



LEARN ABOUT THE PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING



JOURNEY
OF
Faith

“If you want peace,
work for justice.
If you want justice,
defend life.”



- POPE JOHN PAUL II

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INTRODUCTION: Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ

In the following pages, CCSJ offers you an opportunity to reflect on some of the Church's key social justice principles. In 2004 CCSJ's Chair was fortunate to have been present at the Vatican at the launch of The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. It was published by the then Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the request of Pope John Paul II. It was presented by Cardinal Renato Martino, the then President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Inter alia, Cardinal Sodano stated in a foreword Letter that the Compendium deals with "questions concerning life in society" of which the compendium aspires to present "a precise but complete overview." The compendium, which is over 300 pages long, is divided into three parts, with twelve chapters, an introduction and a conclusion. It can be accessed via the following link: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_d oc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

"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. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and Episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents" (US Bishops).

The Church has proclaimed her social doctrine since Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Labour), 1891. His encyclical on social issues condemned the terrible conditions certain employers were imposing on their workers. He urged governments to implement labour laws and safeguards that would embrace fairer and more equitable work practices.

Since 1891 successive Popes have applied Gospel principles to social problems and have added to and developed the Church's body of social teaching via e.g. encyclicals, exhortations and so on. Pope Pius XI (1922 to 1939) introduced the term "social justice" into Catholic teaching in his encyclical, *Studiorum Ducem* (1923) – on St Thomas Aquinas, and in his encyclicals *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) and *Divini Redemptoris* (1937).

Carol Shields Wright states: "Catholic social teaching is a branch of moral theology... The Church's social encyclicals are a reflection upon the issues of the day using the light of faith and reason. They offer commentary on the ways to evaluate and address particular social problems—also using natural law principles—in the areas of politics, economics, and culture. It offers a structural way of reflecting and discerning, rooted in the Gospel and natural law. It is the foundation on which to form our conscience in order to evaluate the framework of

society and is the Catholic criteria for prudential judgment and direction in developing current policy-making.

“With knowledge of these social principles, in combination with our faith, we will be more armed and informed as to articulate the Catholic vision of reality, the truthful nature of the human person and society, to apply and integrate the social teachings in our everyday administrative and clinical encounters, and through the virtue of charity take action within the social, political, and economic spheres in which we have influence...

“With knowledge of these social principles, in combination with our faith, we can offer a Catholic vision of reality as the foundation and criteria for decision making in confronting the issues, for, we, as the laity, are called into the public square. Moreover in integrating our professional and personal lives, our faith becomes fully alive in helping to bring the Kingdom of God here and now, though not yet, through utilizing these principles in our spheres of influence.” Vatican News reported that on 26 May 2018, Pope Francis addressed participants of an international conference at the Vatican that discussed policies and lifestyles in the digital age. “The conference was organized by the Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation. St. Pope John Paul II instituted the foundation in 1993 to promote the Church’s social doctrine...

“In his address, Pope Francis urged that the richness of the social teaching of the Catholic Church be spread across the world to help build a global culture of economic justice, equality and inclusion. He said: ‘The current difficulties and crises within the global economic system have an undeniable ethical dimension,’ the Pope said. “They are related to a mentality of **egoism** and **exclusion** that has effectively created a **culture of waste** blind to the **human dignity** of the most vulnerable.’ In his talk, Pope Francis lamented the growing ‘globalization of indifference’ that places ‘manifold obstacles to the integral human development’ of many men and women both in poor as well as developed countries. He particularly pointed to the ‘urgent ethical issues associated with the global movements of migration.’

Social justice is an essential element of our faith. If we are to have a personal relationship with God; if we are to build the civilisation of love, then it is essential that we keep to the forefront of our minds the social doctrine of our Church. As Pope Francis has said: “None of us can think we are exempt from concerns for the poor and for social justice...Jesus tells us what the ‘protocol’ is, on which we will be judged. It is the one we read in chapter 25 of Matthew’s Gospel”.

Let us remind ourselves of the teachings of our Church with regard to key elements of a just society. This is what our Catechism tells us about Social Justice:

“**1928** Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority.

1929 Social justice can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of man. The person represents the ultimate end of society, which is ordered to him:

What is at stake is the dignity of the human person, whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to us by the Creator, and to whom the men and women at every moment of history are strictly and responsibly in debt.³⁵ 35 John Paul II, *SRS* 47.

1930 Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it. They are the basis of the moral legitimacy of every authority: by flouting them, or refusing to recognize them in its positive legislation, a society undermines its own moral legitimacy.³⁶ 36 Cf. John XXIII, *PT* 65. If it does not respect them, authority can rely only on force or violence to obtain obedience from its subjects. It is the Church's role to remind men of good will of these rights and to distinguish them from unwarranted or false claims.

1931 Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that "everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as 'another self,' above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity."³⁷ 37 *GS* 27 § 1. No legislation could by itself do away with the fears, prejudices, and attitudes of pride and selfishness which obstruct the establishment of truly fraternal societies. Such behavior will cease only through the charity that finds in every man a "neighbour," a brother.

1932 The duty of making oneself a neighbor to others and actively serving them becomes even more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged, in whatever area this may be. "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."³⁸ 38 *Mt* 25:40....

1943 Society ensures social justice by providing the conditions that allow associations and individuals to obtain their due.

1944 Respect for the human person considers the other "another self." It presupposes respect for the fundamental rights that flow from the dignity intrinsic of the person.”

“The Church’s social Magisterium constantly calls for the most classical forms of justice to be respected: **commutative, distributive and legal justice**. Ever greater importance has been given to social justice...” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* #201).

Our *Catechism* (# 2411) tells us that **commutative justice** “regulates exchanges between persons and between institutions in accordance with a strict respect for their rights.

Commutative justice obliges strictly; it requires safeguarding property rights, paying debts, and fulfilling obligations freely contracted. Without commutative justice, no other form of justice is possible. One distinguishes *commutative* justice from *legal* justice which concerns what the citizen owes in fairness to the community, and from ***distributive* justice** which regulates what the community owes its citizens in proportion to their contributions and needs” (*Catechism* #2411).

Distributive justice is “the virtue that regulates those actions which involve the rights that an individual may claim from society. According to distributive justice, the state has three basic duties: to distribute the common burdens and privileges equitably; to make it possible for each citizen to exercise natural and acquired rights without undue hindrance; to foster mutual relations among the citizens for living together peacefully. (www.catholicreference.net).

Let us ask the God of justice and compassion to convert our hearts and minds so that we will live as authentic disciples in His vineyard; let us resolve to build our nation/world by addressing some of the social ills that beset us. We are living in a time when powerful forces are seeking to push religion off the public stage. We must stand up as proud Catholics—confident in our ability to build a world in which justice, peace, truth, love and freedom prevail. Don’t be afraid to speak out for justice; don’t be afraid to be a peacemaker.

CCSJ hopes that this summary of key principles will be of use to you. Please join us as we seek to achieve our vision and mission: 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.

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.

Leela Ramdeen, Episcopal Delegate for Social Justice/Chair, CCSJ

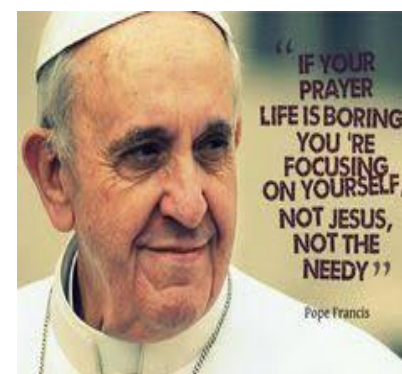
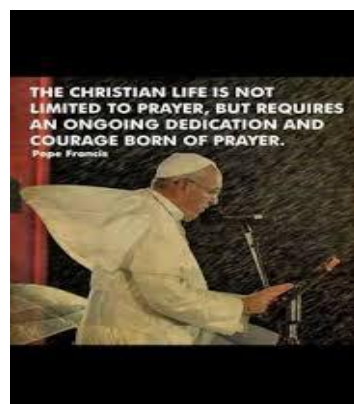
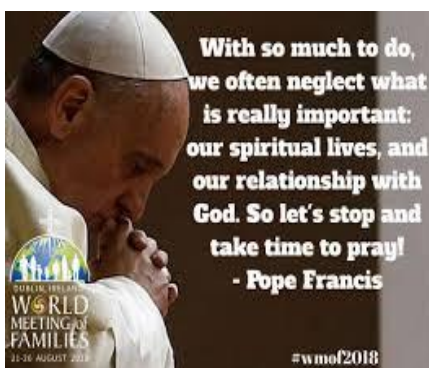
No. 1 THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER IN OUR LIVES



“All pastoral work, including promoting social justice and providing for the poor, must be nourished by prayer, Pope Benedict XVI said. Without contemplating and internalizing God's word daily, one risks being suffocated by too heavy a workload and one's heart risks hardening to the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, he said. "Charity and justice are not just social action but are spiritual action realized in the light of the Holy Spirit" Charity workers must be filled with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and not just be "good organizers who know how to do things," the pope said. It's through prayer and reflecting on God's word that people can "respond to every challenge and situation with wisdom, understanding and fidelity to God's will."

Pope Benedict said, "We must not lose ourselves to pure activism, but always let our actions be penetrated by the light and the word of God and, that way, learn real charity." Truly serving others means not just providing them the basic necessities, it's giving, "above all, the affection of our heart and God's light," he said. Everything Christians do should be nourished by contemplating God, which is especially important in a world that stresses productivity and efficiency above all else, he said (CNS 4.25.2012).

Our God is a God of justice and mercy. He wants the best for us. He wants us to remain in Him. To promote Justice and Peace we need to pray and work. Our catechism tells us that “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God”(CCC2559).



Archbishop Jason Gordon reminds us that “Prayer for the Christian is like water for fish...to pray is to realise the truth that we are in God: in Him we live and move and have our being.” (CN Jan 13, 2019)



Pope Francis (Jan 2019) reminds us that we must not just rattle off our prayers, but we must pray from the heart. He says: ‘In prayer... we learn to see one another as brothers and sisters...In prayer, there are no rich and poor people, there are sons and daughters, sisters and brothers. In prayer, there is no first or second class, there is brotherhood and sisterhood. It is in prayer that our hearts find the strength not to be cold and insensitive in the face of injustice.

Jesus keeps knocking on our doors, the doors of our lives. He doesn’t do this by magic, with special effects, with flashing lights and fireworks. Jesus keeps knocking on our door in the faces of our brothers and sisters, in the faces of our neighbours, in the faces of those at our side.”



St Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that we must pray without ceasing. Prayer helps us to communicate with God; to talk to him and to draw closer to Him.

It helps us to build right relationships, not only with God, but with our neighbour and with God's Creation. By praying constantly, we ourselves can change and become more just; more like the persons that Jesus wants us to be.

How much time do you devote to prayer each day? Teach your children to pray. Pray as a family. We live in a society and a world which are sorely ill. Our prayers are needed if we are to find solutions for the many social ills that threaten to overwhelm us.

The Importance of Family Prayer
"Family Prayer is a special way of expressing and strengthening our baptismal faith." (AL # 318)

Pope Francis encourages parents:
"a few moments can be found each day to come together before the living God:

- to tell him our worries
- to ask for the needs of our family
- to pray for someone experiencing difficulty
- to give thanks for life & its blessings" (AL #318)



And remember, Justice and Peace will not become a reality unless our prayer is linked to action. As we read in James 2:17: "If good works do not go with Faith, it is quite dead." Pope Francis has said: "You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. That's how prayer works." And we must act to change unjust structures also. If we pray for justice and peace to prevail, what are we doing to make this a reality? May the Lord continue to inspire us to do what is right to build better communities and a better world.

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.



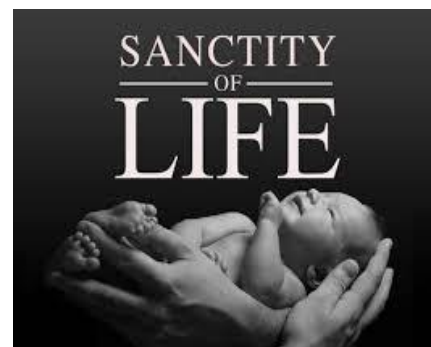
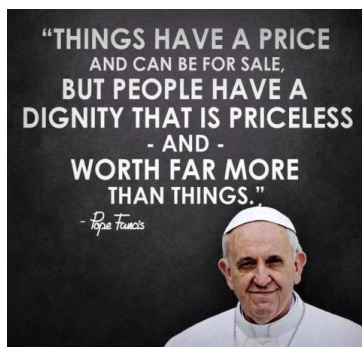
No. 2 THE SANCTITY OF LIFE AND THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Human life is a gift from God. Jeremiah 1:5 tells us: “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you.”

Our Catechism tells us: “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.

We are all made in the image and likeness of God. Pope St John Paul II reminded us that: “Human persons are willed by God; they are imprinted with God's image. Their dignity does not come from the work they do, but from the persons they are... The new evangelization calls for followers of Christ who are unconditionally pro-life: who will acclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life in every situation. A sign of hope is the increasing recognition that the dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil.”

The sanctity of life and the dignity of each human being is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our Church’s social teaching.

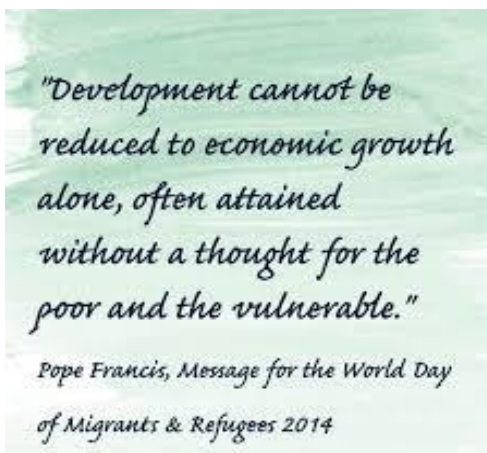


The US Bishops remind us that our Church teaches that “The life and dignity of every person must be respected and protected at every stage and in every condition. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.”

To be pro-life is to be pro-all life. As Pope Francis states: “Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect.”

The dignity that I have comes from God. Nobody can take that away from me. It doesn't matter whether I'm rich or poor, whether I live in Beetham or Westmoorings, it's a permanent part of my being. When you think of dignity, you have to think of your duties to God, your neighbour and also to yourself. The permanent character of my dignity is essentially linked to the dignity of others. We are connected. And our dignity is connected. If their dignity is trampled upon, mine becomes tarnished.

Although human dignity is a permanent part of our character, given by God, it is also a goal, an achievement. This means that we must constantly be seeking to realize our human dignity by how we live our lives.



We must promote human life which is under attack daily. Many don't have basic amenities or what is necessary to have a decent quality of life. For example: water, food, clothing, housing, appropriate health care, electricity, education, decent roads, employment. Authentic integral human development is about the whole person and every person. The words of a Vatican II document, Gaudium et Spes, The Joys and Hopes, are worth noting. The document states:

“Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere instruments of gain rather than as free

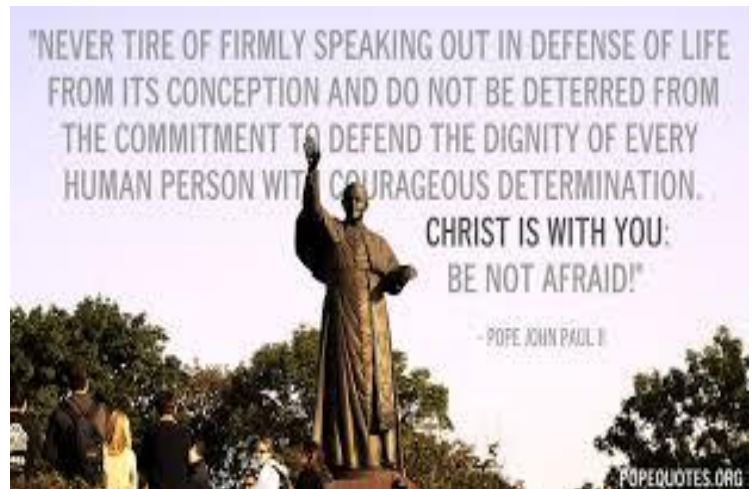
and responsible persons; all these things and others like them are infamies indeed. They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practise them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonour to the Creator”.

Sanctity of human life and dignity of the person

Inherent dignity of the human person starting from conception through to natural death

Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life):

- opposes the deliberate taking of innocent life:
- abortion
- euthanasia
- capital punishment
- genocide
- torture
- the intentional targeting of noncombatants in war



If TT is concerned to promote the sanctity of life and the dignity of each person, then we must work with our Government to build the common good; to create conditions to allow people to realise their potential so that they can flourish. We must become advocates for those whose dignity is being trampled upon daily, e.g. let's be a voice for the voiceless unborn. Euthanasia and assisted suicide are now legal in a number of countries. And while 142 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice, our Church continues to call for global abolition and in August 2018, Pope Francis revised our Catechism to make it clear that, as Catholics, we oppose the death penalty. Para 2267 now reads: "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",^[1] and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide. Pope St John Paul II warned against the "alarming symptoms of the 'culture of death'... which sees the growing number of elderly and

disabled people as intolerable and too burdensome.” Let us ask Our Lord, the giver of life, to help us to value all life and to promote the dignity of each human person.”

A Throwaway Culture

“How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?”

“The throwaway culture is not of Jesus. The other is my brother, beyond every barrier of nationality, social extraction, or religion.”
Pope Francis
Millennial

“We use and throw away unborn children, immigrants, laborers, the disabled, the elderly, the terminally ill, and our own natural environment.”

We have a duty to help others to do good and avoid evil. Therefore, we must not turn our backs on those who have committed crimes. As Pope Francis says: “Every life is sacred, every human person is endowed with an inalienable dignity, and society can only benefit from the rehabilitation of those convicted of crimes.”

Let us not condemn others but journey with them as we seek to encourage everyone to live lives of holiness. As Pope Benedict XVI said: “The Catholic community must offer support to those women who may find it difficult to accept a child, above all when they are isolated from their family and friends. Likewise, the community should be open to welcome back all who repent of having participated in the grave sin of abortion, and should guide them with pastoral charity to accept the grace of forgiveness, the need for penance, and the joy of entering once more into the new life of Christ.”

In July 2002 our Archdiocese staged an interfaith march to celebrate the dignity of life from the first moment of conception. Before the march, the then Archbishop, Edward Gilbert told the media that it was necessary to put all life’s challenges into a proper context.

“The secret in facing the challenge is to understand the context. Poor family life, an inadequate understanding of the meaning of sexuality, gender-conditioned relationships between the sexes, poverty, little or no value formation, alcohol abuse, the drug culture, individualism are all part of the context,” he said.

“The church understands that, even in the best of circumstances, life can be extremely challenging for many different reasons,” but, said the archbishop, “the teaching of many religious traditions, including the Catholic Church, is quite clear – abortion is not an acceptable answer to the challenge” (www.ipsnews.net).

And as we reach out to assist pregnant mothers and their families, as well as those who give birth to their children, let us also lobby for, for example: Better health care services for all; The reduction of poverty and social exclusion; More informed educational programmes/counselling

facilities in educational institutions and in local communities about issues such as family life, values, life skills, responsible parenthood, natural family planning methods; Well publicised information about centres/organisations where pregnant women in need can go for help; The availability of workplace crèches and community nurseries; and Better employer practice in relation to maternity and paternity leave.

In promoting the dignity of the human person, we need to examine practices and procedures in our country/world that stand as obstacles to this goal. In Jun 2016, organised a symposium, in collaboration with the Faculty of Law, at the St Augustine Campus of UWI. It was titled: Understanding and Promoting Restorative Justice. Archbishop Jason Gordon was one of the speakers. He said: “The penal system as it exists today, exists not so much for justice but, I would dare say, for retribution of some form or fashion...the system was set up long ago where the form of justice was that if you did something, you took something that belonged to me, you lost your freedom and your liberty and while you were parked away being warehoused, somehow I was feeling better for myself because you lost your dignity or your liberty or your life or your name...it is kind of a preventative, measure.” He said that scenario had not worked well in the existing justice system.

“There are more people being warehoused in prisons around the world now than ever before and the truth in our circumstance is that an 18- or 19-year-old commits a crime, goes through the legal system, goes into remand, and in remand what happens?

“He now goes from a petty criminal, graduates with a degree, comes out with a Masters (degree) depending on how long he spends on the remand and now comes out with a circle of friends who have taught him how to do real criminal activity and, therefore, it has not helped society by putting this person in remand.”

He said there were many people who had spent more time in remand than they should have. “And so, how is justice being served by this system that we are using now?... Now, we are masters of our own house and we have to find new traditions, new ways of dealing with things.”

Archbishop Jason Gordon referred to the concept of Restorative Justice (RJ). He said: “In our current system the focus is on retribution. RJ is about restoring relationships through truth, forgiveness, paying a price and thus establishing justice...One of RJ’s main proponents, Howard Zehr, says, ‘RJ is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offence and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible.’”

Over the years, our Popes have spoken out and have produced encyclicals etc. that highlight the Church's concern to promote the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person e.g. in June 2018, Pope Francis said: "Life from conception, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age, as well in those moments when it is fragile and sick, wounded, offended, demoralized, marginalized and those cast aside is always human life... When we surrender children to deprivation, the poor to hunger, the persecuted to war, the elderly to abandonment, we are not doing our own work but rather the dirty work of death. And where does the 'dirty work' of death come from? It comes from sin." Here are a few other helpful quotations:

"When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities – to offer just a few examples – it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected. (Pope Francis, *On Care for Our Common Home* [Laudato Si'], no. 117)

"The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner." (Pope Benedict XVI, *Charity in Truth* [Caritas in Veritate], no. 32)

"Human persons are willed by God; they are imprinted with God's image. Their dignity does not come from the work they do, but from the persons they are." (St. John Paul II, *On the Hundredth Year* [Centesimus annus], no. 11)

"There exist also sinful inequalities that affect millions of men and women. These are in open contradiction of the Gospel: Their equal dignity as persons demands that we strive for fairer and more humane conditions. Excessive economic and social disparity between individuals and peoples of the one human race is a source of scandal and militates against social justice, equity, human dignity, as well as social and international peace." (Catechism of the Catholic Church. . . no. 1938)

"... if the family is the sanctuary of life, the place where life is conceived and cared for, it is a horrendous contradiction when it becomes a place where life is rejected and destroyed... The family protects human life in all its stages, including its last" (83). Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, 'The Joy of Love'.

As we promote the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person, let us resolve never to give up in our efforts to reject the culture of death that threatens to overwhelm us.

No. 3 THE FAMILY

One of the Church's key social justice principles is *The Family*. The 1983 *Catholic Charter of the Rights of the Family* defines family as “a community of love and solidarity, which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values, essential for the development and well-being of its own members and of society”.



In his Independence Day address to the nation on 31 Aug 1962, Dr Eric Williams stated clearly that “the strength of the Nation depends on the strength of its citizens.” Strong families build strong communities which in turn will build a strong nation.

St Pope John Paul II reminded us years ago that: “The future of humanity passes by way of the family.” He referred to the family the “first and vital cell of society.” It is in the family that our young people first learn moral and spiritual values and virtues, which give meaning to their lives. It is in the family that we will develop a culture of life; a spirit of nation-building.

And see his apostolic exhortation called: *The Christian Family in the Modern World* (Familiaris Consortio, 1981). In it, he said, inter alia: “...the essence and the role of the family are in the final analysis specified by love. Hence the family has as its mission to guard, reveal and communicate love.”

It is important to note that while various forms of families exist in TT/the world and we must respect the inherent dignity of each child of God, as Catholics we must be aware of the Church's teaching on marriage and the family.



On June 18, 2018, Pope Francis said: “the human family as the image of God, man and woman, is only one. It can happen that a man and a woman aren’t believers: but if they love each other and are united in marriage, they are the image and likeness of God, even though they might not be believers.”

Catholics must develop our vision for families in our communities/country and play our part to promote and protect our families. Sadly, many families in our country and in our world are in crisis - in both rich and poor countries. In our region, over the last few decades, the family has been undergoing a profound and far-reaching transformation. In many ways, family structure and family values have been changing. The extended family is eroding rapidly. Also, there appears to be an anti-family mentality that is sweeping our world. This is all part of the throw-away society that threatens our stability.



Family life and family values are often debased. Yet we must not give up. Now is the time to strengthen our resolve to stand by our families. And while we acknowledge the contribution of single/divorced/widowed parents, grandparents or guardians to their children or to children in their care, our vision must be for a world in which all children can grow up with a mother and a father.



“

The family is also threatened
*by growing efforts on the part of some to
redefine the very institution of marriage,
by relativism, by the culture of the ephemeral,
by a lack of openness to life*

(Pope Francis' message to families at the Mall of Asia Arena, January 16, 2015)

”



We must be aware of the many challenges that families face e.g. poverty and social exclusion. If we are to promote and protect Family Life, we must create conditions within our communities that will allow The Family to flourish. Too many of our families live on the margins.

Read our Catechism paras 2207 to 2211, which states that “The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the differently abled, and the poor. ...The family must be helped and defended by appropriate social measures. Where families cannot fulfill their responsibilities, other social bodies have the duty of helping them and of supporting the institution of the family”



Our Government can and must do more to improve the quality of life of our families. However, if we are to realize the vision of building strong families and a strong nation, we should not simply look to government for solutions to our social ills. As the Body of Christ in this world, we cannot afford to sit on the sidelines and ignore the many social ills that impact adversely on family life.

We must also look to our communities for role models and mentors to encourage, challenge and enthuse those who are at risk. John Rohn's words are instructive. He said: “Your family and your love must be cultivated like a garden. Time, effort, and imagination must be summoned

constantly to keep any relationship flourishing and growing.” Mother, father, children, community all have a role to play in building strong families.

We need to take stock of where family life is and where it’s going. *Families matter.* Will we stand up for the Family and work to save our families? Investing in families is investing in society as a whole. Therefore, let’s invest in our families and build a society in which all families can flourish, as God intended.

Let us pray the words of Pope Francis: “Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families, too, may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel, and small domestic Churches.”



Prayer for Family

May my family be protected from harm, misfortune and sadness. May we enjoy the privilege of spending time together to share joy, celebrate happy occasions and to be there for each other when there is need for comfort. May good health prevail and may there be ever-present faith in God's mercy and grace.



A family doesn't need to be perfect; it just needs to be united.

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fam' i • ly, n.

1. one of life's greatest blessings
2. a unit of people that love and support each other through good times and bad.

"If you want your children to turn out well, spend twice as much time with them, and half as much money."

- Abigail Van Buren

FAMILY RULES

- Always tell the truth
- WORK HARD**
- Keep Your Promises
- Try New Things Don't Whine
- Laugh Out Loud**
- Always say I Love You
- Use kind words Do Your Best
- Be Grateful Be Kind
- BE PROUD OF YOURSELF**
- Say Please & Thank You
- REMEMBER YOU ARE LOVED**

Conclusion

World would be a better place full of love, peace and humanity, if we realize the importance of family to strengthen the society.

The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home.

Confucius

Time spent with family is worth every second.

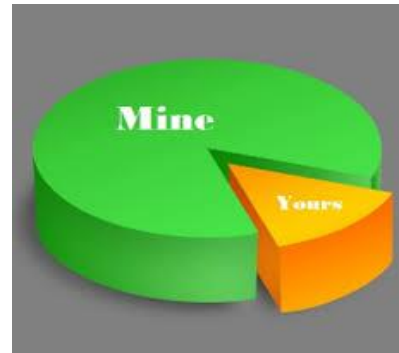
NO. 4 COMMUNITY AND THE COMMON GOOD

Today we will focus on the social justice principle of “the common good”.

St. Pope John XXIII’s defined the common good in his 1961 encyclical, *Mater et Magistra* (On Christianity and Social Progress – Mother and Teacher, 74) , as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.”

As writers have noted, The Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* integrates the legacy of *Mater et Magistra* and defines the common good as “the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment.”

In his encyclical, *God is Love*, Pope Benedict XVI told us that: “the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good is something which concerns the Church deeply.” (*Deus Caritas Est* (“God is Love”), Pope Benedict XVI, 2005 #28).



While we work and pray that everyone will open his/her mind and heart to build the common good, let us remember that, as Disciples of Christ, each of us has a duty to use our God-given talents to build the common good – the good of each person and of every person – and, in doing so, to remember those who will come after us – future generations. That is why our Church is concerned about sustainable development.

The World Synod of Catholic Bishops document: *Justice in the World*, (1971 #38), states that Christians “should act as a leaven in the world, in their family, professional, social, cultural and political life.

“In a global culture driven by excessive individualism,” our Church teaches us that: “The human person is both sacred and social. We realise our dignity and rights in relationship with

others, in community. Human beings grow and achieve fulfillment in community. Human dignity can only be realized and protected in the context of relationships with the wider society. How we organize our society — in economics and politics, in law and policy — directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. ”
(<http://cgcatholic.org.au/services-directory/councils-commissions/social-justice-commission/principles-of-catholic-social-teaching/>).

“The role of government and other institutions is to protect human life and human dignity and promote the common good.” (<https://www.tcdsb.org>) .

Politics is a noble activity. We should revalue it, practise it with vocation and a dedication that requires testimony, martyrdom, that is to die for the common good

— Pope Francis —



“In order to prepare a truly human future, it is not enough to reject evil. We must build the common good together.”
Pope Francis

"We must move forward together, as one, in a renewed spirit of fraternity and solidarity, cooperating generously for the common good!"
Pope Francis

Building the common good also requires us to consider whether or not we are good stewards of God’s creation. We have much work to do to promote ecological justice, which is inextricably linked to integral human development.

Read Pope Francis’ encyclical: *Laudato Si*, on care for our common home (see Articles 156 – 158) (the expression “common good” occurs 29 times in *Laudato Si*). In it he reminds us that:

“An integral ecology is inseparable from the notion of the common good, a central and unifying principle of social ethics. ...Underlying the principle of the common good is respect for the human person as such, endowed with basic and inalienable rights ordered to his or her integral development. It has also to do with the overall welfare of society and the development of a variety of intermediate groups, applying the principle of subsidiarity. Outstanding among those groups is the family, as the basic cell of society.

“Finally, the common good calls for social peace, the stability and security provided by a certain order which cannot be achieved without particular concern for distributive justice; whenever this is violated, violence always ensues. Society as a whole, and the state in particular, are obliged to defend and promote the common good. In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately

becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters. This option entails recognizing the implications of the universal destination of the world's goods, but, as I mentioned in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, (Cf. Nos. 186-201: AAS 105 (2013), 1098-1105) it demands before all else an appreciation of the immense dignity of the poor in the light of our deepest convictions as believers. We need only look around us to see that, today, this option is in fact an ethical imperative essential for effectively attaining the common good.”

The common good is achieved when we cooperate together in service



In their document: Economic Justice for All, the U.S. Bishops, (1986 # 14 & #122) state that: “The obligation to ‘love our neighbour’ has an individual dimension, but it also requires a broader social commitment to the common good...The Christian vision of economic life...asks, Does economic life enhance or threaten our life together as a community?”

The US Bishops rightly state that “government has a moral function: protecting human rights and securing basic justice for all members of the commonwealth. Society as a whole and in all its diversity is responsible for building up the common good. But it is the government’s role to guarantee the minimum conditions that make this rich social activity possible, namely, human rights and justice. This obligation also falls on individual citizens as they choose their representatives and participate in shaping public opinion.”

In his encyclical, *Charity in Truth*, Pope Benedict XVI, reminded us that “to desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity” (CIT,7, 2009). And remember, justice must include a consideration of distributive justice.

Read the 1996 Statement on the Common Good by the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales in the preface to this document, the late Cardinal Basil Hume stated: “The Church has the right and the duty to advocate a social order in which the human dignity of all is fostered, and to protest when it is in any way threatened. ..The Church (also) rejects the view that human happiness consists only in material wellbeing, and that achieving this alone is the goal of any government. If a government pays too much attention to material welfare at the expense of other values, it may advocate policies which reduce people to a passive state of dependency on welfare. Equally, if a government gives too little priority to tackling poverty, ill-health, poor housing and other social ills, the human dignity of those who suffer these

afflictions is denied. In every society respect for human dignity requires that, so far as possible, basic human needs are met. The systematic denial of compassion by individuals or public authorities can never be a morally justified political option.”

Our Catechism (CCC1928-1929) tells us that: “Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority...Social justice can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of man. The person represents the ultimate end of society, which is ordered to him”.

<http://cgcatholic.org.au/services-directory/councils-commissions/social-justice-commission/principles-of-catholic-social-teaching/>

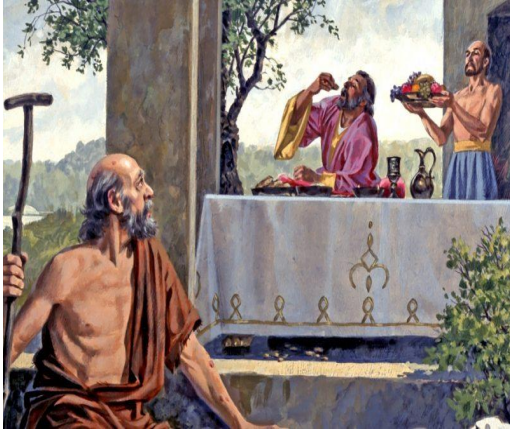


Pope Francis’ words in his address to the US Congress in 2015 are noteworthy. He said: “...building a future of freedom requires love of the common good and cooperation in a spirit of subsidiarity and solidarity...All of us are quite aware of, and deeply worried by, the disturbing social and political situation of the world today.”

He noted how the world is increasingly a place of conflict, violence, hatred and atrocities, “committed even in the name of God and of religion”...Even in the developed world the effects of unjust structures and actions are obvious, he said, calling for cooperation in restoring hope and righting wrongs, with the well-being of peoples and individuals in mind. He said “We must move forward together, as one, in a renewed spirit of fraternity and solidarity, cooperating generously for the common good. The complexity, the gravity and the urgency of these challenges demand that we pool our resources and talents, and resolve to support one another, with respect for our differences and our convictions of conscience.”

And in January 2019, in addressing the Diplomatic Corps, he “called on States to work for the common good of all and warned of new forms of ideological colonization that disregard the

identity, dignity and sensitivities of peoples...He expressed concern about ‘nationalistic tendencies’ and encouraged states to pursue the common good by providing ‘long-term answers’ rather than ‘quick partisan consensus.’” He “encouraged a generous sense of solidarity and spirit of fraternity towards migrants.” <https://rcpolitics.org/pope-francis-encourages-states-to-work-for-the-common-good-and-warns-against-new-forms-of-ideological-colonization/>



Balance

- It is the job of our government and society to find a **balance** between **individual rights** and the **common good**.



And see paras 164 to 170 of the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church which reminds us that:

“164. *The principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must be related if it is to attain its fullest meaning, stems from the dignity, unity and equality of all people...*

“165. *A society that wishes and intends to remain at the service of the human being at every level is a society that has the common good - the good of all people and of the whole person - as its primary goal. The human person cannot find fulfillment in himself, that is, apart from the fact that he exists "with" others and "for" others...*

“166. The demands of the common good are dependent on the social conditions of each historical period and are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights. These demands concern above all the commitment to peace, the organization of the State's powers, a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom[350]. Nor must one forget the contribution that every nation is required in duty to make towards a true worldwide cooperation for the common good of the whole of humanity and for future generations also.



“167. The common good therefore involves all members of society, no one is exempt from cooperating, according to each one's possibilities, in attaining it and developing it.”

Pope Francis is constantly reminding us of the need to work tirelessly to build the common good. Working to achieve the common good “requires the constant ability and effort to seek the good of others as though it were one's own good.” – Remember the golden rule; do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

“Everyone also has the right to enjoy the conditions of social life that are brought about by the quest for the common good.

“168. The responsibility for attaining the common good, besides falling to individual persons, belongs also to the State, since the common good is the reason that the political authority exists. The State, in fact, must guarantee the coherency, unity and organization of the civil society of which it is an expression, in order that the common good may be attained with the contribution of every citizen. The individual person, the family or intermediate groups are not able to achieve their full development by themselves for living a truly human life. Hence the necessity of political institutions, the purpose of which is to make available to persons the necessary material, cultural, moral and spiritual goods...

“169. To ensure the common good, the government of each country has the specific duty to harmonize the different sectoral interests with the requirements of justice.” Our Church realises that this is a delicate task. We are reminded “that in the democratic State, where decisions are usually made by the majority of representatives elected by the people, those responsible for government are required to interpret the common good of their country not only according to the guidelines of the majority but also according to the effective good of all the members of the community, including the minority.

“170. The common good of society is not an end in itself; it has value only in reference to attaining the ultimate ends of the person and the universal common good of the whole of creation. God is the ultimate end of his creatures and for no reason may the common good be

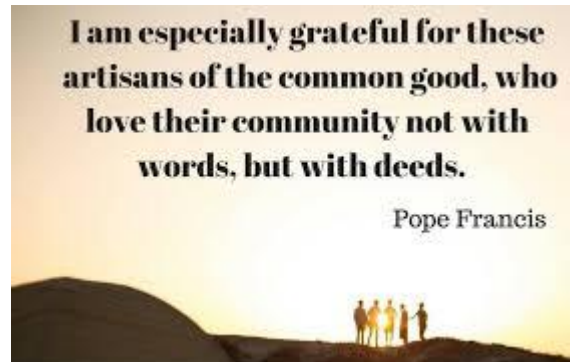
deprived of its transcendent dimension, which moves beyond the historical dimension while at the same time fulfilling it... the personal and collective effort to elevate the human condition - begins and ends in Jesus: thanks to him, by means of him and in light of him every reality, including human society, can be brought to its Supreme Good, to its fulfillment. A purely historical and materialistic vision would end up transforming the common good into a simple *socio-economic well-being*, without any transcendental goal, that is, without its most intimate reason for existing.



Pope Francis ✓
@Pontifex

Following

In order to prepare a truly human future, it is not enough to reject evil. We must build the common good together.



And while many may consider the principle of the common good in relation to creating conditions so that people can realise their full potential, it is important to note St Pope John Paul II's (1995 #101) words in his encyclical: *The Gospel of Life*:

“To be actively pro-life is to contribute to the renewal of society through the promotion of the common good. It is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop. A society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized.”

The writer, Beth Haile, rightly points out that “The other principles of Catholic social teaching function to concretize the common good. The preferential option for the poor, for example, turns our attention to the most vulnerable members of society, whose own suffering most threatens the achievement of the common good... Solidarity encourages us to see one another as each other's keepers... Also necessary is the state, which acts ...to ‘guarantee the coherency, unity, and organization of the civil society’ (*Compendium*, 168). .. one of the most pressing demands of the common good is the persistent conversion of hearts in the realization that we do not exist for ourselves.”

As you reflect on this principle of the “common good”, I urge you to re-read Luke 16:19-31 - Jesus' parable of *The rich man and Lazarus*. Are we indifferent to the suffering of others? Are

we hearing the cry of the poor and marginalised? How are we responding to Archbishop Emeritus' Pastoral Letter, *Return to Hospitality*?

As I close, I ask our Heavenly Father to pour out His Holy Spirit upon us and enkindle in us a desire to build the common good so that we will move from selfishness and individualism, to working to create conditions in which each person and all His Creation can flourish. Amen.

“It is imperative that no one...indulge in a merely individualistic morality. The best way to fulfill one's obligations of justice and love is to contribute to the common good according to one's means and the needs of others, and also to promote and help public and private organizations devoted to bettering the conditions of life. (Gaudium et Spes - The Church in the Modern World, Vatican II, 1965 #30)


“... the whole reason for the existence of civil authorities is the realization of the common good.” Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth), St Pope John XXIII, 1963#54




THE COMMON GOOD PUT INTO ACTION


- ❖ The Common Good is when the Golden Rule is put into action in the world.
- ❖ The Common Good is a Catholic Social Teaching. (CST)

An illustration showing several hands of different skin tones forming a circle. To the right is a globe with a large wooden cross superimposed on it, and small white figures of people walking around the base of the cross.

 **Common Good**



We should always try to think about what is good for everyone, not just ourselves. It's about living together in a community.



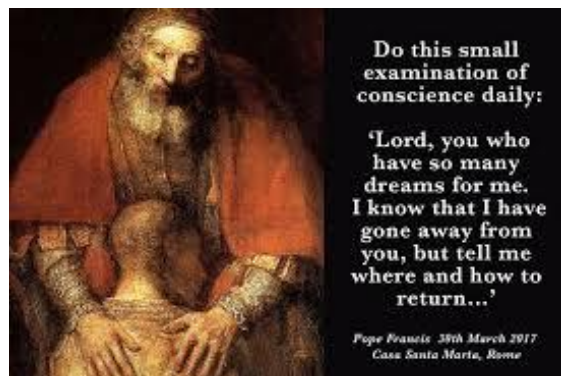
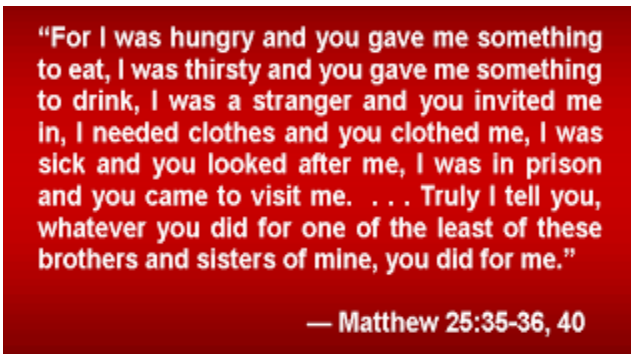
No. 5 PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

A key social justice principle in the Catholic Church is the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. On World Day of the Poor, 18 November 2018, Pope Francis urged us to hear the cry of the poor, who he says: “are a true presence of Jesus in our midst. “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40).”

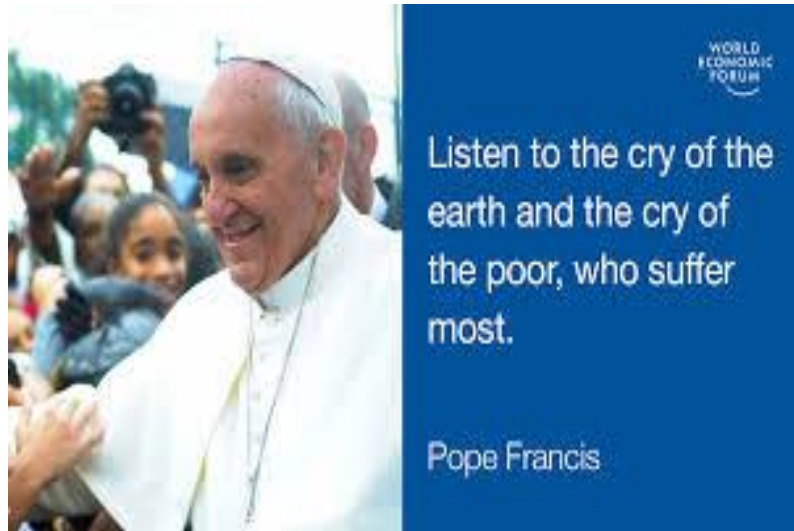


He reminded us of the need to stand in solidarity with the poor. Remember the words of St Paul: “If one member suffers, all suffer together.” Gandhi rightly said: “the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members”. Pope Francis asks us “to make a serious examination of conscience, to see if we are truly capable of hearing the cry of the poor” and responding.

We are to respond not only to their immediate needs, but to address unjust structures that may adversely affect them from achieving their potential. “Injustice”, he says, “is the perverse root of poverty. The cry of the poor daily becomes stronger but heard less...” He says: “No-one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world!”



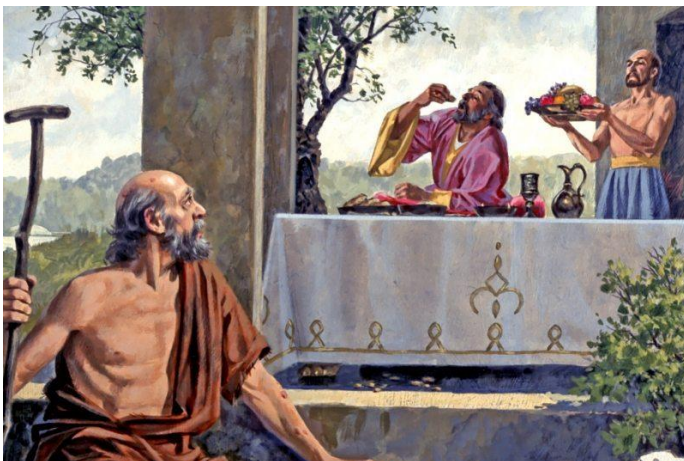
We were created to do good works, and the “good works” Jesus speaks of in Matthew 25 includes taking care of the poor.



He reminds us that as Christ’s followers we must constantly strive to be in ever greater conformity to the “mind of Jesus Christ” (Phil 2:5).” If we truly put on the mind of Jesus, we will see Him in the faces of the poor and vulnerable; we will not be indifferent to their needs.

He says: “Lazarus is a good example of the silent cry of the poor throughout the ages and the contradictions of a world in which immense wealth and resources are in the hands of the few” (2016).

A recent Oxfam report in Jan 2019, shows that the world’s 26 richest persons own as much as 3.8 billion of the world’s poorest persons – including 1 billion children worldwide - all of whom struggle on the margins of society. According to UNICEF, 22,000 children die each day due to poverty.



The UNDP states: “Eradicating poverty in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges facing humanity...too many are still struggling for the most basic human needs.” Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals calls for an end to poverty in all its manifestations by 2030.

We have a duty of care to work to ensure that people have basic amenities e.g. food, water, housing, sanitation, health care and employment.

The first step in seeking to eradicate poverty is to recognise the inherent, inalienable, inviolable dignity of each human person made in God's image and likeness.

Here in TT it is estimated that more than 20% of our citizens live below the poverty line. Many are trapped in poverty for generations.



According to 1 definition, those who are socially excluded suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.

These different dimensions of social exclusion prevent many persons from participating fully in the life of society.

The Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World), 1965, states: “everyone has the right to possess a sufficient amount of the earth’s goods for themselves and their family. This has been the opinion of the Fathers and Doctors of the church, who taught that people are bound to come to the aid of the poor and to do so not merely out of their superfluous goods...” #69.

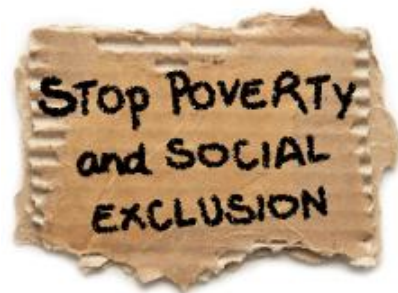
In their 1986 document, *Economic Justice for All*, the US Catholic Bishops stated: “As followers of Christ, we are challenged... — to speak for the voiceless, to defend the defenseless, to assess life styles, policies, and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor. This “option for the poor” does not mean pitting one group against another, but rather, strengthening the whole community by assisting those who are the most vulnerable. As Christians, we are called to respond to the needs of all our brothers and sisters, but those with the greatest needs require the greatest response....

“The obligation to provide justice for all means that the poor have the single most urgent economic claim on the conscience of the nation...As individuals and as a nation, therefore, we are called to make a fundamental “option for the poor”. The obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor and the powerless arises from the radical command to love one’s neighbour as one’s self. Those who are marginalized and whose rights are denied have privileged claims if society is to provide justice for all. This obligation is deeply rooted in Christian belief .

“The prime purpose of this special commitment to the poor is to enable them to become active participants in the life of society. It is to enable all persons to share in and contribute to the common good... the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community. The extent of their suffering is a measure of how far we are from being a true community of persons. These wounds will be healed only by greater solidarity with the poor and among the poor themselves” #16, #86, #87,#88 .

Pope Francis rightly stated in his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*: “Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor... In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters.” #30, #158.

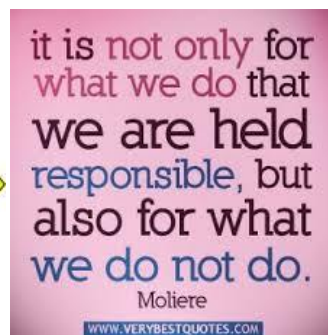
Are we evaluating how our Governments' social and other policies are impacting on people’s lives? Does every creed, race, and class find an equal place in TT? Let us pray that our God of justice will open our ears to listen to the cry of the poor and open our hearts to respond to their needs. Let us ask forgiveness for the times when we walked on the other side and ignored the needs of our neighbours. May the God of justice and compassion convert our hearts and minds so that we will live as authentic disciples in His vineyard. Let us resolve to build our nation by addressing some of the social ills that beset us. Don’t be afraid to speak out for justice.



No. 6 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

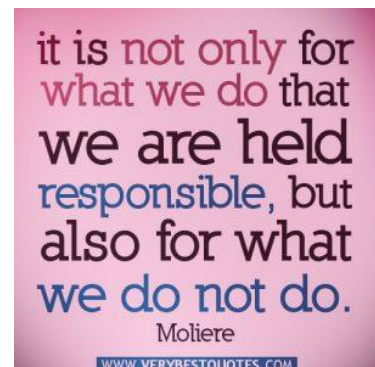
Let's focus on the social justice principle of "rights and responsibilities".

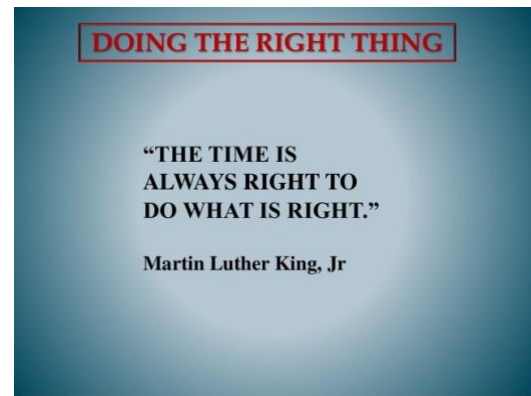
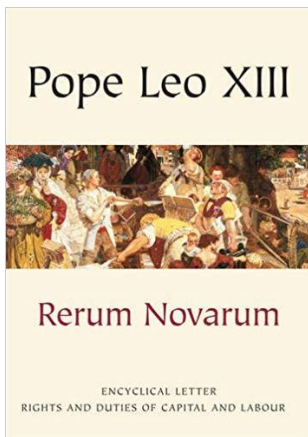
Violation of human rights plagues every society in our world on a daily basis. Promoting and protecting human rights is everyone's business. In Pope Francis' Message for World Day of Peace, 2019, entitled: *Good politics is at the service of Peace*, he said: "As we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in the wake of the Second World War...let us also remember the observation of St. Pope John XXIII in his 1963 encyclical, *Peace on Earth* : "Man's awareness of his rights must inevitably lead him to the recognition of his duties". Yes, we have certain duties and responsibilities to God, neighbour, ourselves and creation.



We live in an age in which greed, individualism and moral relativism threaten our very freedom/dignity. Catholics believe that there are objective moral norms which apply to all people at all times. Moral relativists believe that morality is subjective – if it feels good, do it! Can you imagine what would happen if each of us does what we like just because it 'feels good'? Sadly, the language of human rights today is cloaked in secularism e.g. some women who try to justify abortion say: "It's my body; I can do with it as I wish."

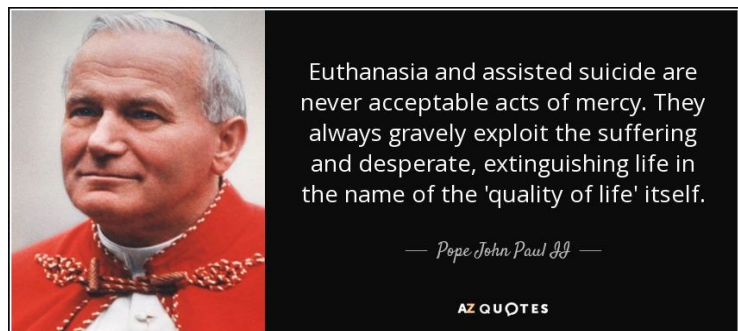
The Church has always sought to educate us about rights and responsibilities e.g. Pope Leo XIII's encyclical: *Rerum Novarum* (1891) focused on the Rights and Duties of Capital and Labour.





God created us in His image and likeness and gave us free will – but that does not mean that we should do what we like. As St Pope John Paul II said: “Every generation needs to know that freedom consists not in doing what we like but in having the right to do what we ought.” Thora Best, former principal of Rose Hill RC Primary School, POS, rightly sought to instill the following in her students: “Always do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.”

But where do we get our human rights from? Our Church tells us that “...the roots of human rights are to be found in the **dignity** that belongs to each human being...The ultimate source of human rights is ...found in man himself and in God his Creator. These rights are “universal, inviolable, and inalienable... Human rights are to be defended not only individually but also as a whole: protecting them only partially would imply a kind of failure to recognize them...The first right ...is the right to life, from conception to its natural death...The field of human rights has expanded to include the rights of peoples and nations: in fact, ‘what is true for the individual is also true for peoples.’”

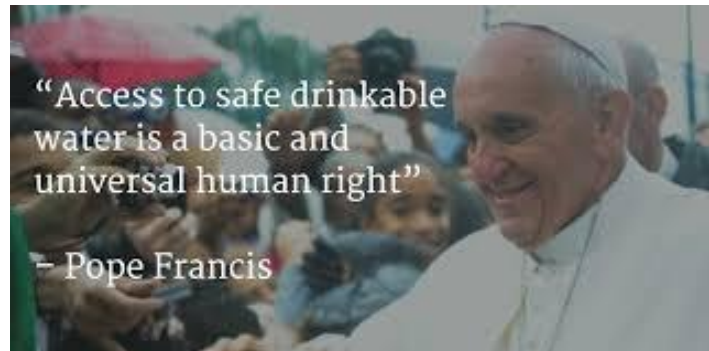


As well as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; read St Pope John XXIII’s *Charter of Rights* in his 1963 encyclical, *Peace on Earth* and St Pope John Paul II’s list of rights in his 1991 encyclical, *The Hundredth Year*.

Here are some of the rights St Pope John XXIII outlined in his encyclical, *Peace on Earth*:

"the right to life; the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and the necessary

social services; the right to be looked after in the event of ill-health, disability, widowhood, old age, unemployment; the right to a good name; ...freedom of speech and publication; freedom to pursue a choice of career; the right to be accurately informed about public events;... the right to receive a good general education; the right to raise children, which belongs primarily to the parents; the right not only to be given the opportunity to work but also to enjoy the exercise of personal initiative in that work; the right to a just wage; the right to the private ownership of property...; the right to meet together with others and to form associations; the right to freedom of movement; and the right to take an active part in public life, and to make a contribution to the common welfare.”



Human rights must also be seen within the context of: the breakdown in family life; challenges faced by families; lack of good governance/integrity/transparency at the level of leadership; lack of positive role models/mentors – at all levels; peer pressure; lack of discipline, and guidance; an education system that does not meeting the needs of 21st century students/adults - that fails to build character and form moral consciences; lack of respect for just laws; a media that should play a stronger role in our democracy e.g. by seeking to strengthen democratic institutions through investigative reporting on issues relating to e.g. corruption and organized crime.

Human rights have expanded to include the rights of peoples and nations. All rights are indivisible so we have to protect them together. Remember, though, that our rights are not more important than our duties.

For example, we have a duty to build the common good, for example, to work towards creating conditions so that each person can realise his or her potential – building the common good helps to move people from less human conditions to more human conditions.

Love of God and of neighbour has global dimensions. We cannot be indifferent in the face of inequalities/inequities/injustice. We have a duty to stand in solidarity with those whose rights are being trampled upon e.g. victims of human trafficking and other crimes, poverty, hunger, migrants, refugees and so on. As our Church tells us, those “who claim their own *rights*, yet

altogether forget or neglect to carry out their respective duties, are people who build with one hand and destroy with the other.” Let us ask our Heavenly Father to guide us as we seek to promote rights and to meet our responsibilities.

And see the US Bishops’ words on this issue. They said: “The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities--to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. Scripture

- Leviticus 25:35 : When someone is reduced to poverty, we have an obligation to help.
- Ruth 2:2-23 : Boaz cares for Ruth, a widow and a foreigner, giving her far more than the law requires.
- Tobit 4:5-11 : Give from what you have received and do not turn away from the poor.
- Proverbs 31:8-9 : Open your mouth to speak on behalf of those in need.
- Isaiah 1:16-17 : Seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.
- Jeremiah 22: 13-16 : A legitimate government upholds the rights of the poor and vulnerable.
- Jeremiah 29:4-7 : Seek the welfare of the city, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.
- Matthew 25: 31-46 : Just as you did it to the least of these, you did it to me.
- Luke 16:19-31 : The rich man has a responsibility to care for Lazarus.
- Acts 4:32-35 : There was not a needy person among them.
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 : God’s gifts are given to be shared.
- James 2:14-18 : Faith without works is dead.

In human society one man's natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men; the duty, that is, of recognizing and respecting that right. Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty. Hence, to claim one's rights and ignore one's duties, or only half fulfill them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other. (St. Pope John XXIII, *Peace on Earth* [Pacem in Terris. . .], no. 30)

As for the State . . . It has also the duty to protect the rights of all its people, and particularly of its weaker members... It can never be right for the State to shirk its obligation of working actively for the betterment of the condition of the workingman. (St. John XXIII, *Christianity and Social Progress* (Mater et Magistra. . .), no. 20)

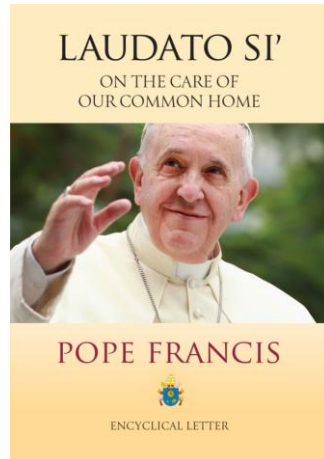
Let us lift the veil of indifference that weighs on the destiny of those who suffer. Nobody can wash their hands when faced with the tragic reality of modern SLAVERY.
December 2, 2018

“EVERY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SHOULD BE AN OASIS OF CHARITY AND WARMTH IN THE MIDST OF A DESERT OF SOLITUDE AND INDIFFERENCE.”
POPE FRANCIS
Millennial

The gravest sin is “indifference.”
Indifference is the absence of love, when one does not care at all.
So much poverty we see around us makes us numb and indifferent.

No. 7 CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

A key social justice principle is Caring for God's Creation. In Genesis we read that we have a duty to cultivate and care for the earth. As Christians, we cannot be indifferent to environmental degradation. Let's be good stewards; let's reconcile ourselves with God's creation.



CHAPTER ONE - WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR COMMON HOME

- POLLUTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE
 - Pollution, waste and the throwaway culture
 - Climate as a common good
- THE ISSUE OF WATER
- LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY
- DECLINE IN THE QUALITY OF HUMAN LIFE AND THE BREAKDOWN OF SOCIETY
- GLOBAL INEQUALITY
- WEAK RESPONSES
- A VARIETY OF OPINIONS



Globally biodiversity, the various kinds of life forms on earth, is being lost faster than it recovers and it is the poor who feel the brunt of this moral crisis. There are about 100 million different species co-existing with us on our planet. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 100,000 species are becoming extinct each year. And human activity is contributing to this.

In TT we continue to pollute our environment; we clog drains and waterways thus contributing to widespread flooding. We are blessed in T&T with rich bio-diversity but we must do more to conserve it.

Human beings are responsible to some extent to climate change and global warming. We must protect and promote authentic human development and environmental ecology which are both inextricably linked.

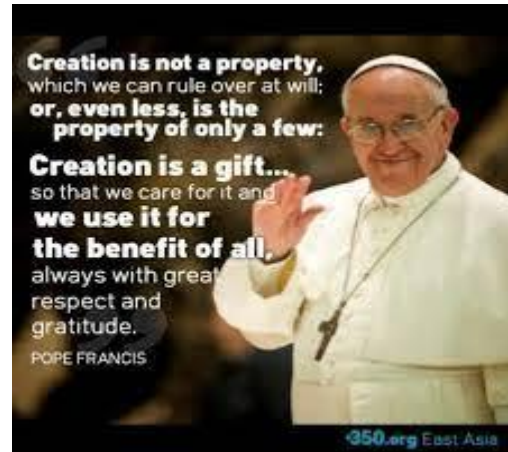
Indeed, there can be no sustainable development if we don't learn to protect our biodiversity and to manage our natural resources. Here is what some of our Popes and Bishops have said about this issue:

The Bishops of the Antilles Episcopal Conference have issued 2 Pastoral Letters on this issue: "*Stewardship and the revitalization of parish life in the Caribbean*" and "*Caring for the Earth – Our responsibility.*"

Psalm 24 tells us that: 'The earth and its fullness belong to the Lord, the world and all that dwell in it.' Years ago Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI told us: "*Our earth speaks to us, and we must listen if we want to survive.*" He said: "We are all in the world not as owners but as tenants and stewards...The environment is God's gift to us...God is sovereign of all that exists and has

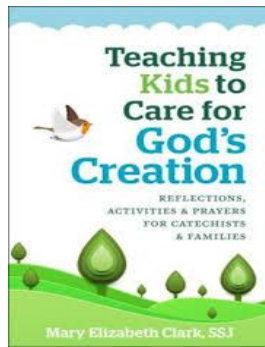
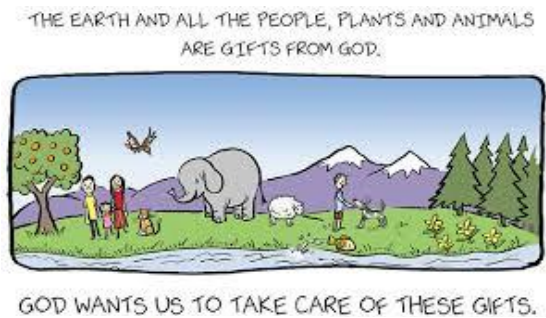
instilled in every creature, including humans, laws and purposes which must be observed.” He asked:

“Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change, desertification...the increase of natural catastrophes and the deforestation of equatorial and tropical regions? Can we disregard the growing phenomenon of “environmental refugees,” people who are forced by the degradation of their natural habitat to forsake it – and often their possessions as well – in order to face the dangers and uncertainties of forced displacement?”



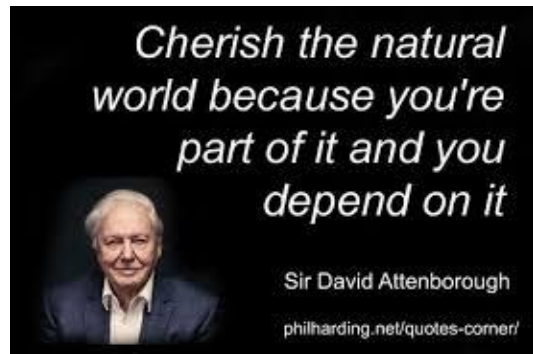
And in Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si* (On Care For Our Common Home) he calls for conversion of hearts, minds and lifestyles if we are to save our planet. He says dialogue and education can “help us to escape the spiral of self-destruction which currently engulfs us”. He urges us to “*hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.*” He calls us to promote authentic human ecology which connects ecological issues and life issues. He says Human Ecology and Natural Ecology come fully together in “Integral Ecology”. “There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself...There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology” # 118. St Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He was particularly concerned for God’s creation and for the poor and outcast” #10.





Here are some things we can we do to love our earth:

- Develop an environmental spirituality. Read, Pray, Reflect on the story of Creation in Genesis;
- Discover and reflect on the beauty of God's creation and of our connection to it. Enjoy nature and live in harmony with it;
- Reuse, Recycle, Reduce, Restore. Practice these 4 R's for sustainable living;
- Learn about and educate others on the causes and effects of environmental degradation and about action that can be taken to reconcile ourselves with God's creation;
- Examine and assess your lifestyle and consumption. Pledge to make changes that will improve the ways in which you impact on and interact with the environment;
- Prevent Pollution and Reduce Your Carbon Footprint:
- Become an Advocate for God's Creation;
- Promote sound environmental management practices e.g. energy efficiency, water conservation, waste avoidance, composting, using environmentally responsible products, and car-pooling.
- ***Let us ask the Lord, to send out His Spirit, and renew the face of the earth (Psalm 104:30).***



Prayer taken from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*:

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

*Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.*

*Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.*

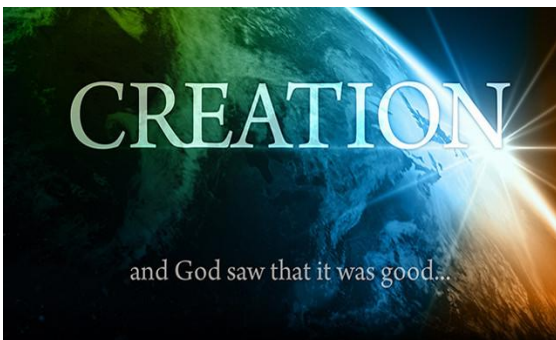
*O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.*

*Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.*

*Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.*

We thank you for being with us each day.

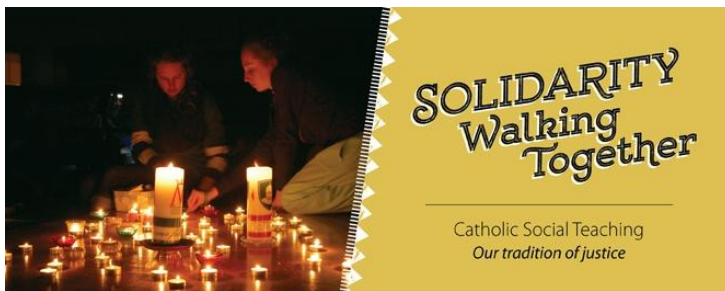
*Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.*



No. 8 SOLIDARITY

Today we will focus on the social justice principle of “solidarity”, which is also a virtue.

We know that, generally, each of us does not journey through life alone. Our Church teaches us that “we are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic and ideological differences. Learning to practise the virtue of solidarity means learning that ‘loving our neighbour’ has global dimensions in an interdependent world.” We are all interconnected and inter dependent. We all have a common origin in Jesus Christ and should see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.



HUMAN SOLIDARITY

"It requires that we begin to be more responsive to the demands of the wider and greater good of all."

-PCP II 664



Good Samaritan
Luke 10:25-37

What does “solidarity” mean?

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, #193 states that Solidarity “is the firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”

What has our Popes said in more recent times about this virtue?

Saint Pope John Paul II defined the concept of solidarity in the following terms in his encyclical: “The social concern of the Church” (1987) (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38),

He said: “The fact that men and women in various parts of the world feel personally affected by the injustices and violations of human rights committed in distant countries, countries which perhaps they will never visit, is a further sign of a reality transformed into awareness, thus acquiring a moral connotation.

“It is above all a question of interdependence, (sensed as a system determining relationships in the contemporary world in its economic, cultural, political and religious elements, and accepted as a moral category. When interdependence becomes recognised in this way, the correlative response as a moral and social attitude, as a 'virtue', is solidarity.) This (then) is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far.

On the contrary it 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 (paragraphs 38.3-38.4)...Building a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential through each of us respecting each other's dignity, rights and responsibilities makes the world a better place to live" (SRS). He has urged the Faithful: "never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity."

Pope Benedict XVI said: "Solidarity refers to the virtue enabling the human family to share fully the treasure of material and spiritual goods."

He said: "Love of neighbour...consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, even affecting my feelings" and "that closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God." (Benedict XVI 2005b, nos. 18, 16).

"Seeing with the eyes of Christ, I can give to others much more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look of love which they crave," Benedict continues. Only my readiness to encounter my neighbour and to show him/her love makes me sensitive to God as well...Love is "divine" because it comes from God and unites us to God; through this unifying process it makes us a "we" which transcends our divisions and makes us one, until in the end God is "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). (Benedict XVI 2005b, no. 18) (God is Love – Deus Caritas).

"True solidarity—though it begins with an acknowledgment of the equal worth of the other—comes to fulfillment only when I willingly place my life at the service of others," Benedict stated (Benedict XVI, 2008).

Take note of Pope Benedict's words. He said "As society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbours but does not make us brothers and sisters".

Solidarity prevents rich nations from being indifferent to the poverty and human rights violations experienced by people living in other nations.

"Solidarity:
it's about being
selfless"

Examples of Solidarity...

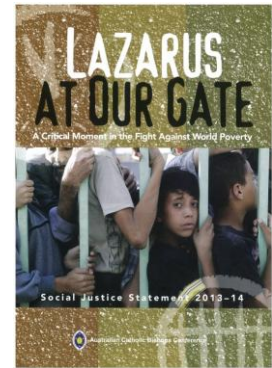
- Promoting inter-religious dialogue and tolerance



“
Intergenerational solidarity
is not optional, but rather a
basic question of justice,
since the world we have
received also belongs to
those who will follow us.

POPE FRANCIS

RD.COM/QUOTES



Our Church tells us that Solidarity is about valuing our fellow human beings, respecting who they are as individuals, and treating them like brothers and sisters.

And Pope Francis has said: “We are called to live not as one without others, above or against others, but with and for others.” As Disciples of Christ we are called to build the common good; to stand against injustice and strive to build a just society and world; to strengthen community. We can do so by committing to stand together in solidarity with each other.”

“The many situations of inequality, poverty and injustice, are signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the absence of a culture of solidarity. New ideologies, characterized by rampant individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism, weaken social bonds, fuelling that “throw away” mentality which leads to contempt for, and the abandonment of, the weakest and those considered “useless”. In this way human coexistence increasingly tends to resemble a mere *do ut des* which is both pragmatic and selfish.”

In 2013, he told us in his Message for World Food Day that “Today more than ever, I think it is necessary to educate ourselves in solidarity, to rediscover the value and meaning of this very uncomfortable word, which oftentimes has been left aside, and to make it become a basic attitude in decisions made at the political, economic and financial levels, in relationships between persons, peoples and nations.

“It is only in standing firmly united, by overcoming selfish ways of thinking and partisan interests, that the objective of eliminating forms of indigence determined by a lack of food will also be achieved. A solidarity that is not reduced to different forms of welfare, but which makes an effort to ensure that an ever greater number of persons are economically independent. Many steps have been taken in different countries, but we are still far from a world where all can live with dignity.” (Message for World Food Day, Oct. 16, 2013)

And in 2014, he reminded us that solidarity “is a word that means much more than some acts of sporadic generosity. It is to think and to act in terms of community, of the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few. It is also to fight against the structural causes of

poverty, inequality, lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social and labour rights. It is to confront the destructive effects of the empire of money: forced displacements, painful emigrations, the traffic of persons, drugs, war, violence and all those realities that many of you suffer and that we are all called to transform. Solidarity, understood in its deepest sense, is a way of making history...” (Pope Francis, World Meeting of Popular Movements 2014).

...when food is shared in a fair way, with solidarity, when no one is deprived, every community can meet the needs of the poorest. Human ecology and environmental ecology walk together.
Pope Francis
www.FOOD4PEOPLE.org



And remember the importance of intergenerational solidarity, which, as Pope Francis says, “is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.” That is why, for example, we should be concerned about the kind of world we will leave behind for future generations.

He has said that: “The many situations of inequality, poverty and injustice, are signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the absence of a culture of solidarity.

“New ideologies, characterized by rampant individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism, weaken social bonds, fuelling that “throw away” mentality which leads to contempt for, and the abandonment of, the weakest and those considered “useless”. In this way human coexistence increasingly tends to resemble a mere *do ut des* which is both pragmatic and selfish.”

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

Vatican II stressed the need for the Catholic Church to stand in solidarity with the whole human family:

“The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men and women of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ.”(Lumen Gentium).

And see what paras 1939 to 1942 of our Catechism has to say about human solidarity. For example 1940 states: Solidarity is manifested in the first place by the distribution of goods and remuneration for work. It also presupposes the effort for a more just social order...

“1941 Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all the forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, solidarity among nations and peoples. International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this.

1942 The virtue of solidarity goes beyond material goods" it includes "the spiritual goods of the faith..."”



Today modern technology enables us to reach out in solidarity with our brothers and sisters abroad e.g. via social media.

Christ calls us to live in fraternity. Heavenly Father, help us to practise the virtue of solidarity; help us to look through the lens of the Gospel and see the needs of our brothers and sisters in our homes, our families, our work places, our communities, in those who live on the margins, those who are hurting, the elderly, the sick, the shut-ins, the abused, the lonely. In 2013 Pope Francis reminded us that: “The culture of selfishness and individualism that often prevails in our society, is not...what builds up and leads to a more habitable world: rather, it is a culture of solidarity that does so; the culture of solidarity means seeing others not as rivals or statistics, but brothers and sisters. And we are all brothers and sisters!”

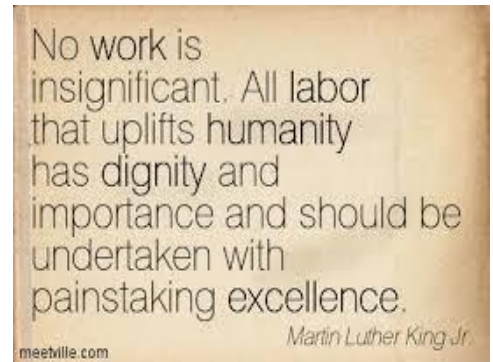
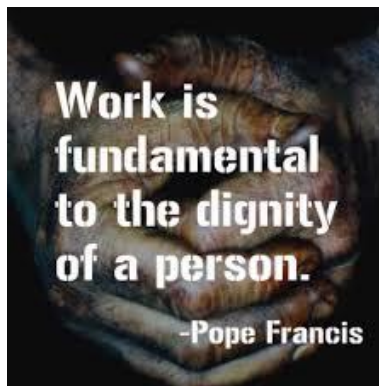
Father, and when we go to Church, open our eyes to see you in our neighbour so that we will not drive by those who are walking to and from Church. Soften our hearts so that we will offer a lift to our brothers and sisters. Father, we know that it is these small gestures that will help us to make solidarity an integral part of our daily lives. Amen.

No. 9 The dignity of work and the rights of workers

Today we will focus on *The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers*. This is another key principle of Catholic social teaching. Our Church believes that work is important. Remember that, as St Pope John Paul II said in his encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*, On Human Work, “Jesus became “like us in all things, and devoted most of the years of his life on earth to manual work at the carpenter’s bench.” His Foster Father, St. Joseph, is the patron saint of workers and labourers and of social justice.



Work honors the gifts and talents that God has given to each one of us.



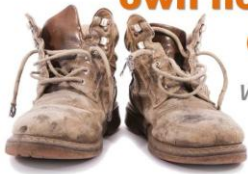
Pope Francis reminds us that “work is fundamental to the dignity of a person created in the image of God. Therefore, it is said that work is sacred...it gives one the ability to maintain oneself, one’s family, and to contribute to the growth of one’s own nation.” He has said: “There is no worse material poverty ... than the poverty which prevents people from earning their bread and deprives them of the dignity of work.”

In his 2015 encyclical: *Laudato Si*, he tells us that: “We were created with a vocation to work. The goal should not be that technological progress increasingly replaces human work, for this would be detrimental to humanity. Work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfillment. Helping the poor financially must always be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs. The broader objective should always be to allow them a dignified life through work” (LS 128). As St Basil the Great said: “Work honours the gifts and talents that God has given to each one of us.”

The US Bishops said: “Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected.” What are these rights? They include the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to humane working conditions, to form and join trade unions, to reasonable limitation of working hours, to private property, and to economic initiative.”

The economy exists to serve the people, not the other way around. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church reminds us that: “Work is for man, and not man for work.” (No. 272). Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said (2007): “work is of fundamental importance to the fulfillment of the human being and to the development of society. Thus, it must always be organised and carried out with full respect for human dignity and must always serve the common good. At the same time, it is indispensable that people not allow themselves to be enslaved by work or to idolize it, claiming to find in it the ultimate and definitive meaning of life.”

“Any necessary work that pays an honest wage carries its own honor and dignity.”



W. Kelly Griffith

- Human Dignity finds special expression in the **dignity** of work and in the rights of **workers**.

- Through work we participate in **creation**.



- Workers have rights to **just wages**, **rest** and **fair working conditions**.



The Compendium states that “Any form of materialism or economic tenet that tries to reduce the worker to being a mere instrument of production, a simple labour force with an exclusively material value, would end up hopelessly distorting the essence of work and stripping it of its most noble and basic human finality” (No. 271). The final goal of work is the human person who is made in God’s image and likeness and “called to an eternal destiny” (Compendium).

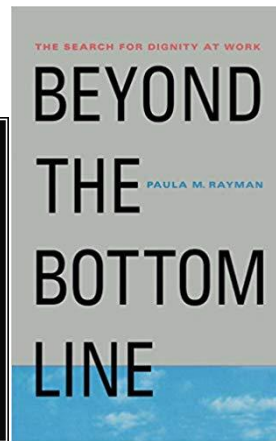
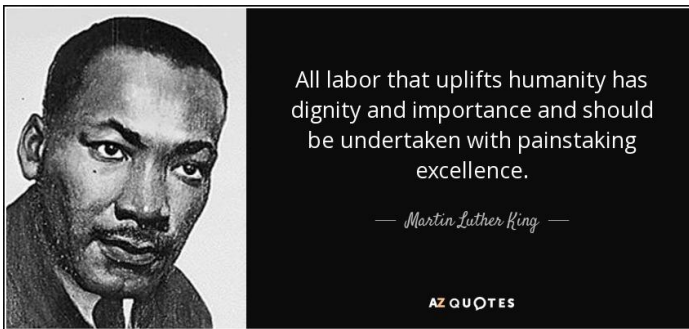
Pope Francis has reminded us (19 Aug 2015) that “Work is an important expression of human dignity and of caring for one's family, but today there is a ‘dangerous tendency’ to consider a worker's family obligations as an obstacle to productivity and profit...’But let's ask ourselves: What productivity? And for whom? Work, in its thousand forms, beginning with housework, is about caring for the common good,’ providing for one's family and cooperating with God in creating goods and services that are useful to others, the pope said.”

<https://www.catholicnews.com> .

It is important for us to recognize the contribution of working men and women throughout our country. Way back in 1891 Pope Leo XIII wrote the encyclical Rerum Novarum, (Of New Things) which highlighted the dignity of work and called for changes that would protect the rights of workers. It was the time of the Industrial Revolution. As writers have noted, the

development of machinery created unsafe conditions, a demand for longer work hours and child labour.

Catholic lawyer, Andrew Greenwell, said: “With all the unquestionable increase in human economic development, the increase in wealth, and efficiency in productivity and technical progress that the Industrial Revolution ushered in, there also came a variety of moral plagues and social evils, particularly for the factory worker, the miner, the child laborer, the family in overcrowded tenement, the disregarded poor, all of whom seemed to suffer from exploitation.” These were hard times for workers and it raised a “social question” which Pope Leo XIII addressed in *Rerum Novarum*.



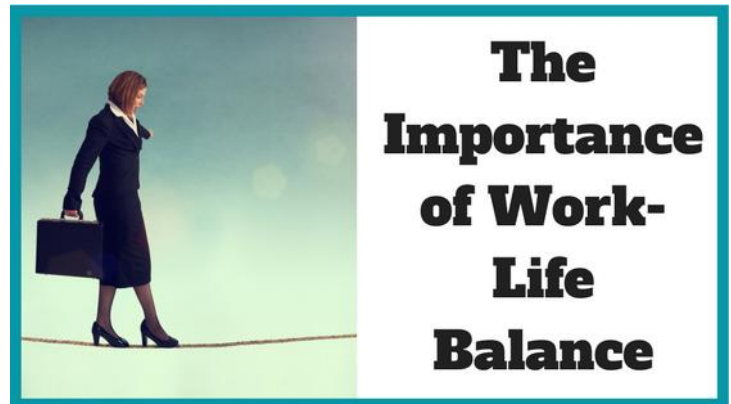
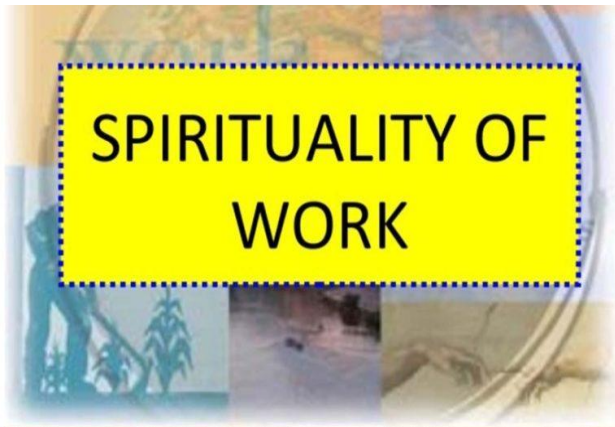
The Compendium describes *Rerum Novarum*, as "a heartfelt defense to the inalienable dignity of workers," but it also stressed the "importance of the right to property, the principle of cooperation among the social classes, the rights of the weak and the poor, the obligations of workers and employers, and the right to form associations." (No. 268)

In his encyclical, *On Human Work (Laborem Exercens)*, 3 (1981) St Pope John Paul II insisted that “human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question...all work should be judged by the measure of dignity given to the person who carries it out... Through work we not only transform the world, we are transformed ourselves, becoming ‘more a human being’... it is primarily through their daily labour that people make their most important contributions to economic justice.”

And Pope Benedict XVI's stated in his encyclical *Charity in Truth, Caritas in Veritate* (2009), “the Church has never stopped considering the problems of workers within the context of a social question which has progressively taken on worldwide dimensions”(Compendium, No. 269).

The Compendium tells us that “Work...cannot be properly evaluated if its social nature is not taken into account.” (*Compendium*, No. 273). This means that we always work with others and for others, and not only for ourselves.

Let’s remember that God has commanded that we work. We read in Genesis that he put man in the Garden of Eden with a command to cultivate and care for the earth. The Compendium tells us that work is required for a man or woman “in order to respond to the need to maintain and develop his/her own humanity.” And when we work, we are not to be viewed as “cogs in a wheel”, but must be given opportunities to be creative and innovative.



Greenwell tells us that there is always a personal, a spiritual part of man or woman involved in work; and also that “work is a moral obligation ‘with respect to one's neighbour, which in the first place is one's family,’ but which may also be seen to including ‘the society to which one belongs, the nation of which one is son or daughter,’ and even ‘the entire human family of which one is a member.’ Indeed, the duty of work extends beyond our own time, since we are ‘heirs of the work of generations and at the same time shapers of the future of all who will live after us.’” (*Compendium*, No.274)

Let us look at our country and our world today with regards to “work”. Sadly, over the past few years thousands of our people in TT have been made redundant for a variety of reasons. Thousands remain unemployed or underemployed. And among youth between the ages of 15-24, unemployment is high. There are many reasons for this, including the contractions in the energy and construction sectors and cuts by the Government in certain areas.

For example, you may have read in the Guardian on 21 July 2018 that, having studied for 5-6 years to complete medical studies, “an estimated 680 qualified young doctors have been facing unemployment and underemployment since 2014 after graduating from the University of the West Indies.” Many of them are now seeking employment abroad.

Unemployment is regarded as one of the most challenging economic problems facing not only our Government, but Governments in many parts of the world. In September 2017, when unemployment in TT was around 4%, Newsday reported Planning and Development Minister Camille Robinson-Regis as stating: “for every 100 persons you see, at least four are unemployed...She said the stories of exploitation, discrimination, and employers who ill-treat their employees are many. ‘I challenge employers today to treat their workers fairly, pay them their just due, and provide the conditions under which they can be most productive.’”

With the arrival on our shores of thousands of asylum seekers/migrants/ refugees, there is great concern that persons are being exploited in the labour market – many being paid less than minimum wage.



The International Labour Organisation (ILO) states that: “Worldwide 218 million children between 5 and 17 years are in employment. Among them, 152 million are victims of **child labour**; almost half of them, 73 million, work in hazardous child labour.”

And the ILO states that “nearly **25 million** people are victims of **forced labour** across the world, trapped in jobs which they were coerced or deceived into and which they cannot leave” e.g. in domestic work, construction or agriculture.

Millions are victims of **modern day slavery and human trafficking** where persons are trafficked to work forcibly e.g. as prostitutes – commercial sex industry.

These are crimes against humanity and must be addressed by the Criminal Justice System in countries around the world.

Remember, as St Paul said in 1 Cor 12:26, if one part of the body is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. So we must stand in solidarity with those who are out of work or are exploited. As St Pope John Paul II said in his encyclical: On Social Concern (Sollicitudo rei Socialis): “Solidarity helps us to see the “other” whether a person, people or nation not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then

discarded when no longer useful, but as our “neighbor”, a “helper” (cf. Gen 2: 18-20), to be made a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.”

And we must also ask ourselves if our current education system is preparing students for life, work and citizenship, in our highly technological and innovative world. And is there a mismatch between the knowledge, skills and abilities that we are developing in our students and the needs of the labour market? Lack of productive work can adversely affect the health of individuals and lead, for example, to depression, disaffection and so on.

The economies of many countries are not creating enough jobs to allow citizens to provide for themselves or their families. The gap between those who have and those who don't; between the rich and the poor is growing daily – leading to inequality and inequity.



The Vatican II document: *Gaudium et Spes*, the Church in the Modern World, lists among the things that are offensive to life and militate against the honour of the Creator: “degrading working conditions where people are treated as mere tools for profit rather than free and responsible persons”.

All that we have is gift from God. This is where the virtue of distributive justice comes in.

Distributive justice requires that the allocation of income, wealth, and power in society be evaluated in light of its effects on persons whose basic material needs are unmet. The Second Vatican Council stated: “The right to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one’s family belongs to everyone. The fathers and doctors of the church held this view, teaching that we are obliged to come to the relief of the poor and to do so not merely out of our superfluous goods.” Minimum material resources are an absolute necessity for human life.

Like Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI previously warned of the dangers of economic inequality in his encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, Charity in Truth (2009), saying, “The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do

not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner, and that we continue to prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone....”

What a waste of human resources to have thousands of persons out of work.



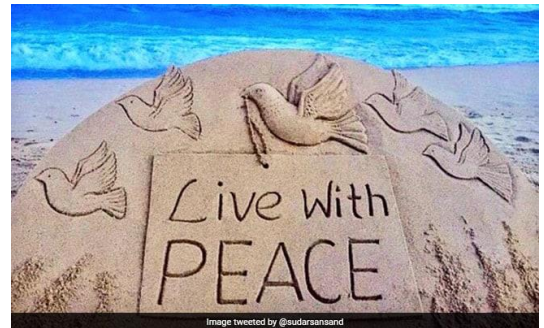
In one of their Labour Day statements, the U.S. Bishops reminded us that we should reflect on the gift of labour, and how we can work to advance the dignity and rights of workers. How can we promote opportunities for growth and development and support “private enterprises that...create decent jobs, contribute to the common good, and pay just wages?” How do we advocate for an adequate safety net for jobless workers and their families and those who cannot work? The Bishops urge us to “support immigration policies that bring immigrant workers out of the shadows to a legal status and offer them a just and fair path to citizenship, so that their human rights are protected and the wages for all workers rise.”

They urge us to renew our commitment to promote the dignity of the human person by supporting work that is honourable, pays just wages, and recognizes the God-given dignity of the working person. All workers have a right to productive work, to decent and fair wages and to safe working conditions.

And in thinking about what is a just wage, remember the words of St Pope John XXIII (1961, 71), in his encyclical, Mother and Teacher (Mater et Magistra): “the remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace; nor should it be a decision left to the will of the more powerful. It must be determined in accordance with justice and equity; which means that workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner. Other factors too enter into the assessment of a just wage: namely, the effective contribution which each individual makes to the economic effort, the financial state of the company for which he works, the requirements of the general good of the particular country ... and finally the requirements of the common good of the universal family of nations.” Let us pray that we will find joy and satisfaction in our own work; that we will defend the dignity and rights of workers, especially the most vulnerable. Let us pray also for leaders in the public and private spheres, that they may consider the struggles of the working poor, and work diligently to create more opportunities for living wages so that workers will be able to sustain their families and build the common good. Amen

No. 10 PROMOTION OF PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE

Our world is sorely ill; it craves for peace and non-violence. There are countless wars being waged globally at this moment. Violence, conflict, terrorism, and other forms of crime, including white-collar crime, threaten to overwhelm us. Violence seems endemic across the world. Countries are spending trillions of dollars on weapons of mass destruction while many of their citizens go hungry and live in abject poverty. Archbishop Desmond Tutu is right: “Stability and peace...will not come from the barrel of a gun, because peace without justice is an impossibility.”



St Paul VI rightly stated that "The world must be educated to love peace, to build it up and defend it." And Pope Francis reminds us that: “The New Evangelization calls on every baptized person to be a peacemaker.” One of his 10 guidelines to happiness states: “We are living in a time of many wars, [and] the call for peace must be shouted. Peace sometimes gives the impression of being quiet, but it is never quiet, peace is always proactive.”

In seeking to understand “peace”, reflect on the words contained in the Vatican II 1965 document, *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World): Peace is not merely the absence of war. Nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. Nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called “an enterprise of justice” (Is. 32:7). Peace results from that harmony built into human society by its divine founder, and actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice” #78.

The UN encourages us to strive to strengthen the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples”. Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not include a separate article on “The Right to Peace”. The UN urges us to reflect on what “The Right to Peace” means to each of us. Countries are a long way from implementing the 17 Sustainable Develop-

ment Goals (SDGs) which UN Member States signed in 2015. To achieve meaningful peace, we must address the critical issues outlined in these SDGs eg, “poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, environment, and social justice”.

SDG16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions calls for “promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. A peaceful society is one where there are justice and equality for everyone. Peace will enable a sustainable environment to take shape and a sustainable environment will help promote peace”.

Archbishop Jason Gordon reminds us that: “Peace is not the absence of war or murder; it is the establishment of right relationships within and across society. The high violence and rate of crime in T&T is a reflection of wrong relationships, unhealed hurts and injustices in our society. Peace requires conversion of hearts, which means change. Peace comes at a cost. We want someone to deliver peace without it costing us anything but that is not possible: we all have a part to play.” He reminds us that Pope Francis calls us to be “artisans of peace”. But, as Archbishop Gordon says:

“To be artisans of peace we have to be at peace with ourselves. This is the first challenge... To be artisans of peace we need to start with Christ, not as peripheral to our existence, but as core and centre of our identity. Then we have right relationship with God and self; right relationship with neighbour and creation... Answering the call to be artisans of peace must begin in the family... Artisans of peace relate to others in a way of peace and non-violence, not just in the family but also in the school, church and workplace.

“To build peace in our nation, we all need to work tirelessly at reforming how we communicate and relate with each other... Non-violence begins with me. It spreads to all others whom we meet and with whom we come into contact. It is the foundation for peace and transformation of Trinidad and Tobago...

We have over 2,000 people on remand in our prisons in T&T. Half of these are for murder and the other half are charged for other crimes—most of which are bailable offences.

Hundreds of people are in prison because they are too poor to post bail—about one fifth of the prison population. It is even more sad. Our laws allow bail to be posted in cash but some magistrates do not allow this; they want a property deed free from any mortgage. This is not fair. Justice works for people who have money but does not work for those who do not. This is an injustice in our society.

And then there are hundreds who have spent more time on remand awaiting trial than they would have spent if they had been tried, convicted and handed down the maximum sentence. This does not contribute to peace in Trinidad and Tobago.

The refugee situation in our country is another area where we find injustice. We have children in our country not going to school because they are refugees. This is a violation of their human rights.

Peace is either peace for all or it is not at all. As Pope Paul VI has said, “If you want peace, work for justice”. <https://catholicnewstt.com/index.php/2019/01/05/part-play-peace/>

As followers of Christ, we must develop our understanding of the meaning of the gift of peace that was given to us. As well as the peace that Jesus gave to us, He promised that God would send the Holy Spirit to be our teacher, counsellor, helper, comforter, consoler, and advocate. The Holy Spirit is a gift given to us by the Father.



There is a culture of violence that seems to permeate many communities. In his 2019 Easter message, after the terror attacks that caused death and destruction in Sri Lanka, Pope Francis called on the risen Jesus to “end the roar of arms, both in areas of conflict and in our cities, and inspire the leaders of nations to work for an end to the arms race and the troubling spread of weaponry, especially in the economically more advanced countries.” He prayed that “before the many sufferings of our time” that Jesus “may not find us cold and indifferent” and would “make us builders of bridges, not walls”.

The document, *Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* signed by Pope Francis and Sheik Ahmed al-Tayeb, grand imam of Egypt’s Al-Azhar mosque and university (Abu Dhabi, February 4, 2019), makes compelling reading. They rightly state that peace demands that we adopt “dialogue as our path, mutual understanding as our code of conduct, and reciprocal understanding as our method and standard”.

Through the document they call upon themselves, “upon the leaders of the world as well as the architects of international policy and world economy, to work strenuously to spread the culture of tolerance and of living together in peace; to intervene at the earliest opportunity to stop the

shedding of innocent blood and bring an end to wars, conflicts, environmental decay and the moral and cultural decline that the world is presently experiencing.”

As temples of the Holy Spirit we are called to be “peacemakers”. Pope Francis’ last public event in Bulgaria in May 2019 was dedicated to peace. As *VaticanNews* reported, the Holy Father said: “Each of us is called to follow in Jesus’ footsteps by becoming a peacemaker. Peace is both a gift and a task”, one we must pray for and work for, striving daily “to build a culture in which peace is respected as a fundamental right...”

“Let there be peace on earth, in our families, in our hearts, and above all in those places where so many voices have been silenced by war, stifled by indifference and ignored due to the powerful complicity of interest groups. May each of us, wherever we may be, in all that we do, be able to say: ‘Make me an instrument of your peace’.”



As we seek to build peace, let us act on Pope Francis’ words in his 2018 Peace message, in which he asked us to “embrace those who endure perilous journeys and hardships in order to find peace. He urges people of faith to turn with a ‘contemplative gaze’ towards migrants and refugees, opening our hearts to the ‘gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their houses, in their streets and squares’ ” (www.usccb.org). What more can you and I do to act on the four mileposts for action he laid down: welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating?

As you know, Archbishop Jason Gordon has established an Archdiocese’s Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR), which CCSJ’s Chair leads. Members of AMMR include Rhonda Maingot, and Rochelle Nakhid (Living Water Community), and Fr Simon Peter Ango. His Grace has also mandated that all parishes establish Parish Ministries for Migrants and Refugees (PMMR). It is encouraging to note the number of parishes that have established Migrants and Refugees Ministries. These men, women, and children are also in search of peace. There are many examples of good practice on which we can build, for example, the work in which Fr Christian Pereira and his La Romaine Migrant Support Team are engaged.

Mandela reminded us that “our human compassion binds us the one to the other.” We need to nurture in our people virtues and values that will “animate” love, compassion,

and respect for each other. We all have a role to play in transforming our society so that it will reflect the kind of values and virtues that will help us to build the common good; to welcome the stranger.

It was St Teresa of Calcutta who said: “If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.” We are all made in the image and likeness of God; we belong to each other, and we have a responsibility to reach out to those in need. Sadly, as Pope Francis suggested in January, hostility towards migrants is driven by irrational fear. “It is the fear that makes us crazy,” he said.



In February 2017 he reminded us that “protecting the world’s migrants and refugees is a moral imperative.” Other faith leaders have also spoken out about the need for compassion in today’s world. For example, the Dalai Lama has said: “Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.”

Archbishop Jason Gordon has identified “hospitality” as one of the priorities in our archdiocese. During Lent 2019 he urged us to see “the positive effects of practising hospitality daily.” He said: “Hospitality is recognising the need of others. Let us reach out to those in need...”

We do not journey through life in isolation from each other. We are social beings who are interconnected and interdependent. May we have zeal for our mission of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants and refugees.

And remember, we will not attain peace until we reconcile with God’s Creation. As Pope Francis reminds us: “Our planet is a mother for all of us. We must hand it on to our children, cared for and improved, because it’s a loan they make to us.”

Let’s become proactive stewards and advocates for the earth; to address ecological degradation that continues to impact all areas of our lives. Are we doing enough to turn back the tide? Do we understand that integral human development is inextricably linked to ecological justice?

The Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy rightly states: “Environment and peace are cross-cutting and relevant in all areas of conservation, sustainable development and security ...building more effective environmental governance and policy can reduce conflict and ensure security from local to global levels. By reducing conflict and conflict potential and by strengthening environmental security we lay the ground for enduring social and environmental sustainability.

To promote peace, we must address the crime that plagues TT, our region and the world. Sir Dennis Byron, former President of the Caribbean Court of Justice said that: “Crime flourishes when the environment is conducive to people behaving in a certain way.” Let's change the way we behave. As Gandhi said: "Let's be the change that we want to see."



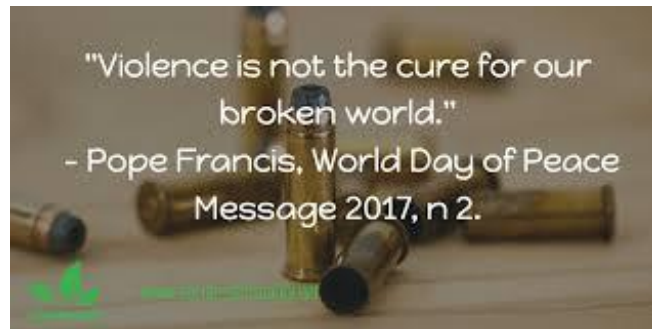
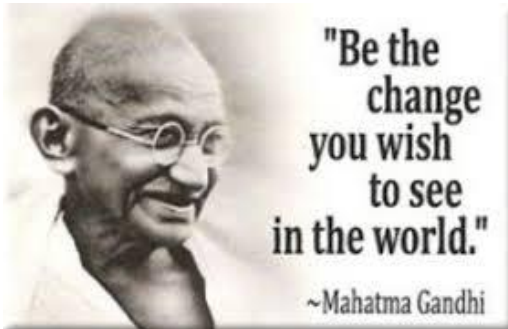
Sadly, too often we focus on the symptoms of crime and not on the root causes. Crime reduction strategies must include efforts to strengthen family life, deal with poverty and social exclusion; address the deficiencies in our education system, our criminal justice system and public institutions; deal with the proliferation of guns, drugs and gangs in our country and get a better balance between law enforcement and prevention. Imagine, we only spend 15 cents in the dollar on crime prevention.

Non-violence begins with each of us. Pope Francis says we must “cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values...” He says: “Jesus himself offers a ‘manual’ for this strategy of peacemaking in the Sermon on the Mount. The eight Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-10) provide a portrait of the person we could describe as blessed, good and authentic.”



As people of the Beatitudes, let's commit ourselves to play OUR part to build a safer, just and peaceful society; a society in which the rule of law prevails and in which there are conditions that will enable each person to realise his/her potential – to be the best that we can be. And let us play our part in promoting conflict resolution.

If we all do as the Holy Father asks and practise non-violence, we will speed up the process of building a better society/world. He has said: "If violence has its source in the human heart, then it is fundamental that non-violence be practised before all else within families." Each one of us must look in the mirror and reflect on ways in which we are contributing to the crime situation. Ask yourself: "What can I do to reduce crime?"



In a statement by the Bishops of the Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) on September 21 2016 calling for the abolition of the death penalty in the region, the Bishops said: "We stand with Archbishop Patrick Pinder, President of the Antilles Episcopal Conference, in his expression of solidarity with the victims of crime. Delivering the homily at the Red Mass in Nassau in 2009, he said: 'It is important to note that while we oppose the death penalty, we embrace the victims of violent crimes; those who are hurting and grieving for their loved ones who have been killed, at times in the most heinous ways. We urge each parish to establish victim support groups and seek to meet their physical, mental, spiritual, financial and other needs... Faithful to the mission of Jesus Christ who came 'that they may have life and have it abundantly' (John 10:10), we... once again wish to proclaim, celebrate and serve the gift of life.'"

Let us, therefore, in our parishes, establish victim support groups and seek to meet their physical, mental, spiritual, financial and other needs. Let's form neighbourhood watch groups and share details of hotlines so that persons can call anonymously to report crimes. And the perpetrators also need our assistance to turn their lives around.

CCSJ welcomes 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.

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.

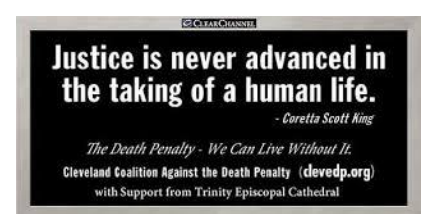
The revised text, which "centers principally on the clearer awareness of the Church for the respect due to every human life", reads as follows:

"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."

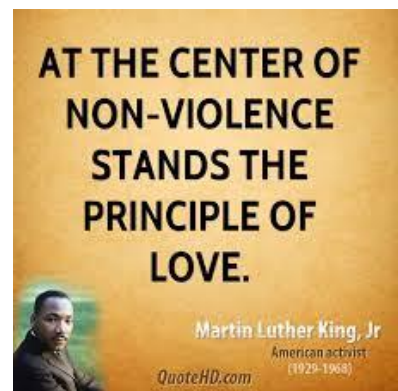
Let us continue to be tireless advocates, not only for the abolition of the death penalty in the Caribbean region and worldwide, but also for effective systems to be put in place to reduce crime and to support the victims of crime. States have a duty to protect the common good, but we agree with Pope Francis that they can do so without resorting to lethal means. ALL lives matter!"



Our catechism tells us that it is the duty of citizens to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society (2239). Let's work together for a peaceful society based on solidarity and justice, remembering always, as Pope Francis has said, that: "Violence is not the cure for our broken world... All of us want peace. Many people build it day by day through small gestures and acts." He says: "Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace."

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu has said: "Do your little bit of good where you are. It's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." Are you up to the challenge to become non-violent people and to build non-violent communities? Join me; together we can build peace. You and I can make a difference. Join the Non-violence Begins With Me Movement (call: 625 6730). Let's celebrate each small step we take to promote peace. Mahatma Gandhi was right when he said: "Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being." You and I can be part of the solution. But first, we have to do as Pope Francis says and "say 'no' to hatred and violence—with action—and 'yes' to fraternity and reconciliation".

The UN shares some simple steps that we can take eg, seek peaceful resolution of conflict when disagreements arise around you; prevent an injustice at school or in your community by adopting a non-violent approach to problem solving and reporting potential crimes, including online bullying; speak up when others are at risk and stand with others' human rights at work, at school, at home, in communities.



On 8 September 2016, as reported in Zenit, Pope Francis spoke in his homily at Santa Marta, Vatican, about "the importance of working for peace in small, daily actions – because, he said, it is in small daily gestures that peace on a global scale is born.

"It is not so much great international meetings that produce peace, he said. Rather, peace is a gift from God which is born in small places: in the heart, for instance. We must work 'to grow'

in peace, he said, because peace is a gift ‘that has its own life journey’; and so, each one of us must work to develop it:

“ ‘And this path of saints and sinners tells us that we too ought to take this gift of peace and make it the path in our own life, make it enter into us, make it enter the world. Peace is not made overnight; peace is a gift, but a gift that must be taken up and worked on every day. For this reason, we can say that peace is a gift that is crafted in the hands of men. We men and women, each day, should take a step towards peace: It is our work. It is our work with the gift we have received: to make peace.’ ”

“But how can we succeed in this objective? the Pope asked. He pointed to a specific word in the liturgy of the day, which speaks of ‘littleness’: that of Mary, which is celebrated at Christmas, and also that of Bethlehem, ‘so small that you are not even on the maps,’ as Francis paraphrased: “ *‘Peace is a gift, it is a handcrafted gift that we must work for every day; but doing so in the small things, in daily ‘littleness.’ Great manifestations for peace, great international encounters, are not enough if peace is not then made in little things. On the contrary, you can speak of peace with splendid words, putting together a great conference... But if in your little things, in your heart, there is no peace, in your family there is no peace, in your neighbourhood there is no peace, in your place of work there is no peace, there will not be peace in the world.*”

“Pope Francis suggested that we should ask God for the grace of ‘the wisdom to make peace, in the little things of each day, but aiming at the horizons of the whole of humanity,’ especially today, in which ‘we are living a war and all are seeking peace.’ And in the meantime, he said, it would be good to start with this question:

“ ‘How is your heart, today? Is it at peace? If it is not at peace, before speaking of peace, make sure your own heart is at peace. How is your family, today? Is it at peace? If you are not able to bring peace to your family, your rectory, your congregation, bringing it more peace, then words of peace for the world are not enough. This is the question that I would like to ask today: How is the heart of each one of us? Is it at peace? How is the family of each one of us? Is it at peace? That’s how it is, isn’t it? To achieve peace in the world.’ ”

Who could forget the poignancy of Pope Francis’ words on July 25, 2013 in the soccer field of a Rio de Janeiro shanty town, during the 28th World Youth Day? Inter alia, he said: “I would like to make an appeal to those in possession of greater resources, to public authorities and to all people of good will who are working for social justice: never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity!

“No-one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world! Everybody, according to his or her particular opportunities and responsibilities, should be able to make a personal contribution to putting an end to so many social injustices. The culture of selfishness and individualism that often prevails in our society is ...not what builds up and leads to a more habitable world: rather, it is the culture of solidarity that does so; the culture of solidarity means seeing others not as rivals or statistics, but brothers and sisters. And we are all brothers and sisters!...I would like to make an appeal to those in possession of greater resources, to public authorities and to all people of good will who are working for social justice: **never tire of working for a more just world, marked by greater solidarity!**

And here are some useful quotations from Papal Documents on this theme:

“Inequality eventually engenders a violence which recourse to arms cannot and never will be able to resolve. It serves only to offer false hopes to those clamouring for heightened security, even though nowadays we know that weapons and violence, rather than providing solutions, create new and more serious conflicts” (Evangeliu Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel), Pope Francis, 2013 #60).

“The solidarity which binds all men together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist.” Mater et Magistra (Mother and Teacher), Pope John XXIII, 1961 #157.

“Peace must be born of mutual trust between nations rather than imposed on them through fear of one another’s weapons. Hence everyone must labour to put an end at last to the arms race, and to make a true beginning of disarmament.” (Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World), Vatican II, 1965 #82).

“Excessive economic, social and cultural inequalities among peoples arouse tensions and conflicts, and are a danger to peace.” (Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples), Pope Paul VI, 1967 #76).

“Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life.” Laudato Si’ (“Praise Be”), Pope Francis, 2015 #225.

No. 11 The role of Government and subsidiarity

Let us consider the role of the Government and the principle of subsidiarity.

DEFINITION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

“Good Governance entails SOUND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT (Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy), ACCOUNTABILITY, EXCHANGE AND FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION (Transparency) and a LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT (Justice, Respect for Human Rights and Liberties).”

United Nations Public Administration



Catholic Social Teaching teaches: “the state has a positive moral function. It is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good. Its purpose is to assist citizens in fulfilling their responsibility to others in society. Since, in a large and complex society these responsibilities cannot adequately be carried out on a one-to-one basis, citizens need the help of government in fulfilling these responsibilities and promoting the common good.

“According to the principle of **subsidiarity**, the functions of government should be performed at the lowest level possible, as long as they can be performed adequately. When they cannot, then higher levels of government should intervene to provide help.” (See the US Bishop’s 2007 Document: *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. YOUCAT 323 states:

“What individuals can accomplish by their own initiative and efforts should not be taken from them by a higher authority. A greater and higher social institution must not take over the duties of subordinate organizations and deprive it of its competence. Its purpose, rather, is to intervene in a subsidiary fashion (thus offering help) when individuals or smaller institutions find that a task is beyond them.”

This way, we promote the dignity of all persons and support the social justice principle of participation which teaches that “all people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community.

Conversely, it is wrong for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in society.”



Pope Francis referred to this principle in his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'* (Ch5#196): “Let us keep in mind the principle of subsidiarity, which grants freedom to develop the capabilities present at every level of society, while also demanding a greater sense of responsibility for the common good from those who wield greater power.”

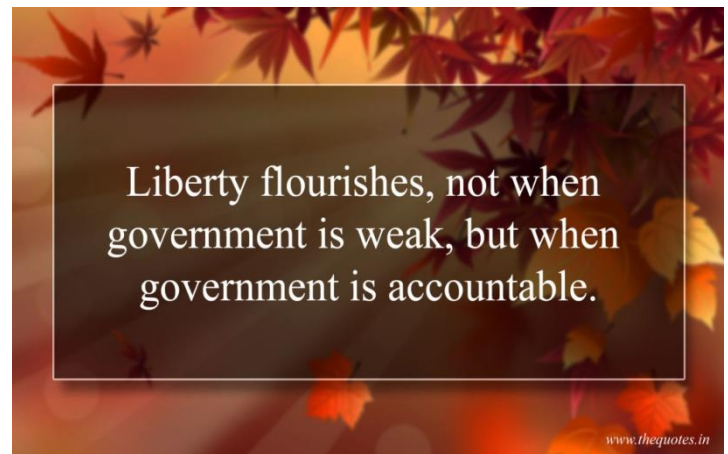
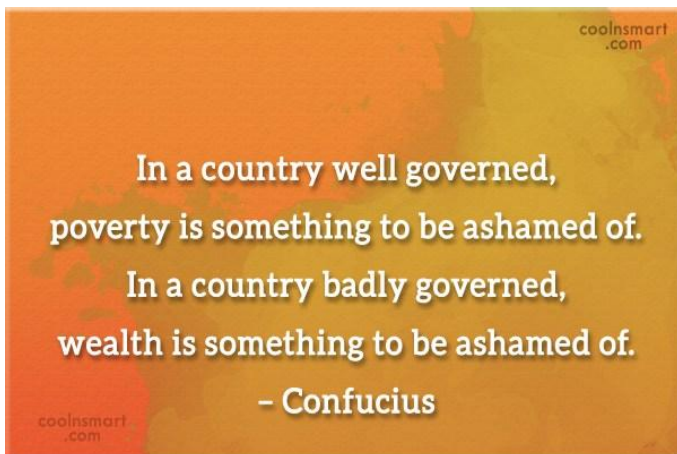
And Pope Benedict XVI, stated in 2009: “Subsidiarity is first and foremost a form of assistance to the human person via the autonomy of intermediate bodies. Such assistance is offered when individuals or groups are unable to accomplish something on their own, and it is always designed to achieve their emancipation, because it fosters freedom and participation through assumption of responsibility. Subsidiarity respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others” (*Caritas in Veritate - Charity and Truth*, #57).

It is important to note that way back in 1891, Pope Leo XIII addressed the issue of the role of Government in his encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (On the condition of labour and the working class). Among other things, he said:

“The foremost duty...of the rulers of the State should be to make sure that the laws and institutions, the general character and administration of the commonwealth, shall be such as of themselves to realise public well-being and private prosperity. This is the proper scope of wise statesmanship and is the work of the rulers. Now a State chiefly prospers and thrives through moral rule, well-regulated family life, respect for religion and justice, the moderation and fair imposing of public taxes, the progress of the arts and of trade, the abundant yield of the land-through everything, in fact, which makes the citizens better and happier. Hereby, then, it lies in the power of a ruler to benefit every class in the State, and amongst the rest to promote to the utmost the interests of the poor; and this in virtue of his office, and without being open to

suspicion of undue interference – since it is the province of the commonwealth to serve the common good. And the more that is done for the benefit of the working classes by the general laws of the country, the less need will there be to seek for special means to relieve them (#32).

Many other encyclicals address the issue of the role of Government. For example, in St Pope John XXIII's encyclical, *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher), 1961, he said: “**As for the State, its whole raison d’être is the realization of the common good in the temporal order.** It cannot, therefore, hold aloof from economic matters. On the contrary, it must do all in its power to promote the production of a sufficient supply of material goods, the use of which is necessary for the practice of virtue. It has also the duty to protect the rights of all its people, and particularly of its weaker members, the workers, women and children. It can never be right for the State to shirk its obligation of working actively for the betterment of the condition of the workingman” #20.

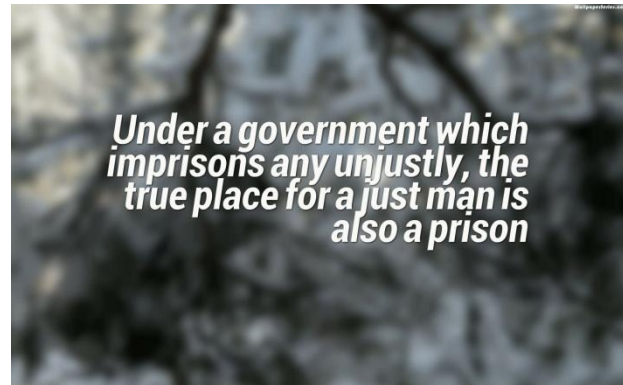


In 2013, Pope Francis stated in his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel): “It is the responsibility of the State to safeguard and promote the common good of society.[188] Based on the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, and fully committed to political dialogue and consensus building, it plays a fundamental role, one which cannot be delegated, in working for the integral development of all. This role, at present, calls for profound social humility” Chapter 4, #240.

On June 30 each year the world observes the *International Day of Parliamentarism*. "It is also the date, in 1889, on which the Inter-Parliamentary Union — the global organization of parliaments — was established. This Day celebrates parliaments and the ways in which parliamentary systems of government improve the day-to-day lives of people the world over. It is also an opportunity for parliaments to take stock, identify challenges, and ways to address them effectively" (UN).

The Inter-Parliamentary Union rightly states that: “A democratic parliament is one that is representative, open and transparent, accessible, accountable and effective.”

“Strong parliaments are a cornerstone of democracy. They represent the voice of the people, pass laws, allocate funds to implement laws and policies, and hold governments to account. They work to make sure that policies benefit all people, especially the most vulnerable...Parliaments also link international and national agendas, ensuring that governments implement international treaties and agreements that they sign up to” (UN).



How effective is TT’s Parliament? Do you know your MP or Councillors? Parliament's website explains that TT's Parliament “also known as the legislature, is the arm of state entrusted with the responsibility of making laws for good governance, and providing oversight of the Government or Executive.” TT “follows the Westminster System of government, in that Members of the Executive are also members of Parliament and thus attend sittings of the legislature.” According to Section 39 of our Constitution “Parliament consists of the President of the Republic, the Senate, and the House of Representatives.”

TT citizens love to talk “politics”. Are we aware that justice is at the heart of “politics”? As Pope Benedict XVI said in his encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), 2005: “Justice is both the aim and the intrinsic criterion of all politics. Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice, which by its very nature has to do with ethics. The State must inevitably face the question of how justice can be achieved here and now... the Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest.” #28.

In 2007 the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) highlighted the fact that: “In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. This obligation is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, “It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the

common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. . . . As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life” (nos. 1913-1915). (Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2007, #13).



Reflect on the following extracts from a report by Prof Fredrick Staphenurst, Institute for the Study of International Development at McGill University, Canada, entitled: *Report on Oversight to the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago*. It "examines parliamentary oversight in Trinidad & Tobago and questions why it appears not to be working as well as in other countries around the world...

"Over the past decade a substantial amount of research has shown that parliaments matter. It is now fully recognized that effective parliaments are a critical element of good governance, and perform the essential functions of enacting legislation, representing citizens and governments to account. The latter function, holding governments to account, is conducted through oversight. Also over the past decade, there have been several studies to determine exactly what oversight is and, more especially, what makes it effective...

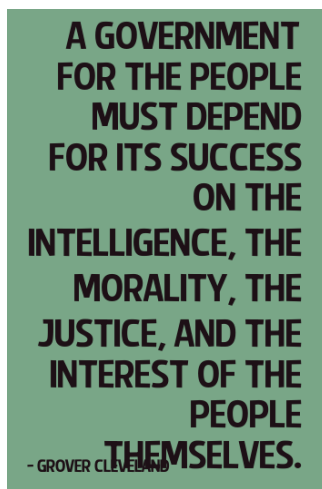
"Researchers have used the reduced corruption as an indicator of effective oversight. Trinidad & Tobago both scores poorly in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index and its score has declined over the past decade...It is among the poorest performing countries in the English-speaking Caribbean...

"Research shows that there is a strong correlation between oversight potential (as measured by the oversight tools available to a parliament, such as questions, question period, oversight committees, interpellations, and ombudsman office) and levels of corruption. Yet the Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago has adopted the full of oversight tools, so clearly Parliament has the potential. The question becomes: why is Trinidad & Tobago not using this potential?...

" it is with regard to reports that T&T committees do particularly poorly, writing far fewer than the global average. This is particularly important, as research shows that the number of reports prepared by oversight committees directly impacts levels of corruption. Only two reasons are thought to account for this poor level of activity by Trinidadian committees – lack of political will by legislators to undertake effective oversight or lack of time to fully undertake their oversight responsibilities.

"The report concludes that it is likely the latter, especially as Trinidadian legislators' only work part-time, in contrast to almost all countries of the world. It is recommended that the Trinidadian Parliament moves to a full-time institution, to bring it into line with other parliaments globally...

"effective oversight depends not only on the availability of oversight tools, but also on additional conditions, often referred to as contextual factors, or facilitating conditions. These include such variables as the electoral system, political parties, the level of democracy, public trust in parliament as well as the supporting factors of parliamentary research capacity and information."The report highlights the relatively low levels of public trust in TT's parliament. www.ttparliament.org/documents/2319.pdf



The rising tide should lift all boats. Sadly, many in TT don't even have a boat. Let's build the common good and promote inclusivity. In 1995 Pope St John Paul II stated that: "The value of democracy stands or falls with the truths and values which it embodies and promotes." What are the values that define us as a people, and what is the role of the Government in ensuring that core values are reflected in its policies, procedures and practices so that all may benefit from the resources that God our Father has made available to us.

In his 2019 Easter Message, Pope Francis prayed that the risen Lord may move "all those with political responsibilities" to "work to end social injustices, abuses and acts of violence,

and take the concrete steps needed to heal divisions and offer the population the help they need.”



7. ELEMENT OF DEMOCRACY

1. Human Rights
2. Election
3. Rule of Law
4. Separation of powers
5. The parliaments
6. Democratic Pluralism
7. The government and the Opposition
8. Public Opinion and Freedom of the Media

But it is not only the Government that has responsibility for to promote the common good and to be engaged in nation-building. Each of us who live in these blessed twin-islands of T&T has a duty to use our God-given gifts to build ourselves, our families, our communities, our nation, and, indeed, to strive to make the world a better place/to reflect Gospel values.

See the following quotations from St Pope John XXIII’s 1963 encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth):

“Individual citizens and intermediate groups are obliged to make their specific contributions to the common welfare. One of the chief consequences of this is that they must bring their own interests into harmony with the needs of the community, and must contribute their goods and their services as civil authorities have prescribed, in accord with the norms of justice and within the limits of their competence” #53.

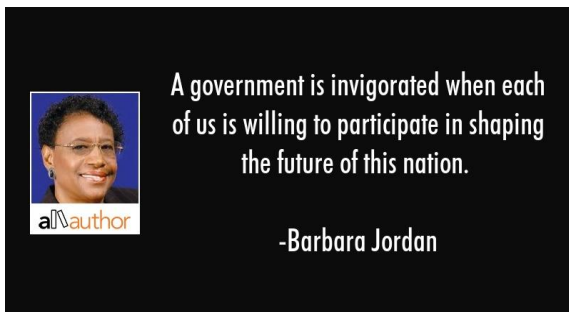
“The very nature of the common good requires that all members of the state be entitled to share in it, although in different ways according to each one’s tasks, merits and circumstances. For this reason, every civil authority must take pains to promote the common good of all, without preference for any single citizen or civic group” #56.

“It is also demanded by the common good that civil authorities should make earnest efforts to bring about a situation in which individual citizens can easily exercise their rights and fulfill their duties as well. For experience has taught us that, unless these authorities take suitable action with regard to economic, political and cultural matters, inequalities between the citizens tend to become more and more widespread, especially in the modern world, and as a result human rights are rendered totally ineffective and the fulfillment of duties is compromised” #63.

“It is in keeping with their dignity as persons that human beings should take an active part in government, although the manner in which they share in it will depend on the level of

development of the country to which they belong. Men will find new and extensive advantages in the fact that they are allowed to participate in government. In this situation, those who administer the government come into frequent contact with the citizens, and it is thus easier for them to learn what is really needed for the common good. And since public officials hold office only for a specified period of time their authority, far from withering, rather takes on a new vigour in a measure proportionate to the development of human society.” #73-74.

The 1965 Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World) reminds us that: “Citizens...should remember that it is their right and duty, which is also to be recognized by the civil authority, to contribute to the true progress of their own community according to their ability”#65.



EQUALITY
EQUITY

And remember, integral human development is not only about economic development. It is the development of each person and of every dimension of the person. Thus, as Pope John XXIII said in his encyclical, *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher), 1961: “Economic progress must be accompanied by a corresponding social progress, so that all classes of citizens can participate in the increased productivity. The utmost vigilance and effort is needed to ensure that social inequalities, so far from increasing, are reduced to a minimum... Citizens should cultivate a generous and loyal spirit of patriotism, but without narrow-mindedness, so that they will always keep in mind the welfare of the entire human family which is formed into one by various kinds of links between races, peoples, and nations.” #73, #75.

On Sep 16, 2013, in his daily homily at Santa Marta, Vatican, Pope Francis said that “Catholics should not be indifferent to politics, but should offer their suggestions, as well as prayers that their leaders may serve the common good in humility and love. He rejected the idea that ‘a good Catholic doesn’t meddle in politics. That’s not true. That is not a good path...A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of himself, so that those who govern can govern. None of us can say, ‘I have nothing to do with this, they govern’ ...Rather, citizens are responsible for participating in politics according to their ability, and in this way are responsible for their leadership. ‘Politics, according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good...I cannot wash my hands, eh? We all have to give something!’

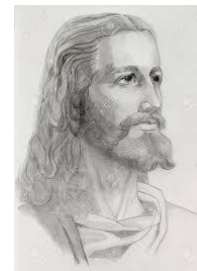
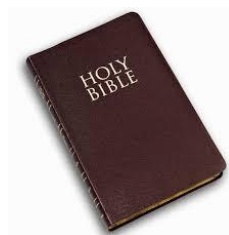
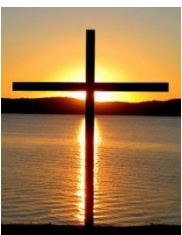
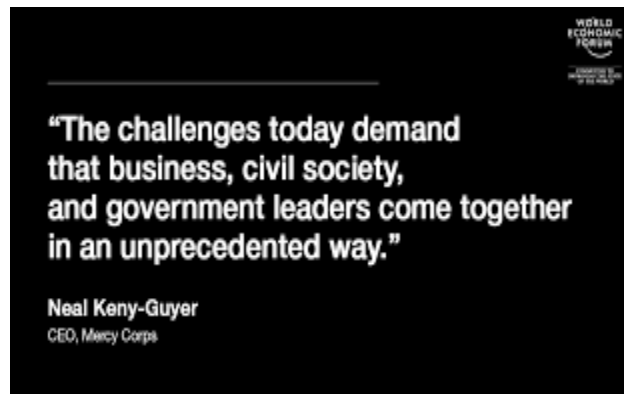
“He noted that it is sometimes common for people to speak only critically of their leaders, to complain about ‘things that don’t go well.’ Instead of simply complaining, we should offer ourselves – our ideas, suggestions, and most of all our prayers, the Holy Father said. Observing that prayer is ‘the best that we can offer to those who govern,’ he pointed to St. Paul’s letter to Timothy inviting prayer for the conversion and strong leadership of those in authority.

“Even if they believe certain politicians to be ‘wicked,’ Christians should pray ‘that they can govern well, that they can love their people, that they can serve their people, that they can be humble,’ he said. At the same time, the Pope reflected on the role of those who hold political power, stressing the need for humility and love. Reflecting on the Gospel of the centurion who humbly and confidently asked for the healing of his servant, the Holy Father explained that ‘a leader who doesn’t love, cannot govern – at best they can discipline, they can give a little bit of order, but they can’t govern.’

“In addition, he emphasized, ‘You can’t govern without loving the people and without humility! And every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government, must ask themselves two questions: ‘Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path? If you don’t ask those questions, your governance will not be good...The man or woman who governs – who loves his people is a humble man or woman’” (Catholic News Agency).

Setting the Scene

- Creating a responsive and caring government
- Our collective focus on addressing the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality
- Defending the integrity of the state
- Managing consequences for poor performance
- Having the right people, right systems and right intentions





What is Catholic Social Teaching?

• “The church’s social teaching comprises a **body of doctrine**, which is articulated as the **church interprets events in the course of history**, with the **assistance of the Holy Spirit**, in the light of the whole of what has been revealed by Jesus Christ... the church’s social teaching proposes **principles for reflection**; it provides **criteria for judgment**; it gives **guidance for action**.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2422-3)

Your Catholic Faith & Social Justice

- Aspects of Catholic Social Justice Teaching

- ✓ It gives us principles for **reflection**
- ✓ It provides criteria for **judgment**
- ✓ It gives guidelines for **action**

Catholic Social Teaching: Our ‘Best Kept Secret’

- Catholic Social Teaching (also known as Catholic Social Doctrine) sums up the teachings of the Church on social justice issues.
- It promotes a vision of a just society that is grounded in the Bible and in the wisdom gathered from experience by the Christian community as it has responded to social justice issues through history.

“The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me, He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.” (Luke 18-19)

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