



PARISH LINK



MESSAGE FROM ROBERT PERSAUD, CCSJ'S PARISH LINK COORDINATOR

Happy Easter to all our readers !

In celebrating the resurrection of our Lord, we look forward with renewed interest and vigour to promoting our Social Justice Ministries across the Archdiocese. In this issue, we share news from our Social Justice Groups, update you on the process of formulating an Archdiocesan Environmental Policy, encourage you to challenge your knowledge with a quiz of the Draft Framework towards such a Policy, report on the Values and Virtues Formation Programme, invite you to our Values and Virtues Seminars, request your participation during Respect for Life Week and round it off with some Social Justice Teaching. Good luck with the quiz and enjoy reading.

MESSAGE FROM LEELA RAMDEEN, CHAIR CCSJ

CCSJ continues its efforts to build the capacity of Catholics in T&T to promote justice and peace. Our work is grounded in the resurrection of Christ. Indeed, as an Easter people, our celebration of His resurrection strengthens us for the journey.



A key social justice principle is the need for us to “cultivate and care for “God’s creation (Genesis 2:15). Our Archdiocesan Mission Statement urges us to reconcile ourselves with creation. Pope Benedict XVI highlighted the urgency of the situation when he said: “Our earth speaks to us, and we must listen if we want to survive.” (24 July, 2007). Our theme for this year is : *The New Evangelization: Catholic Family Become What You Are*. We will only be able to do so if we recognise, as the Holy Father says, that: “Our duties towards the environment flow from our duties towards the person, considered both individually and in relation to others... The book of nature is one and indivisible; it includes not only the environment but also individual, family and social ethics.” In his encyclical, *Charity in Truth* (2009), the Holy Father reminded us that: “The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.” We must not hand over to future generations God’s creation depleted of its resources. The “common good” includes a concern for those who will come after us. Here are some ways in which you can protect the integrity of creation (see our website for more examples:)

- * Read, Pray, Reflect on the story of Creation in Genesis.
- * Look around, discover and reflect on the beauty of God’s creation and our connection to it – locally and globally. Enjoy nature and live in harmony with it.
- * Evaluate the impact of your activities on the environment. See Catholic Earthcare Australia - <http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net/audit.html> - to find out how to conduct an environmental audit in your parish, home, school, and community.
- * Examine and assess your lifestyle and consumption - improve the ways in which you impact on and interact with the environment; strive to live simply; Reuse, Recycle, Reduce, Restore.
- * Prevent Pollution and Reduce Your Carbon Footprint e.g. plant a tree(s) and use reusable bags.
- * Promote sound environmental management practices/best practice in ecological stewardship, e.g. energy efficiency: replace electric bulbs with energy efficient ones, turn off lights when you leave an empty room, unplug appliances such as cell phone chargers when not in use, use clotheslines instead of a dryer; water conservation: fix leaky pipes, take shorter showers; avoid waste.
- * Organize/encourage participation in events that promote good stewardship of God’s creation e.g. turtle watching, reforestation/replanting of trees, beach cleanup, anti-litter campaigns etc.

PARISH NEWS

HOLY TRINITY, AROUCA

Our Social Justice Group celebrated its 5th Anniversary on 12th July 2009 with a Mass, get together and distribution of commemorative bookmarks. This year, we are hosting a 4-day Easter Camp which caters for 30 children between the ages of 7 to 12. The Camp will be held at St. Finbar's Girls R.C. School in Arouca, from 6th to 9th April. The Theme of this 4th Annual Camp is 'Guardians of the Environment'. Photo from 2009 Camp.

Submitted by Evril Rodriguez (Holy Trinity Parish, Arouca)

SUBURBAN CLUSTER

(ST CHARLES, TUNAPUNA; FATIMA, CUREPE; ST JOHN'S, ST AUGUSTINE; ST JOSEPH, ST JOSEPH)

Three parishes of our Cluster Group attended the Launch of the Draft Framework towards an Archdiocesan Environmental Policy. All of our members will study the draft and submit comments to CCSJ by the end of June.

Our current projects include:

The Family Life Census in support of the Synod Implementation Team and training of interviewers, Transportation Project at Tunapuna and assistance at the St Vincent de Paul Night Shelter.

The Cluster is on a paper saving drive by emailing minutes and using a laptop at meet-

ings to display the minutes. We are encouraging all ministries to do the same.

We plan to approach the parish priests in our respective parishes to use overhead projectors to display hymns instead of printed material.

The Cluster will also seek to educate parishioners about ways to protect the environment e.g. announcements at masses and emails with action that can be taken.

One of our members will view the Ask Why DVD on the Pope's Peace Message for 2010 and make a presentation to the team at our next meeting.

Submitted by Vera Allen (St Charles, Tunapuna)

ST THERESA'S, WOODBROOK

Our Parish pastoral plan, in addressing this Year's theme of "Catholic Family Become What You Are," has as one of its areas of focus, "Family activities and unity." In considering social family involvement and unity, the ideas of environmental awareness and recycling were mentioned. We had already begun some research into recycling practices locally through the EMA and a recycling company which had a presence in our neighbourhood. We saw the implementation of the pastoral plan as an opportunity to accelerate the realisation of specific projects in the vein of 'stewardship of the environment.'

Our specific plans include:

April 2010 - Production of a newsletter on the topic of environmental awareness with practical tips for preservation and proper stewardship of the environment.

June 2010 - Organisation of a half day symposium on environmental stewardship for a par-

ish and Northern Vicariate audience, to be addressed by experts / practitioners in the field e.g. from the EMA, SWMCO and recycling companies.

Aug - Dec 2010 - Lectures to our Parish on recycling and school community - encouraging the formulation of recycling projects for plastic bottles, aluminum cans and glass bottles. Liaising with local recycling companies to provide enhanced facilities for and encourage more recycling in our parish and in the wider community. Promoting a greater level of recycling in our neighbourhood through the distribution of flyers. Promoting the benefits of and convenient availability of recycling receptacles in the neighbourhood.

Submitted by Nigel Cassimire (St. Theresa's, Woodbrook)



ST FINBAR'S, WESTMOORINGS

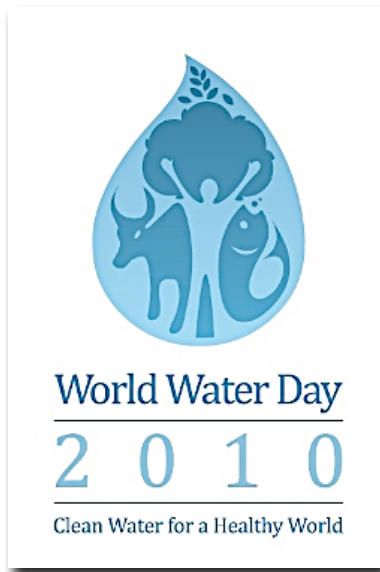
Recently, the Cancer Treatment Foundation held an auction of 50 slots for children to attend a cricket and football camp in an effort to raise funds for the Foundation's continued cancer care and awareness-raising. The cricket-football camp, hosted by the Brian Charles Lara Foundation, commenced on Saturday 20th Feb. Fifty children had the opportunity to work with three guest



hosts - Brain Lara, Dwight Yorke and Russell Latapy. The St Finbar's Social Justice Committee was afforded 3 slots at this camp and a family of 3 boys from the La Puerta neighbourhood attended. It was truly a spectacular experience for them. Many thanks to the Cancer Treatment Foundation, the Brian Charles Lara Foundation and the guest hosts for such a rewarding and life-changing event.

Submitted by Marie Gurley (St Finbar's, Westmoorings)

**ROSARY, PORT OF SPAIN & ST
MARTIN de PORRES, GONZALES**



In light of the water shortage in Trinidad and Tobago, our Social Justice Group decided to sensitise the community to the need to conserve water. Posters and informational brochures from WASA and Fisherman & Friends of the Sea were displayed to commemorate World Water Day 2010 on March 22nd.

Submitted by Paul Massiah (Rosary Parish, Port of Spain)

ST MARY'S, MUCURAPO

Our soup kitchen is heading into its fifth year. It continues to provide the homeless in our community with approximately 40 lunches every Saturday at 12 noon. The kitchen is run from Mucurapo Boy's R.C. (thanks to the support of the principal, Mr. Rex Griffith, and the security staff). It is largely funded by donations from parishioners and individuals who reside outside the parish. The Committee comprises ten members who are extremely active in maintaining the weekly commitment of distribution of lunches etc. The number of persons seeking our aid is increasing, and the commitment is becoming more and more challenging to supply the increasing number of lunches required. Our Social Justice Committee, with the assistance of Sagicor General Insurance

Inc., and the Red Cross Society, have been able to forward food and clothing to Haiti on behalf of St. Mary' Parish, we thank all those who contributed.

Homework supervision of boys from Mucurapo Boys RC School has been one of the initiatives of the SJ Committee. In recent times however this has slowed down significantly, due to the unavailability of volunteers. Members of the Parish Council are asked to assist in soliciting volunteers to support this initiative.

The SJ Committee of our Parish partnered with Lions P.O.S. and the Cancer Society to provide our annual medical service, free of charge to patrons. We wish to thank all assistants especially St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Hospitality Ministry.

There is a critical need to provide counselling for people with drug addiction and other social problems. The SJ Committee therefore recognises the need to train at least 2 members of the Committee in counselling. We will work with our Parish Priest, Fr Henry Charles, to pursue this goal.

During 2010 we also hope to develop a sporting program for Mucurapo Boys R.C. School in conjunction with the parish Youth Group - following the "Big Brother" model.

From its inception, it has been extremely challenging for our SJ Committee to maintain various commitments with limited resources. It has however, been equally rewarding for every member of the Committee.

We cannot overstate the critical need for foodstuff from the Parish, both for preparation of hot meals and distribution to needy families. There are also many individuals and families out there crying out for help. The training of individuals to become counsellors is an absolute necessity.

We pray that today, like others, our cries are heard and that God will use the right person or persons to assist us in our Father's work.

Submitted by Derry Lee Loo (St Mary's Parish, Mucurapo)

SYNOD IMPLEMENTATION : ARCHDIOCESAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY



The Draft Framework towards an Archdiocesan Environmental Policy was presented on Feb 23rd at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Hall, Curepe. The presentation included welcome remarks from His Grace, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert C.Ss.R.; an outline of the framework by CCSJ Chair, Leela Ramdeen; and the keynote address on environmental issues facing Trinidad & Tobago by Agriculturalist Wendy Lee Yuen. Junior Calypso Monarch, 6 year old Aaron

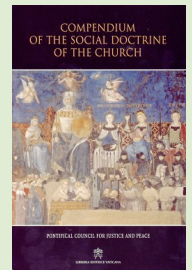
Duncan, accompanied by his sister, sang his winning composition "Doh Waste It" to a very appreciative audience. The lyrics of his song were appropriate for the occasion. He encouraged listeners not to waste the resources that we have been given. The Draft Framework is open for consultation until June 30th 2010 and is available on CCSJ's website: www.rcsocialjusticett.org. A hard copy is available from CCSJ's office at Archbishop's House. See also the 4-page supplement in the Catholic News of 14 March 2010. We encourage readers to review the document and make your contribution to shape the Environmental Policy for the Archdiocese of Port of Spain.

QUIZ RELATING TO THE DRAFT FRAMEWORK TOWARDS AN ARCHDIOCESAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

WIN A COPY OF THE COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Answer the following questions and e-mail or drop off your answers in writing to CCSJ's Office at Archbishop's House for a chance to win a copy of The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. The winner will be chosen from a random draw of all correct entries received. The deadline for the competition is 31 May, 2010. All answers should be taken directly from the Draft Framework. Good Luck!

1. Name 2 objectives of the Draft Framework towards an Archdiocesan Environmental Policy.
2. State which Synod Resolution mandates the formulation of a Policy on environmental awareness.
3. Name the 3 guiding steps to decision-making about current social issues - originally promoted by Belgian Priest, Fr. Cardijn.
4. Name 3 threats to Trinidad & Tobago's environment.
5. The Policy urges the practise of the 4 R's, name them.
6. List the key actions of the St Francis Pledge.



**The Values and Virtues
Formation Programme 2010**
For Post SEA Students in RC Primary Schools

The Values and Virtues Formation Programme is part of the curriculum for Post SEA students in Catholic Primary Schools. As Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert C.Ss.R. says, it is important to teach young people about "values, virtues, morality and personal and social relationships" in order to form their consciences and build their character; to "form young people of the Archdiocese and Nation so they can choose truth and authentic values for their lives; and find ways to enable themselves to live a full and productive life which embraces the common good." The common good includes a concern for the environment. The Programme includes activities that should help students to respect and cherish nature.

CCSJ is also hosting a Seminar Series on Values and Virtues for the general public. Each will be run on a Vicariate basis. The schedule is as follows. (Details will be published in the Catholic News and on CCSJ's Website.)

MAY (Central/Suburban, Northern) : SEPT (Eastern) : NOV (Southern)

RESPECT FOR LIFE WEEK (RFL)

Synod Resolution 3 under the Archdiocese's 3rd Pastoral Priority: Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society states:



Resolution #3a: Be it resolved that each parish and school become a community celebrating the dignity of human life from conception to natural death, affirming and developing the whole person.

Res. 3a:1: "The Archdiocese to dedicate a week every year to the theme of 'respect for life.'"

Res. 3a:3: "Each parish to conscientiously, honestly assess how it respects life, in terms of facilities for and services to persons from all walks of life and implement systems accordingly."

Synod Resolution #1a:6 highlights some of the threats to life today:

"...whatsoever 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 men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are supreme dishonour to the Creator." (n27, *Vatican II document. The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*).

To implement this Resolution and these strategies in 2010, CCSJ, in conjunction with the various departments in the Archdiocese, will be hosting a Respect for Life Week from **26th September to October 3rd 2010**. In a spirit of solidarity, we are also seeking to partner with the Inter-Religious Organisation in this initiative.

This initiative is in keeping with the Family Life theme for the year. We hope that all parishes, families and schools will join us in this celebration of life and in committing to counter the threats to life at all stages – from conception to natural death. The proposed programme for the week includes:

- ✓ An Interfaith Service,
- ✓ Masses in celebration of life and for a culture of life to prevail,
- ✓ An Interfaith panel discussion on the theme: "Promoting a culture of life and integral human development",
- ✓ A Concert in Celebration of Life and
- ✓ An Interfaith Candlelight Procession (around the Queen's Park Savannah – if permission is obtained).

We hope that parishes, schools and families will identify ways in which you could mark the Week. We welcome your suggestions which will inform the Planning Committee's work.

RESPECT FOR LIFE QUOTE



"Life is a gift that must be protected, from conception until natural death. With all my heart I join people involved in various initiatives aimed at respecting life and promoting a new social awareness."

Pope Benedict XVI, Speaking to Polish Pilgrims, March 24, 2010

SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHING, LEELA RAMDEEN, CHAIR, CCSJ

While we consider issues relating to our stewardship of God's creation, let us not forget some of the other key social justice themes or principles of the Church's Social Doctrine. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church outlines these in some detail. If you have access to the internet, you can read about these themes from a number of helpful websites, including:

- <http://uscceb.org/sdwp/projects/socialteaching/>
- www.osjspm.org/major_themes.aspx
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_social_teaching

The following is a list of the major themes. We focus on 2 of them in this Newsletter:

1. The Sanctity of Life and the Dignity of the Human Person
2. Family and participation
3. The common good and community
4. Option for the poor and vulnerable
5. Rights and Responsibilities
6. The dignity of work and the rights of workers
7. The role of Government and Subsidiarity
8. Solidarity – local and global – and authentic development
9. Economic Justice
10. Peace and disarmament
11. Stewardship of God's Creation
12. The Universal destination of goods

The foundation of the Church's social teaching is our belief in the sanctity of life at all stages – from conception to natural death – and in all circumstances, and in the inherent dignity of the human person. In their 1983 document: *The Challenge of Peace* (15), the US Bishops stated: “At the center of all Catholic social teaching are the transcendence of God and the dignity of the human person. The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God, but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry.”

We are all made in God's image and likeness and God has a plan for each of us. But we do not journey through life alone. Pope Paul VI's reminded us in his encyclical, *On the Development of Peoples*: “...the human person finds true identity only in the social milieu, where the family plays a fundamental role” (36).

A call to strengthen, support and build strong families is another key social justice principle. Every family matters. The Archdiocese's pastoral priority this year is: *The New Evangelization: Catholic family, become what you are*. This theme reflects Pope John Paul II's plea (in his encyclical, *The Christian Family in the Modern World*) for families to “become what you are, the domestic Church and the heart of the world.”

He reminds us that, “the future of humanity passes by way of the family.” He refers to the Christian family as “a society in its own original right”, and the “first and vital cell of society.”

Today family life is under constant attack from various social ills. The break-down of the family challenges many countries around the world, including ours. There are also myriad issues that need to be addressed in families in which both parents are present. If we want to fix our nation, we need to fix our families and individuals within our families. Our task as a nation and as local communities is not to be judgmental but to put legislation and structures in place to strengthen family life.

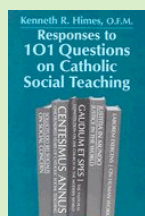
SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHING (CONT'D), LEEA RAMDEEN, CHAIR, CCSJ

Our action must be supported by prayer. Let us use the prayers in the leaflet produced by the Evangelization Commission as we develop family spirituality and strive to “become what we are”. And remember, there is no better way to evangelise than by example; by becoming living witnesses of the Gospel; by allowing our lives to be infused with Gospel values.

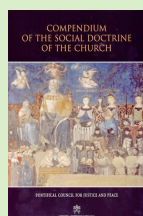
In future issues of this Newsletter, we will focus on other social justice themes listed above. In the meantime, we urge you to read about these yourself and to use information gained to lead you to act justly and to promote justice, peace and love in your homes and in your communities. Please make use of the resources available below.

Resources available to Social Justice Groups from CCSJ, Archbishop's House

Contact Lorna or Marge at 290-1635



Responses to 101 Questions
on Catholic Social Teaching
(Kenneth R Himes) **\$80**



Compendium of the Social Doctrine
of the Church (Pontifical Council
for Justice and Peace) **\$140**



Ask Why DVD Series 2010

January 26, 2010

Pope's 2010 Peace Message : IF YOU WANT TO CULTIVATE PEACE, PROTECT CREATION

Msgr. Jason Gordon and Fr. Joe Harris, (Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)

February 23, 2010 : Lenten Theme : THE JUSTICE OF GOD HAS BEEN MANIFESTED IN FAITH THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

Deacon Mike James and Deacon Derek Walcott, (Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)

March 23, 2010 : ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ & Wendy Lee Yuen, Agricultural Consultant, (Sr Teresa Vialva – Presenter)



Take a Bite DVD Series

1. Msgr. Jason Gordon - Overview of Social Justice
2. Sr. Diane Jagdeo O.P.- Human Life and Dignity
3. Ms. Leela Ramdeen - Rights and Responsibilities
4. Dr. John Agard - Stewards of God's Creation
5. Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues - Global Solidarity

CALENDAR 2010

Values & Virtues Seminar

Central/Suburban - May 6th

North Vicariate - May 20th

Respect for Life Week

Sept 26th to Oct 3rd

PLEASE SEND ALL PARISH SUBMISSIONS, CORRESPONDENCE AND FEEDBACK TO
Robert Persaud (Parish Link Co-Ordinator) email : charityandtruth@gmail.com or call 290 1644