

CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (CCSJ)

HEADS OF DEPARTMENT MEETING

DECEMBER 1st 2010

CCSJ's End of Year Report

January

Awareness raising of Pope Benedict XVI's Peace Message for 2010: "*If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation*". Activities included a panel discussion on CCSJ's monthly Ask Why TV programme on TCN.

February

Launch of Draft Framework towards an Archdiocesan Environmental Policy (23/2/10) at Fatima Church Hall, Curepe, by His Grace. Wendy Lee Yuen was the feature speaker. The Draft Framework was widely circulated for consultation – including a pull-out supplement in Catholic News and TCN programmes focusing on the Draft Framework. The consultation period ended on June 30, 2010. CCSJ has decided to use the lengthy draft as guidelines. A shorter policy will be produced in due course.

March

* Lenten Retreats: CCSJ's Chair ran retreats during lent on justice issues e.g. 5 days during morning Mass at Rosary, POS, and 1 evening session in St Philip & St James Parish, Chaguanas.

* **23 March:** Launch by His Grace of 2nd edition Students' Workbook and Teachers' Guide for Values and Virtues Formation Programme in RC Primary Schools – held in St Philip & St James parish hall. This formed part of the training programme for post-SEA teaches who were to deliver this curriculum in RC primary schools.

April

Participation in Ministry of Education Conference at Crowne Plaza on "*Same Sex Schools Pilot – in 20 Secondary schools in TT*".

May

* May 1: Fundraising Dinner for the Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre (TTRF) for former prisoners. Approx. \$90,000 TT was raised.

* May 6: CCSJ has lead responsibility for implementing Resolutions relating to the 3rd Pastoral Priority in the Archdiocese: "Promoting Moral and Spritual Values". One strategy adopted by CCSJ is to run a series of seminars on this theme across the Archdiocese. The first such Seminar was held at Fatima parish hall, Curepe on 6 May. Theme: *Living Christian values and virtues in a secular world*. Presenter: Msgr Michael de Verteuil. About 85 persons attended. TCN taped the Seminar and this will be used as part of CCSJ's training programme in parishes.

* May 13: CCSJ's Chair participated in a 1 hour prayer session on TCN to pray for peace during TT's elections and to raise awareness of the kinds of questions that viewers should ask candidates – relating to social justice issues. The programme was repeated on a number of occasions in the lead up to the elections on May 24. CCSJ's Chair also participated in other TCN programmes on this issue during that period.

* May 20: The second Seminar in the Values and Virtues series was held at Assumption Parish Hall. Presenter: Fr Henry Charles. Theme: *Why the world needs Christian Values and virtues*. About 50 persons attended. TCN video-taped the session for use as a training tool.

June

29 June: Rededication of Mary Care Centre by His Grace: Mary Care Centre is a sanctuary for unmarried, pregnant, young women. It was founded in 1980 by the late Archbishop of Port of Spain, Most Reverend Anthony Pantin in his concern for and commitment to the preservation of life. The centre is a non-profit organisation funded by donations received from the private and public sector. The objectives of Mary Care Centre 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.

CCSJ has overall responsibility for the work of the Centre which is being run on behalf of the Archdiocese by a Management Committee of Eternal Light Community. There are currently 6 young women at the Centre.

July

CCSJ's Chair – participation in running 5-day AEC Youth Leaders' Training Institute on the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church: St Lucia – from 21-25 July 2010. Theme: *"Empowering Youth Leaders to Build a Culture of Solidarity and Justice"*. Goal: "To ensure that Youth Leaders were exposed to the Church's Social teachings, in order to develop social mission; give participants techniques and strategies for designing and implementing justice and social projects in their local churches; and to ensure that mechanisms are put in place to evaluate

programs.” Participants came from the following Arch/Dioceses of the AEC: The Diocese of Roseau, Dominica; Archdiocese of Nassau, The Bahamas; Diocese of Willemstad, St. Maarten and Curacao; Archdiocese of Castries, St. Lucia; Diocese of Kingstown, St. Vincent; Diocese of Bridgetown, Barbados; Archdiocese of Port Of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; Diocese of Georgetown, Guyana; Diocese of St. John’s-Basseterre, St. Kitts. Presenters: included Rev. Fr. Peter McIsaac, Jamaica; SJ, Deacon Ronald Thwaites, and his wife Marcia Thwaites, Jamaica; and me. Deacon Mike James, AEC Secretariat, also attended for a couple of days.

August

* 25 Aug: CCSJ held its 7th AGM. The AGM report is available on CCSJ’s website.

* Participation in discussion about proposed UNDP Project. The UNDP will fund a 1 year project in TT to conduct a mapping exercise on women and girls with HIV/AIDS in TT. This will lead to a more detailed 3 year project.

* Participation in 2 day workshop run by Transparency International in TT and The Commonwealth Foundation – to assist NGOs to develop a framework to ensure accountability.

* Participation in launch of a 1 year study in TT (focusing on women between 18 and 70 years old) on “The role of stigma in cervical cancer screening.” This is a joint study between a number of partners e.g. the Family Planning Assoc the TT Cancer Registry, the TT Cancer Soc. Of TT and the Centre of Community Alliance for Research and Education, City of Hope, USA.

September

Respect for Life Week: Events included:

- Fri 24 Sept: Seminar with Sir Ellis Clarke as feature speaker: “Our people, our land: Journey to becoming a Republic. Venue: Living Water Community
- Sun 26 Sept: Interfaith Service & IRO National Day of Prayer & Thanksgiving
- Mon 27 Sept: Prayer session: Eternal Light Community
- Tues 28: CCSJ’s Ask Why TV programme on Channel 10
- Wed 29: Interfaith Panel Discussion on Life issues: Threats to life and opportunities to promote integral human development
- Parish priests were asked to focus on RFL during adoration and Mass on 1st Friday and to encourage youths to lead holy hour in parishes before Mass on Sat 2 Oct.
- Vigil at Emmanuel Community on Fri 1 Oct
- Sun 3 Oct: Interfaith procession and prayers from Casuals Corner to St Ann’s roundabout. The session ended with the Youth Commission’s steelband playing and prayers and hymns.

October

* **4-6 Oct:** CCSJ’s Chair represented the Archdiocese at the VIRTUS training programme in Guyana. VIRTUS/Protecting God’s Children programmes, “are comprehensive and multi-

dimensional—incorporating proven best practice standards for the prevention of child sexual abuse by clergy, staff, volunteers, and others who interact with children within the church environment. The training programs incorporate training for local facilitators, facilitator-led training for all parishes and religious organizations, awareness videos, and regularly scheduled continuing education and training for those who interact most closely with children. The continuing education and training is provided via VIRTUS Online, a state-of-the-art web-based training platform...The VIRTUS programs were conceived, developed, and financed by National Catholic Risk Retention Group Inc, USA...National Catholic is 100 percent owned by, and exclusively devoted to, the needs of the Catholic Church."

The programme focuses “on the education and training of clergy, staff, volunteers, parents, and other adults about the nature of child abuse, child sexual abuse, and how adults can help prevent harm to children. Additionally, program developers have researched possible school curricula and religious education programs to include children and young people as partners in prevention. The *Protecting God’s Children* program turns every parish into a child-safe haven. Through expert trainers, the VIRTUS programs bring education and awareness to the entire faith community, and ongoing training is provided through *VIRTUS Online*.”

The training programme comes with a video: Part 1 = A time to protect God’s children. Here children who have been abused (and actors) share their story. Also, 2 abusers share the strategies they used to ‘lure’ children. Part II = A plan to protect God’s children.

Mahalia Paul, Dominica, is the AEC Coordinator for Virtus. Each Archdiocese/Diocese must appoint a Coordinator to facilitate training for all persons who interface with children in the Diocese. US Presenter, Pat Neil, explained the process for Registration and ongoing training - which is a requirement of the programme. CCSJ’s Chair submitted a report to His Grace and to Msgr Jason who has approached Msgr Robert to identify a couple who are members of the Family Life Commission who may be able to take responsibility for this programme.

* **23 Oct:** The third of CCSJ’s Seminar series. Theme: : *Morals and Values* Presenter: Msgr Robert Llanos. Venue: St Francis of Assisi, Sangre Grande. About 40 persons attended. The Seminar was taped and this will be used as part of CCSJ’s training programme in parishes.

November

15-16 Nov: CCSJ’s Chair’s attendance at Conference in Paramaribo, Suriname, on Human Trafficking. (See CCSJ’s website for report).

December

4 Dec: Launch of Wellness Programme at Assumption Parish: Diabetes self-management and Prevention (part of Respect for Life thrust).

CCSJ's Chair is in discussion with Fr Joe Harris to launch this programme in St Ann's Parish. Dr Kenwyn Nicholls, who has returned to TT after working as a medical doctor in the USA for more than 40 years, has offered his services free of charge to pilot this project in these 2 parishes and later to assist CCSJ in rolling out the programme in other parishes. The aim of the project is to:

1. raise awareness of the faithful of issues relating to diabetes
2. empower people to manage their diabetes
3. promote prevention strategies for those who may be likely to get diabetes if they don't take action.

Dr Nicholls' paper (*The diabetes epidemic in TT: Attacking a burdensome disease with conventional weapons*) produced for CCSJ on diabetes contains some frightening stats about the number of people with diabetes 2 in TT (143,000 plus) and those who are pre-diabetic (102,000 plus).

We cannot promote social justice without promoting 'wellness'. Participation in society is a key social justice principle. Many people can't participate in society because they are ill and spend a lot of time dealing with their illness. Integral human development includes a concern to promote wellness.

10 Dec: Planned meeting with Minister of Justice, Hon Herbert Volney re Justice issues in TT and support for CCSJ's/TTRF's work with former prisoners.

OTHER ASPECTS OF CCSJ'S WORK THIS YEAR:

* **Work of Parish Link Coordinators:** CCSJ view the work of these coordinators as critical if we are to implement Synod Resolutions in parishes. Robert Persad left this post in June 2010 to pursue his musical career. Anna Ackbarali and Richard Smith were appointed as Parish Link Coordinators in July and August respectively, 2010. These posts have now been enlarged (since October, 2010) and have been incorporated into the work of Vicariate Link Coordinators. 4 persons have been appointed to these posts – including Richard Smith. One aspect of the work of these Coordinators will be to focus on social justice issues.

* **Social justice Parish teams:** Parish Link Coordinators have been working with social justice parish teams/individuals – where these exist - during the course of the year, supporting their initiatives and giving advice where necessary.

* **CCSJ's Parish Link Newsletters:** This year, CCSJ produced 2 Newsletters focusing on social justice issues: April: *Environmental Justice* and September: *Celebrating Respect for Life Week*.

* **Pro-life work** remains a key aspect of CCSJ's work. CCSJ maintains links with SPUC, UK, Elliott Institute, USA, Human Life International, Emmanuel Community in TT, Lawyers for Jesus in TT. CCSJ's work with the Mary Care Centre forms part of the Commission's pro-life work.

* **Social Justice online course** – CCSJ has partnered with CREDI and Dayton Univ. to run this course. The 1st cohort of 12 persons has successfully completed the course. CREDI should be advertising for the second cohort of students for the next cycle. CCSJ plans to draw on the expertise of those 12 persons in their parishes to ensure that their knowledge and skills will be used to build the common good.

* **Ask Why monthly TV programme** on TCN (Channel 10): Themes covered during programmes in 2010 include: Pope Benedict XVI's peace message: If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation; Pope's Lenten Theme: The justice of God has been manifested through faith in Jesus Christ (Rm 3,21-22); Draft Framework towards and Environmental Policy; Poverty and Social Exclusion; Values and Virtues Students' Workbook; Respect for Life; Good Governance; Morals and Values.

* **Other special programmes on TCN** e.g. CCSJ's Chair giving advice to viewers on Flood relief.

* **Media releases on social justice issues** e.g. Haiti – how we can help; CCSJ urges citizens to mark Earth Hour on Sat 27 March; A reflection on the General Elections 2010; CCSJ says hanging is not the answer to creating a safe society; Let the spirit of compassion and generosity reign in our hearts this Christmas.

* **Values & Virtues Formation Programme:** Training of Post-SEA teachers for Values & Virtues Formation Programme; arranging for monitoring of the programme in RC Primary schools and collection of reports from Teachers, Principals and Monitors; analysis of data, feedback and planning for 2011 programme.

* **Morals and Values Standing Committee:** This Committee is Chaired by Dr Surindra Arjoon, UWI, Senior Lecturer in Ethics and Decision Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences. Maria Diaz-James is CCSJ's voluntary worker on the Committee. Through the work of this Committee, CCSJ hopes to implement Synod Resolution #1a: Be it resolved that the Archdiocese develop a comprehensive strategy to educate the People of God in values and virtuous living, based on the rich tradition of magisterial teaching and theological heritage of the Catholic moral tradition.

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

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

- a. Produce a baseline study;

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

Information has been gathered from local and international sources to assist with the baseline study. Dr Arjoon had arranged for some of his Under Graduate Students at UWI and students on the Masters Course at UWI to focus on this issue as part of their research. Their research have been analysed and summarized and has informed the report which has been produced and will be presented to the Committee shortly by Dr Arjoon.

* **CCSJ's Website (www.rcsocialjusticett.org):** CCSJ continues to use its website as a teaching tool/to promote awareness of social justice issues. Fr Joe's weekly homilies, the Chair's weekly Catholic News articles, and CCSJ's weekly Social Justice Quotes are uploaded. Those visiting the site are also encouraged to support those in need e.g. in Haiti.

* **Catholic News:** CCSJ's Chair writes a weekly article in Catholic News and a weekly social justice quotation, written by CCSJ's Rene Wihby, is printed each week in Catholic News. This is part of CCSJ's communication strategy as the Commission seeks to educate the public about social justice issues.

* **Resource production** e.g. Take-a-Bite series comprising DVDs on various social justice themes, Leaflets, written papers on social justice topics e.g. Catholic Family become what you are – written from a social justice perspective, Christmas Calendar – used as a teaching tool.

* **Attendance at conferences, seminars, meetings, and collaboration with other Catholic organizations/NGOs/the IRO :** CCSJ takes the opportunity to attend where necessary and to collaborate with others within and outside the Church to bring a Catholic Social Justice perspective to discussions.

CCSJ encouraged the faithful via the Catholic News and e-mails to Parish Link persons, to respond positively to the Prime Minister's Cleanup and Beautify Day in TT.

On Sunday 21st November, 2010 CCSJ joined Arrive Alive to mark the United Nations World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

CCSJ's Chair secured the support of the IRO for Respect for Life Week (RFLW). This led to e.g. a joint Interfaith Service & IRO National Day of Prayer & Thanksgiving on Sun 26 Sept during RFLW. Some faith communities also joined the procession around the Savannah on 3 Oct.

The following are some of the speeches delivered by CCSJ's Chair during her collaboration with other groups (all available on CCSJ's website):

- "Legal and marital issues of women of Indian origin: GOPIO Women's Conference"
- "Women of spirit and vision in Trinidad and Tobago" (delivered to Raja Yoga group)
- "Rededication of Mary Care Centre"

- “Can the Catholic Church lead the way for reform of the education system?” (delivered to CREDI students)
- “ Authentic Integral Human Development and Education” (delivered to CREDI students).

* **TV and radio appearances:** CCSJ accepts invitations to appear on radio and TV to address various social justice issues such as the death penalty, abortion, poverty, socially displaced persons, environmental issues, and inadequacies in the justice system.

* **Participatory governance:** Lobbying/liaising with Government: When the issue of the death penalty reared its head again this year, CCSJ sent copies of the AEC Pastoral Letter on Capital Punishment with a covering letter to all MPs and Senators, including the PM, Leader of the Opposition, for information. CCSJ’s letter included a long list of action other than the death penalty that can be adopted to reduce crime and create safe communities. This was also sent to all parish priests/administrators.

Msgr Jason Gordon, Clive Belgrave and CCSJ’s Chair participated in a “Compact Partnership” established by the Minister of Finance, Hon. Winston Dookeran, to assist him in preparing for budget day on 8 Sept. 2010. This gave us an opportunity to highlight the need to consider the kind of society that we wish to build – one that is people-centred and in which integral human development is a priority as opposed to building tall buildings etc.

The Minister of Justice, Hon. Herbert Volney, has requested a meeting with CCSJ’s Chair. She is following this up and will meet with him on 10 Dec. to discuss certain justice issues.

* **Trinidad and Tobago Reintegration Foundation/Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre:** CCSJ is the ‘mother Board’ for TTRF/APRC. The facility that is being ‘built’ in San Raphael to house former prisoners, who have no accommodation when they leave prison, is still to be completed. This project faces many challenges – including securing running cost for the facility.