

MEDIA RELEASE

CCSJ calls for self-control in dress and behaviour during Carnival

The Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ) urges citizens and visitors to TT during this Carnival season to keep to the forefront of our minds the words of Martin Luther King Jr: *“The time is always right to do what is right.”*

Let us enjoy our Carnival remembering our duty to promote positive morals and values in our society e.g. by exercising self-control and modesty in dress and behaviour during this Carnival season. This applies to both sexes.

Catholics believe that all human beings are made in God’s image and likeness; that our vocation is to be holy and to lead others to live holy, virtuous lives. Years ago, Pope Pius XII wrote that: “The human body is God’s masterpiece in the visible world; Jesus elevated the human body to the rank of a temple and an instrument of the Holy Spirit, and as such must be respected...The Church...does not censure or condemn styles when they are meant for the proper decorum and ornamentation of the body, but She never fails to warn the faithful against being easily led astray by them” (1957).

Leela Ramdeen, Chair of CCSJ says: “Do not let the culture of moral relativism, which threatens to overwhelm us, influence your behaviour. Essentially, moral relativism makes many feel that they can do whatever they like; that ‘if it feels good, just do it.’ Morality is not neutral. There are objective moral norms which we must embrace if we and our nation are to prosper. God implanted a moral order in our hearts and minds. Deep within us there is a voice that urges us to do good and avoid evil. Listen to that voice. Modesty helps us to rein in our human passions. If dressing and acting modestly means swimming against the tide, then I say let’s keep swimming with all our might. Change starts with each of us.”

The various faith communities in TT strive to form the consciences of their followers. Many of those who participate in Carnival belong to our various faith communities. CCSJ asks each of you, as well as those of no religious faith, to be exemplars; to model the kind of behaviour that we wish our youths to emulate and which will help us to build a strong, healthy society.

The challenge for each of us is to recognise our dignity/ self-worth as individuals and that of others and to pursue personal excellence. A lack of modesty creates a fertile ground for individuals to rid themselves of social responsibility or ethical standards.

Strive to avoid reckless behaviour; show respect for self and for others and take responsibility for all your actions. St Theresa of Avila’s advice is sound. She said: “Be modest in all your words and works.” CCSJ believes that people can participate in TT Carnival without losing our moral compass. Do not allow peer pressure to lead you down a path that is not honourable. Rise to the challenge of exhibiting a sense of decorum/propriety at all times. Enjoy Carnival!

For further information call Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ on 299 8945

