Pope John Paul II, The Social Concern of the Church, 1987. These were printed free of charge by Andes and distributed to parishes etc.

6.6 Facebook and Website:

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. Feedback from visitors to CCSJ's social media shows that the Website and Facebook page are valued and provide useful information which aims to strengthen the Faith of those who access them. They are kept up-to-date and the variety of topics covered is of interest to many. Some individuals/organisations continue to seek permission from CCSJ to use material contained on the Commission's Website.

There are also a number of useful CCSJ documents under the heading: **Special Focus** on our Website (<http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/special-focus/>). They cover:

- Trafficking in Persons
- Health: Diabetes
- Environment: 3 documents produced by CCSJ on this issue
- Capital Punishment
- Restorative Justice and Parole
- Laventille Devotions 2008,
- Family Life
- Women's issues.

6.7 Council for Responsible Political Behaviour & Code of Ethical Political Conduct

6.7.1 CCSJ is the Secretariat of the Council and CCSJ's Chair is the Secretary.

This Council was established to monitor and evaluate adherence to the Code of Ethical Political Conduct by the Political Parties and their Candidates. The Council seeks to encourage moral, lawful and responsible conduct during elections.

6.7.2 The Code was conceptualised by Archbishop Joseph Harris and was drafted with input from other religious leaders including Anglican Bishop Claude Berkley and civil society organisations, including Transparency International and the Network of Non-Governmental (NGOs), along with FITUN and the Chamber of Commerce. The Code was launched at the Hilton Trinidad Conference Centre on 25 March 2015. All five political parties signed the code.

6.7.3 Signatories to the Code included 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.

6.7.4 It is important to note the Express' report in March 2015: "Asked if the council has the power to impose sanctions, Harris said: 'We have no power to penalise anyone. The council will monitor and evaluate what politicians and parties are doing. People can complain to the council and they will be well within the law. We are evaluating the person or party based on the principles kept. We have no powers to do anything. It has to work through the moral and spiritual suasion of the electorate. The electorate has to ensure the politicians are keeping their word.'

6.7.5 "Harris said they will be embarking upon an education programme for the nation. He said: 'The citizenry can determine if the parties are being true. It is not a religious instrument. It has a lot of civil society groups. The code was intended to stop the downward slide of politics and politicians on the hustings.'

6.7.6 "In a previous interview, Harris had said the code was intended to encourage politicians to behave responsibly and refrain from mauvais langue and non-charitable remarks on political platforms and even during Parliamentary sessions. "Harris also said they should discuss national issues and not focus on the individual. Asked to share his sentiments on the Council, Dr. Ragoonath said: "At this point in

time, we have no power and we have no sanctions. All we could do is utilise moral suasion. We take it to the media and the party that has not been adhering to the Code will be exposed. The individual will also be exposed to the public.” Dr. Ragoonath said the code’s tenets focus on the need to uphold the Constitution, moral principles and ethical standards, promote and enforce tolerance, respect, harmony and peace, and to refrain from practices that promote divisiveness, especially racist remarks.”

6.7.7 At the launch, Archbishop Harris also said: “We as a people have developed certain habits which are not the best and the code seeks to help us to change those habits and build better habits where politics and canvassing and campaigning are concerned....We don’t expect to have 100 per cent compliance immediately, even though I suppose all of that would be welcomed, but we do hope that the code would help us so that ten years from now we could look back and say, ‘Yes our political culture has changed.’ And not a people who focus on the character assassination but on the projects, the ideas, the philosophy and the development which we all seek for our country.”

6.7.8 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.

6.7.9 Among the commitments within the Code are that political parties should maintain the highest moral principles and ethical standards, promoting and enforcing respect, tolerance, harmony and peace. The Code also prescribes obedience to the law while upholding the integrity of the electoral process.

6.7.10 The Code prohibits the offer of inducements to voters, threatening persons’ jobs, abuse of power and office, making defamatory allegations, use of language that intimidates candidates, incites violence and fosters hatred and divisiveness, among other things. Officials of political parties are responsible for ensuring that their respective organizations abide by the Code.

6.7.11 **The Council** is a separate entity which was born out of the code. See the following link for a Media Release from the Council, outlining Methods for managing complaints and reporting thereof:

[http:// www.rcsocialjusticett.org/downloads/coepccouncil_100415.pdf](http://www.rcsocialjusticett.org/downloads/coepccouncil_100415.pdf)

It should be noted that, in line with the thinking of the Members of the Council, the former chairman of the Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC), the late Dr. Herbert Masson, stated that the Code of Ethical Political Conduct should be codified in law. (See Express Sept 8, 2015).

6.7.12 The Council was incorporated as a not for profit Company on Dec 15, 2015. In Dec 2019, the Council's Annual Return was filed with Companies Registry to fulfill the Council's obligation since it is incorporated as a non-profit Company under the Companies' Act.

6.7.13 Since Feb of 2019, there were a series of meetings between the Council and the Founding Organisations (FO). The position of the Archbishop of POS is the Chair of the FO, and Deryck Walcott, Transparency International, is Deputy Chair. The Founding Organisations agreed to change the composition of the Council and Political Parties are no longer represented on the Council. They were, instead, invited to form a "Code-Keepers" group. However, at the time of writing (Nov 2020), no Political Party has expressed an interest in so doing.

6.7.14 The Code was revised in July 2019 and to date most Members of the FO have signed the revised Code. A new structure has been established and some new members have been appointed to the Council by the FO.

6.7.15 Council Members during 2019 – before the decision was taken by the Founding Organisations to amend the composition of the Council, were:

Chair - Dr. Bishnu Ragoonath

Deputy Chair - Bishop Clive Abdulah

Secretary - Leela Ramdeen

Member - Bro. Noble Khan

Member - Ramjit Maharaj.

Also on the Council were representatives from the five political parties including:

Ferdinand Ferreira (PNM)

Denisia Forbes (UNC),

Sunil Ramjitsingh (ILP)

Lisa Henzell (Congress of the People) - Resigned June 2018 – Awaiting new representative

Gregory Fernandez (MSJ)

NB: Recording Secretary to the Council is Jo Anne Lodge – see below.

6.7.16 Council Members since July 2019

• Chair: Dr. Bishnu Ragoonath • Deputy Chair: Bishop Clive Abdulah • Secretary: Ms. Leela Ramdeen • Dr. Beverly Ann-Marie Beckles • Dr. Gabrielle Hosein • Brother Noble Khan • Dr. Olabisi Kuboni • Dr. Eastlyn McKenzie • Mr. Ralph Peter.

6.7.17 A meeting was organised on 29 July with His Grace at which all Political Parties were invited to send their representatives to Archbishop's House to sign the revised Code and to recommit to abide by its contents. A Media Conference was held to share information with the wider public and Political Parties were invited to send their representatives to the Media Conference. A further opportunity to sign the revised Code was provided for those who were unable to attend the first session.

6.7.18 To date 10 Political Parties, except one of the main parties, have signed on to the revised Code – as follows:

July 29, 2019:

1. Congress of the People (COP):
 - Mr. Iqbal Hydal, Secretary Research & Education
 - Mr. Lonsdale Williams, Vice Chairman
2. Democratic Development Party – Mr. Harold Learmond-Criqui, Political Leader
3. United National Congress (UNC)
 - Mr. Davendranath Tancoo, General Secretary
 - Mr. Peter Kanhai, Chairman

July 31, 2019

4. Movement for Social Justice (MSJ) - Mr. David Abdulah, Political Leader
5. National Coalition for Transformation (NCT) – Ms. Nalini Dial, Political Leader
6. Trinidad Humanity Campaign – Mr. Marcus Ramkissoon, Political Leader

September 23, 2019

7. Green Party of Trinidad and Tobago - Mr. Richard Ian Gill, Advisory Board Member
8. Progressive Party

- Mr. Nikoli Edwards, Political Leader
 - Ms. Morgan Ramlallawan, Chief Political Officer
9. Trinidad and Tobago Democratic Front - Mr. Anthony Williams, Political Leader
10. The Democratic Party of Trinidad and Tobago
- Mr. Valentine Steve Alvarez, Political Leader
 - Mr. Kenneth Boodoo, Member.

6.7.19 During 2019, the Council held 3 meetings, issued a Media Release and dealt with a number of complaints about breaches/potential breaches of the Code. Meetings are usually held in the Board- room at the Institute of International Relations, UWI, St. Augustine Campus.

6.7.20 Since Local Govt. and General Elections were held in 2019 and early in 2020, the role of the Council e.g. to monitor adherence to the Code, and to educate the public about its content, was important. Inter alia, the public needs to be aware that the Council has no legal sanctions but depends on moral suasion for candidates, supporters etc. to maintain a high standard of behaviour during the campaigns.

6.8 Promoting a culture of life: e.g.

6.8.1 Pro-Life work and Mary Care Centre:

6.8.1.1 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."

6.8.1.2 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)

6.8.1.3 CCSJ continues to promote and defend life in all forms and at all stages: from conception until natural death. This MCC Ministry contributes to CCSJ's pro-life advocacy. Although abortion is illegal in TT, there continues to be a number of back street abortions. The Catholic Church stands for LIFE from conception to natural death. Mary Care Centre is one way to demonstrate that we are prepared to journey with those who face challenges in having their babies.

6.8.1.4 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.

6.8.1.5 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 marketplace. 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.

6.8.1.6 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 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 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.

6.8.1.7 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. 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.

The young women are usually brought to MCC through recommendations, by the Community Police and Social Workers.

6.8.1.8 Please note that CCSJ is no longer responsible for oversight of the Centre, which now falls within the remit of Eternal Light Community (ELC). ELC has opened another such Centre in South Trinidad.

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.

6.8.2 On Fri 12 October, I was a panellist at an event organised by Pauline Phelps and team - ***Billings Ovulation Method Association of Trinidad & Tobago*** (BOMA-TT). Before the panel discussion participants viewed the Premiere Screening of a film entitled: 'Sexual Revolution – 50 Years since Humanae Vitae'. It was held at St. Dominic's Pastoral Centre. Sadly, the event did not draw a large crowd as on that same evening, there was a candlelight procession around the Savannah, organised by Living Water Community to pray for peace and nonviolence in our Nation.

6.8.3 Anti-Death Penalty work:

6.8.3.1 On the evening of Thurs 10 October 2019, **World Day against the Death Penalty**, CCSJ and partners organised a **Panel Discussion** at Assumption Parish Hall on the Theme: ***“Children, Unseen victims of the Death Penalty”***. Partners were: the Greater Caribbean for Life (GCL) and RED Initiatives. The event was supported by the European Union Delegation to Trinidad and Tobago, the Faculty of Law, UWI, St. Augustine Campus and Amnesty International.

6.8.3.2 The Moderator was supposed to have been Prof. Rose-Marie Belle Antoine Dean, Faculty of Law, UWI, St Augustine Campus, but because of the

inclement weather, she was forced to turn back and could not get to the venue in time, so I acted as Moderator. Panel Speakers were:

- His Excellency Aad Biesebroek, Ambassador, EU Delegation -Keynote Speaker
- Mrs. Rhonda Gregoire-Roopchan, Deputy Director, Care Services, Children's Authority
- Mr. Alloy Youk See, PRO, Social Workers' Association and former Senior Prison Officer. Mr. Gerard Wilson, Commissioner of Prisons, was also unable to attend and was represented by Mr Youk See.
- Mr. Andrew Douglas, Lifer, Maximum Security Prison, Arouca
- and I also presented a paper as Chair, Catholic Commission for Social Justice & Member of the Greater Caribbean for Life.

6.8.3.3. There was a 30 min. slot for a Q&A session. Light refreshments were served. The proceedings were taped and is available for training purposes. The event was well attended. Attendees included 15 Ambassadors/High Commissioners/Diplomats.

6.8.3.4 As the World Coalition stated: "Frequently forgotten, children of parents sentenced to death or executed carry a heavy emotional and psychological burden that can amount to the violation of their human rights. This trauma can occur at any and all stages of the capital punishment of a parent: arrest, trial, sentencing, death row stays, execution dates, execution itself, and its aftermath. The repeated cycles of hope and disappointment that can accompany all of these stages can have a long-term impact, occasionally well into adulthood. Stigmatization from the community in which they live and the loss of a parent at the hands of a state all reinforce deep instability in the child's day to day life. In line with the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November 1989), the focus of this World Day is on children and their human rights."

6.8.3.5 CCSJ continues to work with regional and international partners seeking to **abolish the Death Penalty** in our English-Speaking Caribbean countries and globally and to find non-lethal means of dealing with crimes. Although I continue to be a member of the Greater Caribbean for Life, I resigned in June as the Chair of this organisation due to my ill health. The goal of CCSJ is to achieve the permanent abolition of capital punishment in every Caribbean state/the world and to work towards the creation of

a culture of respect for the right to life and the inherent dignity of all human beings.

6.8.3.6 Pope Francis has repeatedly called for the abolition of the death penalty. In 2018 the Church closed the “loophole” that existed in our Catechism regarding the death penalty. CCSJ welcomed Pope Francis’ decision to revise the Catholic Church’s teaching on the Death Penalty. This decision is clearly linked to the Catholic Church’s belief that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of the Church’s social doctrine. It is important to note that a number of other faith communities/Christian denominations are also opposed to the death penalty.

6.8.3.7 A letter to all Catholic Bishops from the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Luis Ladaria, dated 1 August 2018, includes the new text of the **n. 2267** of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, as approved by Pope Francis. **“The death penalty: 2267. Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good. Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. Lastly, more effective systems of detention have been developed, which ensure the due protection of citizens but, at the same time, do not definitively deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption. Consequently, the Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, that ‘the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person’, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.”**

6.8.3.8 NB: It is to be noted that in 2016 the AEC Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter on Capital Punishment: I had been asked by the AEC Bishops in 2016 to produce a draft. It is entitled: *Human Life is Gift from God*. I also arranged for the final document to be printed pro bono. It has been widely distributed across the region and CCSJ continues to promote it as a key document in our Pro-Life work. It is available online.

6.8.3.9 At the time of writing – Nov 2020, **143 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice.** Also, in his encyclical, **Fratelli Tutti, on fraternity and social friendship**, published on 4 October 2020, **Pope Francis finally closed the door on the death penalty.** In 2018, Pope Francis ordered a change in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the official compendium of church teaching, when he termed the death penalty “inadmissible.” Today the pope placed the full weight of his teaching authority behind this statement: The death penalty is inadmissible, and Catholics should work for its abolition. He said: “There can be no stepping back from this position,” referring to the opposition to capital punishment expressed by St. John Paul II. “Today we state clearly that ‘the death penalty is inadmissible and the Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide.’”

6.8.3.10 As Fr James Martin (Jesuit Review – America), states: “In “Fratelli Tutti,” the pope grounds his opposition to capital punishment not only in mercy, perhaps his most characteristic spiritual theme, but also in opposition to revenge. “Fear and resentment can easily lead to viewing punishment in a vindictive and even cruel way, rather than as part of a process of healing and reintegration into society,” he writes. Moreover, he bases the teaching in the inviolable dignity of each person—including the person on death row. “Let us keep in mind that ‘not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this,’” he says, quoting “The Gospel of Life” (“Evangelium Vitae”). Francis continues: “The firm rejection of the death penalty shows to what extent it is possible to recognize the inalienable dignity of every human being and to accept that he or she has a place in this universe.” Today Pope Francis also condemned life imprisonment, which he calls a “secret death penalty.” With “Fratelli Tutti” Francis has moved opposition to the death penalty into the foreground of Catholic social teaching, completing the church’s long journey of mercy and reconciliation. As Sister Prejean notes, it remains for Catholics to put his words into action:

6.8.3.11 Devotional assent is not enough. Unless we heed the Holy Father’s commitment to work for abolition of the death penalty, his words, however inspiring, will remain just that: words on a page, stillborn, an annunciation, but no incarnation. In us, may these words live!” It is to be noted that CCSJ’s Chair is also Chair of the Greater Caribbean for Life, a regional not-for-profit civil society organisation that is working towards the abolition of the death penalty in our region and further afield.

6.8.3.12 On Tuesday 9 October, I represented His Grace and presented a paper at an event organised by **the Delegation of the European Union to T&T**, to mark **World Day against the Death Penalty**. My paper is available on our website. The event was well attended. Other speakers included the EU Ambassador, the Australian Ambassador, Prof Rose-Marie Belle Antoine (Dean of the Law Faculty, UWI), and a UWI Student.

6.8.3.13 On 10 October, **World Day against the Death Penalty**, CCSJ partnered with the Greater Caribbean for Life to issue a **Media Release** entitled: CCSJ & GCL call for more humane living conditions for those on death row. This was the theme for World Day 2018.

6.8.3.14 On Wed 17 October 2019 CCSJ partnered with another TT NGO – RED Initiatives, and with the Greater Caribbean for Life, supported by Amnesty International, to screen a **feature documentary film called The Penalty**. The aim was to mark World Day against the Death Penalty. It was held at Alliance Francaise, Alcazar St., St Clair. The film follows 3 people with “extraordinary experiences of America’s modern death penalty and goes behind the scenes.” This was followed by a Panel Discussion which included Jason Nathu, Hugh Wooding Law School Legal Aid Clinic; Alloy Youksee, radio host, Social Worker, former Senior Prison Officer, and me. Sadly, we were preaching to the converted as about 5-6 Ambassadors attended and a few persons who are pro-life – including Sr Roberta and Sr Mary.

6.8.3.15 On 17 November 2020 the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution draft calling upon UN Member States to observe a moratorium on executions. A total of 77 UN Member States co-sponsored the proposal. At the vote, a majority of **120** UN Member States favoured the resolution while **39** voted against and **24** abstained. The last vote was taken in 2018. This is the 8th vote on this issue. **Sadly, all the English-speaking countries in the Caribbean region voted against the Resolution.** Unfortunately, Antigua changed from Abstain to No and Dominica from Yes to No.

6.8.3.16 And yet, because of the several rulings by the Privy Council (JCPC) over the years, it is almost impossible for any of the countries in our region to execute anyone. The last execution took place in St Kitts in 2008 when, on 19 Dec., Charles la Place was hanged.

6.8.3.17 On Thurs 29 Nov I had a skype conference with Holly Sarkissian Senior Development Officer Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA). They are liaising with Hon Wade Mark, MP, and others to see what action they can take to work collaboratively on anti-death penalty issues. They accept that strategies should not approach the issues directly but should consider this work within the context of crime reduction in general. PGA intend to return to TT and have asked CCSJ to partner with them as they seek to change hearts and minds here. During their last visit to TT a few years ago, they met with me and a few others at Archbishop's House.

6.8.3.18 As Chair of the Greater Caribbean for Life, I went to Washington from 5-7 December to present a paper at the Thematic Hearing for the 170th Session of Hearings before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on work in the English-speaking Caribbean region to abolish the death penalty. The President of the IACHR is a Jamaican woman, Ms. Margarette May Macaulay, who was elected Commissioner on June 16, 2015, by the OAS General Assembly, for a four-year term that runs from January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2019. I was able to share with the panel the fact that on 1 August 2018, the Catholic Church revised its teaching on the Death Penalty (see Catechism para 2267), stating, inter alia, that "the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, and (the Church) works with determination for its abolition worldwide."

6.8.3.19 On Mon 10 December, the world observed Human Rights Day. I attended an event to observe this day on Tues 11 December. It was held at the Convocation Hall at the Hall of Justice and focused on human rights issues. Archbishop Jason Gordon was one of the panellists.

6.8.4 On Fri 5 July, I attended a **Pro-life Revival** meeting at Emmanuel Community (EC). Since the passing of Violet D'Ornelas, His Grace held a meeting with EC and asked the Team to contact me with a view to promote a pro-life revival. Members of the Pentecostal and Evangelical faith communities and Lawyers for Jesus were also present at the meeting. It is clear that their views on issues such as homosexuality and the death penalty are different from ours.

Emmanuel Community planned and executed a **40-day Rosary for Life** - starting on 31st July on the Feast of 'Our Lady of the Slain' and ending on 8th September on

the Memorial of the 'Nativity of Our Lady'. CCSJ supported this initiative. We prayed for:

~ The Unborn

~ The Children of Our Nation

~ The Family

~ The Nation

~ The Catholic Church

The praying of the Rosary was aired ON TRINITY TV AT 6:30 PM each day. Archbishop Jason asked everyone to pray the Rosary during the 40 days. The 40 days ended with a candle-lit procession around the Queens Park Savannah.

6.8.5 Given the push by the UN and other Agencies to introduce sex education in the nation's schools via a programme that contradicts the teaching of our Church, the Archdiocese intends to introduce an aspect of the curriculum to address this issue, in a way that will be in keeping with the teaching of our Church. On Monday 23 Sept I attended a meeting organised by His Grace at Archbishop's House to clarify the way forward regarding the introduction of **Alive to the World and World Youth Alliance's Human Development Curriculum** in our Catholic Schools. Present at the meeting were: Sharon Mangroo, CEO, CEBM; Tricia Syms, Family Life Commission (FLC); Fr Matthew Ragbir, Spiritual Director, FLC; Taresa Best, Youth Commission; Tonia Gooding, in charge of implementing Alive to the World in Catholic Primary Schools – currently working in about 10 schools. The programme will be "rolled out" to other schools in due course; and Pauline McCarthy (FLC), who is assisting with the process. I represented CCSJ. Sr Juliet Rajah, Catechetics, and Maria Byron, CREDI, were invited to be part of the group.

6.9 Heads of Department/Vicars Meetings : On 17 and 18 January 2019, Heads of Department, Rev Roy and Rev Lennox attended a 2-day retreat at the Seminary with His Grace. He is keen to develop a new way of working in the Archdiocese to encourage Departments to work more collaboratively.

During 2019 I also attended a number of Heads of Department and Vicars Meetings at the Bible Institute in Caroni. During these meetings with His Grace, the

aim was to ensure that all Departments are "on the same page", as it were, and that the Archdiocese's Pastoral Plan is being rolled out e.g. with the establishment of Ministry Animation Teams etc. During the year I also attended 2 Pastoral Retreats for HODs at the Bible Institute in Caroni. Fr Hudlin and his colleague ran the session and used the opportunity to engage us in discussions about how we could work more collaboratively to achieve the Archdiocese's goals.

6.10 FUND RAISING: On Thurs 21 March, at the HODs and Vicars' meeting with His Grace, the prizes for a Raffle were distributed. This was an initiative of Family Life Commission (AFLC) and Catechetical Commission. The idea was to sell tickets at \$20 each – to raise \$750,000. Permission was obtained from the Police to embark on this fundraiser. I joined a member of AFLC outside Tru Value in Trincity on a Saturday to sell tickets, and we sold about 14 books besides what I sold on that day. It had been agreed that since the idea came from AFLC and Catechetical Commission, they would each get \$150,000 and the rest will be shared among the other Depts. CCSJ was allocated TT\$20,000 from the overall sum collected.

7.0 Justice, Peace, and Community Week: Theme: "THE DIGNITY OF WORK": Saturday 19 October 2019 – Saturday 26 October 2019

7.1 All Archdiocesan Departments, Catholic Schools and Catholic organizations were encouraged to plan activities to observe Justice, Peace and Community Week (JPCW). A Prayer Supplement was published in Catholic News for JPCW and the Faithful were asked to use it during the week. Prior to JPCW, Lauren, AEC Secretariat, visited me to make a tape to promote JPCW and this was shared on the Archdiocese's Facebook page.

7.2 On Sat 19 October Justice, Peace and Community Week was launched on TCN with a programme from 1pm to 2pm on the theme: *The dignity of work*. The first 30 minutes focused on a pre-taped contribution from Archbishop Jason Gordon on the theme, and on presentations on the theme by Angela Lee Loy and me. There was then a dramatisation piece performed by the MIQU Team (Mary Immaculate Queen of the Universe, Bourg Mulatresse) whose title is: *Thespians for Christ*. Andrea Hutchinson leads this Team. This was followed by a Panel discussion that allowed youth/young adults to air their views on the topic. Nadine Bushell was the Moderator and Panellists were:

7.3 Gabriella Sambrano-Mendez - a 27 yr old young Lawyer; Kareem Paul - a 26 year old visually impaired young man who earns a living by playing piano at Mass in his parish and who teaches music at the Blind Welfare Assoc.; and Nicole John-

Thomas, a 45 year old former UWI Organic Chemistry Professor who is currently choosing to be a stay-at-home mother; and Jason Hinds, a 34 year old Health and Safety Officer in the Oil Industry who shared his views on the perception of his colleagues and blue collar workers. The programme was aired live on TCN, Living Water Community.

7.4 The following was the *calendar of events* for the rest of that week:

On Sunday 20 October: All Parish Priests/Parish Administrators were asked to encourage the Faithful to pray the Rosary during this Week.

On Monday 21 October: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.: PRAYER SESSION I made a presentation on the theme at a Prayer Session organised by Eternal Light Community at St. Charles Borromeo RC Church, Eastern Main. Rd., Tunapuna.

On Tuesday 22 October: 8:00 – 9:00 p.m. CCSJ'S MONTHLY 'ASK WHY' TV PROGRAMME was aired on TCN. It focused on the theme for the week. The Moderator was Nadine Bushell. Panellists included Hazel Brown, and I.

On Wednesday 23 October all Catholic Schools were asked to focus on the theme from a Catholic Perspective.

On Thursday 24 October from 6.00 – 8.00 p.m. CCSJ joined in a VIGIL Organised by: Emmanuel Community on the theme - at 46 Rosalino Street Woodbrook.

7.5 For the fifth year during Justice, Peace and Community Week, CCSJ partnered with the Youth Commission to hold a **Spoken Word Competition** on the theme: *The dignity of work*. The Competition was held on Friday 25 October from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Participants were between the ages of 13– 21 years. The competition was aired LIVE on TCN/LWC from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

7.6 Episcopal Delegate for Youth, Taresa Best-Downes, and CCSJ's Chair thanked the following contestants for sharing their expertise: Alexandria Douglas, Alliyah Cooper, Chevelle Neptune Francis, Mikayla Cassandra Weekes, and Serapion Jones, including our First, Second and Third prize winners, Malique Wilson (16 years, St Mary's College IN PHOTO), Kerlyssa De Verteuil (15 years, St Joseph's Convent, St Joseph) and Coryal Sylvester (19 years, UWI).

7.7 The following were also thanked by Episcopal Delegate for Youth & Young Adults, Taresa Best-Downes, CYC's Events' Coordinator, Rica Charles, and CCSJ's Chair, Leela Ramdeen:

- the judges: Kwame Weekes, Dianne Wells and Mickel Alexander;
- the MCs: Dave Marcus and Lueann Henry;
- Presenters: Caron Greaves, Cavelle Joseph St Omer, Donna Marie Alexander;
- Performers: MOE; Extempo group: Dylan Mohammed, Francois Sylvester, Nathaniel Williams;
- TCN Team,
- and CCSJ's assistants: Lorna Chee-Wah and Cheryl Wallace.

7.8 Our youth are partners in the process of promoting integral ecology, which Pope Francis spoke about in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, and in which he said: "Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future, without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded" (LS13).

7.9 The involvement of youth in responding to TT's floods in 2018 is a clear indication that they are up to the challenge of addressing environmental degradation and climate change. The spirit of volunteerism in T&T is alive and well.

7.10 PRIZE WINNERS

First prize winner: 16-year-old Malique Wilson, a Lower six student at St. Mary's College. He was the only male competitor. He won TT\$2,000 with his presentation: *The cycle of life at work*. See the entire proceedings via the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/trinitytv/videos/410480012973755/>

Second prize winner: 15-year-old St Joseph's Convent, St Joseph, Kerlyssa de Verteuil. She won TT\$1,500 with her presentation: United as a Nation.

Third prize winner: 19-year-old UWI student, Coryal Sylvester. She won TT \$1,000.00 with her presentation: Immigration.

All participants were given certificates of participation and medals as tokens of appreciation. Entertainment during the event included: **CHECK THIS**

* On Saturday 26 October all Parish Priests /Parish Administrators are asked to

encourage Youth/Young Adults to lead a holy hour in parishes before Mass.

7.11 NB: Archbishop Jason has asked that CCSJ shift Justice, Peace and Community Week (JPCW) to the week commencing World Day of the Poor - which falls on Sunday November 17. Therefore, JPCW will run from Sat 14 – Sat 21 November 2020. The theme in 2019 was: *The hope of the poor shall not perish forever*. We await information on the theme for 2020. (The theme for 2020 was based on Pope Francis' Message for World Day of the Poor: "Stretch forth your hand to the poor" (Sirach 7:32)).

7.12 World Day of the Poor has been celebrated on the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time since 2017. It was established by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter, *Misericordia et Misera* (Mercy and Misery), issued on 20 November 2016 to celebrate the end of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. The Apostolic Letter starts by stating that "*Misericordia et misera* is a phrase used by Saint Augustine in recounting the story of Jesus' meeting with the woman taken in adultery (cf. *Jn* 8:1-11). Its teaching serves not only to throw light on the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, but also to point out the path that we are called to follow in the future... Mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the Church; it constitutes her very existence, through which the profound truths of the Gospel are made manifest and tangible. Everything is revealed in mercy; everything is resolved in the merciful love of the Father."

8.0 Collaboration with others, including Archdiocesan Departments, Parishes, Schools, Government Ministries/Agencies, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, the media, local, regional and international organisations such as the Children's Authority, TT's Counter Trafficking Unit, UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, Childline etc.

8.1 To achieve CCSJ's goals, **collaboration with others** is essential. There is strength in unity. However, collaboration with certain groups/organisations is limited at times due to the values that underpin the work of some organisations. So, for example, while some religious groups oppose abortion, they support the death penalty. CCSJ uses every opportunity to promote and defend life at all stages and in all circumstances. 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.

8.2 SafeCommunitiTT: CCSJ's Chair attended a Workshop in Tobago from **19-22 Jan 2018**. It was entitled: SafeCommunitiTT, and was organised by Ms Kiran

Maharaj, President of the TT Publishers & Broadcasters Association (TTPBA); the Public Affairs Section of US Embassy, POS; and the Department of State's Global Engagement Centre. All expenses were paid for by the Organisers. 30 organisations and 9 organisers participated in the event. One of the key objectives is to assist key TT organisations to be able to counter violent extremism. We are all linked via a WhatsApp group. About 30 persons, including me, are involved in this group - from various faith communities. All members are doing amazing work to combat crime and build the common good in TT e.g. Roots Foundation TT, Mtima Solwazi, Chaguanas; the National Muslim Women's Organisation, Donna Ali and Team; the Ryu Dan Dojo of **Enterprise** Chaguanas, Sensei Marva John-Logan. Their work includes martial arts, the spoken word etc. On Thurs 20 Sept and on 14 December I attended a Safe CommuniTT event organised by the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy at 18 Mary St., St Clair.

8.3 I attended the launch of **Justice Through a Gender Lens: Gender Equality Protocol for Judicial Officers** – at the Radisson Hotel, POS on 27 November. This is “a practical guide geared towards fostering and improving gender sensitive adjudication in Trinidad and Tobago. A project by the Judiciary of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Judicial Education Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (JEITT), The JURIST Project, UN Women, the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers, the Caribbean Court of Justice, and the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Women Judges, this Protocol combines a social and historical framework, international treaty principles, local legislation mandates, and regional and local case law to provide key and critical instructions to ensure that each step of adjudication and proceedings, especially in particular types of matters, is analysed through a lens of equality and non-discrimination. The Gender Equality Protocol for Judicial Officers also includes the Procedural Fairness perspective, based on the JEITT's research, to ground and inform the fair and equal treatment of users of the court systems and to secure public trust and confidence in the justice system.”

8.4 PANCAP Media Training session in Jamaica (9-10 July) for Faith Leaders: I was invited to attend a 2-day training session in Jamaica - organised by PANCAP in July 2019. The aim was to train faith leaders on engaging with the media on HIV/AIDS issues. I was unable to attend as I was still recovering from a stroke. His Grace suggested that Taresa Best-Downes should take advantage of this opportunity. I made the necessary arrangements with PANCAP and Taresa attended and provided feedback after the event.

8.5 Child Abuse: On Wed 24 July I was the feature speaker at an event organised by Andrea Hutchinson-Joseph, the Youth Coordinator at Mary Immaculate Queen of the Universe, Bourg Mulatresse, and her husband who is the Chair of the Social Justice Committee in that parish. They had organised an event to run over a period of 3 afternoons, but I was only able to attend/present on the Wed and Thurs, as I was the Moderator of CCSJ's Ask Why TV programme on Tues 23 July.

The theme for the session on Wed 24 July was: **"Child abuse"**. Following my presentation, there was a Q&A session with 3 panellists, including me. The other 2 persons were Taresa Best-Downes, Episcopal Delegate for the YC, and Darlene, Deputy Director of the Children's Authority and former School Counsellor. And on Thursday 25 July, I addressed those gathered on the issue of "Child abuse in the Church in general." Following my presentation, Darlene's husband, Oliver, and I engaged participants in a Q&A session. Both sessions went well, but were poorly attended. It is hoped that the recommendations for the way forward, recorded by Andrea and her husband, will assist the parish in implementing strategies to eliminate child abuse in the parish/TT.

8.6 Non-Violence Begins With Me: CCSJ has joined the *Movement for Non-Violence Begins With Me* – a not-for-profit, non-denominational and a-political group. It comprises diverse individuals and groups in Trinidad. Living Water Community takes the lead on this initiative which aims to popularise this message and to reduce violence in TT– one person at a time, one family at a time, one community at a time.

8.7 On Sun 7 October, CCSJ's Chair represented the Catholic Church at an **Inter-Faith Service** entitled: Non-violence Begins with Me. The event was part of the Nonviolence Movement's initiative to commemorate Non-violence Month. CCSJ's Chair focused on the needs of Migrants and Refugees.

8.8 CCSJ members were all involved in one way or another in helping others during the widespread **flooding in T&T in October** e.g. by providing food, clothing, prayers, transportation, a listening ear and so on. I was also asked to write an article about the floods for a London-based Magazine, entitled: *Culture-Pulse*. My article is also available on CCSJ's website: [A nation comes together in time of disaster](#) .

8.9 On Wed 20 Nov I had lunch with the newly appointed Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme, TT, Ms Randi Davis. She had

invited 12 women to lunch to share with her information about our work, and to express her interest in working with the 12 organisations represented at the lunch. Those invited included a representative from: CCSJ, the Muslim Women's Group, the Coalition against Domestic Violence, Conflict Women TT, Network of NGOs for the advancement of Women, the Women's Institute for Alternative Development (WINAD), ALTA, and the Wildfowl Trust.



8.10 On Wed 30 October I attended a Conference at the Hyatt entitled: Caribbean Corporate Governance - organised by Angela Lee Loy's Company, Aegis Business Solutions. Local and international speakers shared useful information about best practice in Governance issues in the 21st Century.

8.11 On Friday 1 November, I ran a Workshop at the Seminary for 6 Seminarians, who are in the first phase of their training, on the theme: "*St John Paul II's Theology on Work*". Fr Matthew D'Hereaux had asked me to run this Workshop on his behalf while he was abroad. The session highlighted for me the need for all Seminarians to be exposed to comprehensive training on the Social Doctrine of the Church.

8.12 On Mon 25 November Simone and I attended a session on **Human Trafficking** at the Hilton focusing also on how this adversely impacts on migrants and refugees.

8.13 Procurement Regulation:

13.1 On Friday 6 Dec I attended a training session, with a group from the Equal Opportunity Tribunal, at the **Office of Procurement Regulation** at

Level 19, Tower D, Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, POS. Moonilal Lalchan is the Procurement Regulator and Chairman. Nadine is a member of the Board has produced special guidelines and model handbooks to assist organisations - to ensure compliance with the Act. I shared the following information with His Grace and he agreed that he would need to establish a Committee to address this issue in the Archdiocese:

13.2 “The purpose of the training was to sensitise members of the EOT to the requirements of the *Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property Act No 1 of 2015* which was passed by Parliament on December 16th 2014 - to reduce opportunities for corruption in public procurement. It was assented to on 14 Jan 2015 and partially proclaimed. Inter alia, the Act provides for public procurement and for the retention and disposal of public property, in accordance with the principles of good governance, namely accountability, transparency, integrity and value for money.

13.3 “The Minister of Finance in the 2019 Budget had said that barring unforeseen circumstances, the Act could be in place in the first quarter of 2019. Mr Lalchan said that draft Public Procurement Regulations have been submitted to the Minister of Finance. The Act states that the Regs. are made by the Minister on the recommendation of the Procurement Regulator. So, they are currently being considered by the Minister of Finance. Mr Lalchan hopes that by March 2020 they will be approved. Without the Regs the new procurement system cannot be implemented.

13.4 “In the meantime, Mr Lalchan and his team have been training Govt. Ministries, State Enterprises, Statutory Authorities, NGOs, Schools owned by e.g. the Presbyterian Church etc. on the implications of the legislation in preparation for its enactment.

13.5 “Public bodies under the Act include: Govt. Ministries, Division of Ministries, Statutory Boards, Regional Corporations, Regional Corporation Districts, State Enterprises - 100% owned State Enterprises, Majority owned State Enterprise less than 50%, Tobago House of Assembly Depts., Regional Health Authorities, the Office of the President, Parliament, the Judiciary.

13.6 “NB: Private bodies are subject to the Act. Any private body that uses public money comes under the Act and must comply with the legislation e.g. Catholic Schools etc. Mr Lalchan highlighted the importance of training for

e.g. Principals of our schools. He said that Training sessions have been run for Principals of Presbyterian Schools. Since the penalties for breaches are heavy e.g. \$2 million dollars and up to 10 yrs in prison, it is imperative that the Archdiocese establishes a Procurement Committee to take prepare for the enactment of the law. “

13.7 You will have read in the media recently that the Minister of Finance has said that the Regulations need to be amended further. On Wed 22 Jan the Guardian reported that “members of the Private Sector/Civil Society Group (PSCSG) say they are “deeply disturbed” by the non-operationalisation of the substantive provisions of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Property Act 1 of 2015. Yesterday, a joint release signed by president of the Joint Consultative Council for the Construction Industry, the president of the American Chamber of Commerce, the president of the T&T Manufacturers Association, the president of the T&T Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the chairman of the Transparency Institute, the president of the Federated Independent Trade Unions and NGOs and the president of the Coalition of Services Industries stated that it was “unacceptable that the Act had reached “its current state of functional non-implementation from its conception, spanning three different administrations of Government.”

13.8 The group lamented that the “level of progress achieved in implementing this Act is intolerable, particularly after repeated commitments by this administration to have the Act fully implemented prior to and since coming into government... The group is also standing firm that sections of the Act which do not require proclamation of the regulations should no longer be delayed, but should be proclaimed.”<https://www.guardian.co.tt/news/private-sector-concerned-about-procurement-legislation-6.2.1036149.46ff79400d>

8.14 On 23 Jan I participated in an event organised by **His Excellency Ambassador Arend Biesebroek**, Head of the European Delegation and the Canadian Embassy – held at NAPA, POS, to discuss issues relating to *Restorative Justice and prisoners’ rights*.

8.15 On the evening of April 4. CCSJ held a **Lenten Vigil** at Emmanuel Community (EC).The Theme was: "Let us stand beside our brothers and sisters in need, sharing our spiritual and material goods with them". (Taken from Pope Francis' 2019 Lenten Message).

8.16 On Tues 25 June I attended the launch of the **Environmental Commission’s (EC) stakeholder outreach series**. The Theme of series is: Take Direct Action - a reference to the EC’s provision for direct private party action – focusing on how the EC can improve their working relationship. The event was held at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Invaders Bay, POS. His Honour Sunil Sookraj, Chairman of the EC launched the event. Note that the EC is different from the Environmental Management Authority. See: <http://www.ec.gov.tt/> and <https://www.ema.co.tt/~emacott/index.php/what-we-do>. The EC is a superior court of record.

8.17 On Tuesday 9 July, I was a guest on **Breakfast with the Deacons** - speaking about CCSJ's work. Deacon Cy Moore was the host. The programme can be viewed via the following link:
<https://www.facebook.com/trinitytv/videos/630821480754764/>

8.18 On Mon 15 July I met with Leigh-Ann Bonair, an Officer from the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**, an “intergovernmental organization that provides services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants”. She interviewed me as part of the IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix process – an IOM’s data collection exercise.

8.19 On Mon 9 and Tues 10 September CCSJ was asked to represent the Archdiocese at a 2-Day Workshop titled: **Rethinking Masculinity, Understanding Gender Equality as a Means of Ending Violence in Schools** - held on Monday 9th September 2019 and Tuesday 10th September 2019, at the Arnold Thomasos Room (East and West), Office of the Parliament, Level 6, Tower D, 1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain from 9:00am to 5:00pm. It was organised by The Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat. Since I had to attend a 3-day PANCAP Conference at the Hyatt from 10-12 Sept, Dianne Wells represented the Archdiocese at the aforementioned workshop and reported on the event.

I had attended **PANCAP’s** first regional Dialogue in 2018. His Grace asked me to arrange for an invitation for Taresa Best to attend also, and I did so. This was the *Second Joint Regional Dialogue with Parliamentarians, Faith Leaders, Civil Society Leaders, National AIDS Programme Managers and Youth Leaders*, to reflect, inter alia, on progress to end HIV and AIDS by 2030. One of the speakers asked us to close our eyes and imagine that it is the year 2020 and our region and the world have achieved the 90-90-90 targets which state that by 2020:

- 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status.
- 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy.
- 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

(See the media release re this event: <https://www.caricom.org/media-center/communications/press-releases/pancap-stakeholders-urged-to-work-together-for-the-common-good-of-humanity>).

It is important that the Church is represented at such events. An attempt was made once again to include Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in PANCAP's Roadmap – Justice for all. I intervened successfully and made it clear that the Catholic Church opposes the UN's CSE and instead is introducing in our 118 Catholic primary schools and 22 secondary schools 2 programmes that are based on the values that we espouse, that is, Alive to the World <http://alivetotheworld.org/en/>, and Human Development Curriculum (the latter is a programme developed by the World Youth Alliance- <https://www.wya.net/programs/human-dignity-curriculum/>).

Although Dr Derek Springer, PANCAP's Director undertook to omit reference to CSE from the document, he made it clear that the issue is now being addressed at CARICOM level. I immediately wrote to His Grace to suggest that he work with AEC Bishops to send a letter to CARICOM informing leaders in the region that Catholics oppose the UN's CSE curriculum and urge them not to “buy into” it. His Grace has asked Fr Chambers, at the AEC Secretariat, to take this forward.

8.20 As stated earlier, from Tuesday, September 17–Sunday 22, the **first Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) Mission Congress of the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC)** was held in T&T. Pope Francis declared October 2019 as an Extraordinary Missionary Month. In his message for World Mission Day 2019 he “asked that the whole Church revive her missionary awareness and commitment as we commemorate the centenary of the Apostolic Letter Maximum Illud of Pope Benedict XV (November 30, 1919). The title of Pope Francis' Message was the same as that of October's Missionary Month and the AEC's Mission Congress: Baptised and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World. Read the formation booklet

produced for the Mission Congress :(www.pmsantilles.org). And see my article in Catholic News on this issue:

<https://catholicnewstt.com/index.php/2019/09/13/living-our-baptismal-call-to-mission/>.

On Tues 17 there was a Rally in Tobago to mark the occasion. Some members of CCSJ attended the sessions at the Centre of Excellence from Friday 20 Sept to the Mass on the final day – Sunday 22 Sept when proceedings ended early – after 9 am Mass, due to the impact of tropical storm Karen. The School Rally on Thurs 19 Sept was attended by more than 10,000 children. Clips are available on the Archdiocese's Facebook page. All the sessions were well attended. And although the final rally was moved from the Queens Park Savannah because of the inclement weather on the final day, more than 3,000 persons attended the rally at the Centre of Excellence on the final day, Sun 22 Sept. Many of the Regional Bishops were present and the presentations, the worship etc. were memorable.

8.21 On Mon 30 Sept I was invited to a meeting at the **Indian High Commission** to meet the newly appointed High Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Arun Kumar Sahu, who had read some of my articles in the Guardian (I now have a weekly opinion piece in TT Guardian again – on Saturdays) and wanted to discuss ways in which the High Commission could assist in building strong partnerships on various issues. I was able to share some ideas, some of which is already on his agenda e.g. granting specific scholarships to TT nationals, sharing technical advice and resources/best practice on issues relating to migrants and refugees, poverty reduction, dealing with crime and violence etc. He undertook to maintain contact and to assist where possible.

8.22 CCSJ has been involved in discussions with His Grace, CEBM, YC, AFLC and others to consider introducing an "HFLE" Curriculum in our Catholic Schools that will reflect Gospel values. I will leave Sharon and others to report on our Zoom Conference with the President of World Youth Alliance, about that organisation's Curriculum for Secondary Schools, and on the pilot of Alive to the World, another resource which is being considered for introduction to all our Primary Schools.

8.23 From Tues 17 Dec – Fri 20 Dec I was involved with Simone and members of AMMR in **meetings with Fr Robert Stark, Regional Rep of the section dealing with Migrants and Refugees at the Dicastery for Integral Human Development**. Since the Archdiocese has applied to the Vatican for funding to support our work with M&Rs, he was sent to listen and learn/assess our needs and report back to his Team, sharing also examples of good practice that he observed. The Schedule that

we prepared included meetings with His Grace, members of the Clergy, 4 of the 5 Child Friendly Spaces, some PMMRs, LWC, CCSJ's land in San Raphael where LWC has housed some Venezuelan migrants etc.

9.0 Advocacy continues to be a key activity of CCSJ and takes a number of forms, including writing letters for individuals, conducting research on social and economic issues on behalf of citizens, collaborating with other organisations to campaign for structural change e.g. by making representations to Government Ministries.

9.1 CCSJ Members are involved in advocacy work in their parishes and Lorna and Cheryl, CCSJ's Prof. Assistants (job-share), at CCSJ's POS Office, seek to address the needs of those to come to the Commission seeking assistance. Members also take the opportunity to share information contained in key documents such as Archbishop Harris' Pastoral Letter on Hospitality – a key social justice virtue. CCSJ's advocacy work is based on Catholic values and seeks to create a fair and just society as divinely ordained by God. One in which equity/equality/justice/love/ peace and harmony can become a reality. Some advocacy work include the following:

9.2 On Mon 12 November I met with Ms Zola Simmons. She spent 5 and ½ years in TT's Women's Prison and was acquitted of murder in March 2018. She has launched an NGO entitled: *Joint Force Action Anti-Crime initiative of Change, T&T* and would like CCSJ's Chair, to become a Board Member of her NGO. While CCSJ's Chair is unable to comply with this request, due to time constraints, she is supporting the NGO in a number of ways.

9.2.1 For example, I met with Ms Simmons and her team and the Commissioner of Prisons at his Office in POS on December 18, to discuss some of the challenges women in prison face in TT, and to plan for the launch of the NGO. He had kindly offered to host it at his Quarters at the Maximum-Security Prison. CCSJ's Chair was the feature speaker at the launch of the NGO at the Cmr. of Prison's Quarters on December 29, 2018. She has also arranged for Ms Simmons to appear on Alloy Youk See's, and Andy Johnston's Radio programme to promote the work of the NGO. These women – all former inmates, want to give back to society. CCSJ will continue to support the group of women.

9.2.2 The women have found a "friend" in Topeka K. Sam, a former inmate in the USA, "Founder and Executive Director of *The Ladies of Hope Ministries* whose mission is to help disenfranchised and marginalized women

and girls transition back into society through resources and access to high-quality education, entrepreneurship, spiritual empowerment, advocacy and housing.” She was present at the launch on 29 December and has been sending containers of toiletries from the USA for the women in TT’s prison. She hopes to build a facility in Sangre Grande for former female inmates. Land has already been secured for this initiative.

9.3 On 15 November, CCSJ’s Chair met with Ms Saira La Foucade. His Grace had referred her to CCSJ’s Chair so that she could assist her in establishing an NGO. She has a son who has autism and, having observed the challenges some children/youth face in Church, she formed “the **Bethesda Catholic Community (BCC)**, which offers Catechism and sensory- friendly masses/services for children with disabilities. BCC celebrated its **third anniversary** July 8 2018. The name ‘Bethesda’ means ‘house of mercy’ or ‘house of grace’ and is the place Christ where healed a paralyzed man beside the Pool of Siloam.

9.3.1 An article on the work in which she is engaged states: “Bethesda promotes the inclusion of special-needs people into church life, while providing moral support and advice to their families. The community prepared eight young people to receive first Communion at a June 2017 ceremony and is in the process of assembling a second group, as well as a confirmation class... Bethesda trains volunteers to assist those who need support, including occupying distracted children and, even adults, leaving care-givers free to focus on the liturgy. A sign language interpreter is also present and will sit beside a deaf person or in common view should there be more than one person needing the service. “Anything for inclusivity. And visibility. Now sensory-friendly Masses are held monthly at two locations in east and south Trinidad.” See article about Saira and her Ministry – in the Catholic Register: <https://www.catholicregister.org/home/international/item/27681-trinidad-church-aims-for-inclusion-of-sensory-challenged-disabled-parishioners> (13 July 2018).

9.3.2 His Grace allocated 10 acres of land in Todds Rd. to this Organisation to build a facility for persons with disabilities. CCSJ’s Chair held a further meeting with her and with one of her team members and she continues to give her advice that aims to assist them in achieving their goals.

9.4 On 18 December, 2018 I met with His Grace and Gregory Delzin, Attorney-at-Law, to discuss issues relating to the criminal justice system, in particular: *conditions in our prisons, bail and its impact on the poor, delay in the administration of justice – including a consideration of Archbishop Emeritus Joseph Harris’ Petition for mercy* for those who have spent longer on Remand than they would have spent in prison if they had been tried, convicted and handed down the maximum sentence for the crimes for which they have been charged. His Grace will take certain actions to take this issue forward.

9.5 On Tuesday 16 October, CCSJ issued a **Media Release on Domestic Violence** – see link: <http://rcsocialjusticett.org/2.0/2018/10/16/responding-to-domestic-violence-is-everyones-business/>. This was in response to the murder of 42 year old Pastor Alisa Ali of Longdenville, allegedly by her 46 year old Guyanese husband, Bishop Melroy Corbin. Newsday (15 Oct) reported that he: “told police he was sorry for his actions but carried out the act in a fit of rage. He confessed to Ali's murder and expressed remorse for his actions.”

9.6 On 16 Nov I met with Mrs Barbara Chunisingh, who, like quite a few persons in TT, is the victim of land “fraud” and who, although she has been successful in her Court matter re ownership of her land, continues to receive threats to her life by persons who have appealed the judgment. She contacted me on Mon 25 March to inform me that an application by her lawyer to the Court of Appeal to bring the matter forward, due to the threats to her life, has been thrown out, so she now has to wait for a date for the matter to be dealt with by the CA. She has reported the threats to the Police on numerous occasions but no action. Will share further information at the meeting.

9.7 On 23 Jan I attended an event organised by **His Excellency Ambassador Arend Biesebroek**, Head of the European Delegation and the Canadian Embassy – held at NAPA, POS, (6-8pm) to discuss issues relating to *Restorative Justice and prisoners’ rights*. This is a key issue to be addressed in TT, particularly as our prisons are overcrowded, and the system adversely impacts on the poor who cannot afford bail. Many remain in remand for years while waiting on trial. In fact, some remain for longer periods than if they had been convicted and sentenced.

10 CCSJ's land in San Raphael and the TTRF/APRC (Trinidad and Tobago Reintegration Foundation/Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre):

After Clive Belgrave's death, the work of TTRF/APRC came to an end. The land on which the facility is "built" belongs to CCSJ. At a meeting arranged by Archbishop Emeritus Joseph Harris with CCSJ's Chair and Br Rudolph Boneo, President of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP), it was agreed that the land in San Raphael would be transferred to SVP by a Deed of Gift so that SVP could plant crops to service their various charitable facilities. Although the Deed was executed, it was not registered as SVP was seeking to have the Ministry of Legal Affairs waive the TT\$60,000 Stamp Duty.

Since no waiver was forthcoming, Archbishop Jason suggested that a lease be granted to Living Water Community for a period of time so that they can use the property to house Venezuelan migrants and to plant crops to provide food for their various facilities. UNHCR and LWC visited the site and I informed Br Boneo, SVP's President of His Grace's suggestion. He agreed and Timothy Hamel-Smith drew up the Deed of Lease which was executed on 28 September 2020, giving LWC a 10-year lease at a peppercorn rent of TT\$100 per annum.

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 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:

11.2 "...many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of the Church is an essential part of Catholic faith. This poses a serious challenge for all Catholics, since it weakens our capacity to be a Church that is true to the demands of the Gospel. We need to do more to share the social mission and message of our Church...Because this commitment to social justice is at the heart of who we are and what we believe, it must be shared more effectively...

11.3 "The values of the Church's social teaching must not be treated as tangential or optional. They must be a core part of teaching and formation. Without our social teaching, schools, catechetical programs, and other formation programs would be offering an incomplete presentation of our Catholic tradition. This would fall short of our mission and would be a serious loss for those in our educational and catechetical programs...

11.4 "The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. It offers

moral principles and coherent values that are badly needed in our time. In this time of widespread violence and diminished respect for human life and dignity in our country and around the world, the Gospel of life and the biblical call to justice need to be proclaimed and shared with new clarity, urgency, and energy.

11.5 “The Scriptures say, ‘Without a vision the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18). As Catholics, we have an inspiring vision in our social teaching. In a world that hungers for a sense of meaning and moral direction, this teaching offers ethical criteria for action. In a society of rapid change and often confused moral values, this teaching offers consistent moral guidance for the future... The test for our Church is not simply have we ‘kept the faith,’ but have we shared the faith.”

11.6 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. Remember the words of Pope Pius XI stated in *Divini Redemptoris* (1937): “Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account...Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt themselves from the great duties imposed by justice.”

11.7 Although there is a relationship between charity and justice they are not the same. Working for justice involves changing systems, structures, institutions and public policies that are at the root cause of injustices such as poverty and social exclusion. It is important to understand the interplay and differences between the two approaches. Social ministry, in the Catholic tradition, is a “both/ and” proposition.

11.8 While we meet immediate needs today, we work for long-term changes that will create a more just tomorrow – for all. 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:

11.9 “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.”

11.10 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 Pope St. John Paul II asked and be “communicators of hope.”

11.11 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. And as we on CCSJ continue to promote the social mission of our Church, let us spread the Good News with credibility and integrity. NB: To find out more about Catholic Social Teaching, an essential element of our faith, access the Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church at:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html)

END

SEE SOCIAL JUSTICE PRINCIPLES ON P. 79

Catholic Social Teaching - Key Principles

The Sanctity of life & the Dignity of the Human Person

The Common Good

The Fundamental Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Family & Community

**Participation in the economic, political, social, and cultural life
of society**

Rights and Responsibilities

Economic Justice

Environmental Stewardship – Care for God’s Creation

The Role of Government & Subsidiarity

Global Solidarity & Development

The Dignity of work and the Rights of Workers

The Promotion of Peace and Disarmament

The Universal Destination of Goods

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