



PARISH LINK



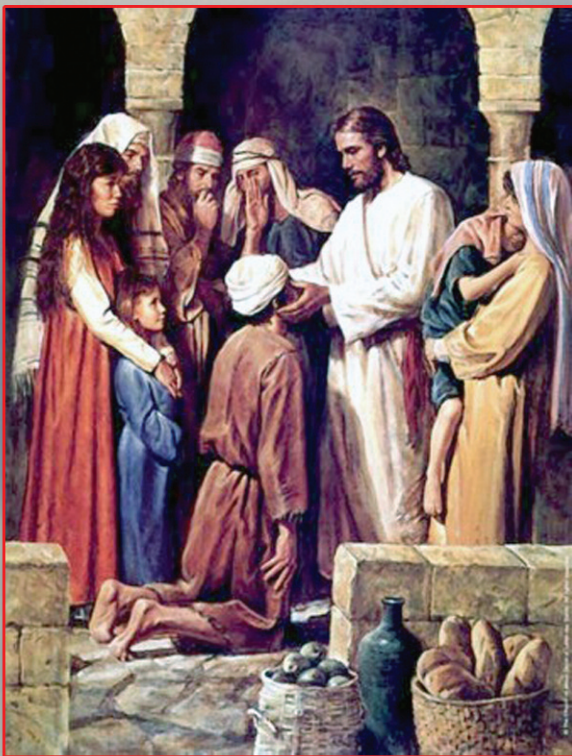
The Newsletter of the Catholic Commission For Social Justice

Issue 3 June 2012

LINKING FAITH

WITH

GOOD WORKS



“ The joys and hopes, the griefs and sorrows of the people of this age, especially of those who are poor or downtrodden in any way, are the joys and hopes, the griefs and sorrows of the followers of Christ as well. ”

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican II

Let us build right relationships in J&J and in our world



INTRODUCTION

Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, on 25 April, Pope Benedict XVI reminded us that all our pastoral work, including promoting social justice and providing for the poor, must be nourished by prayer. There are different types of prayer. Pray any way you wish, just pray. On Shepherd's Corner recently, His Grace has been focusing on Lectio Divina. You will be aware of the 4 parts of this exercise: Reading (lectio), Reflecting (meditation), Expressing (oratio), and Resting (contemplation). We must read our Bibles more regularly and reflect on the ways in which our scriptures are speaking to us at this moment in our history. For example, reflect on James 2:14-24:

"Take the case, my brothers, of someone who has never done a single good act but claims that he has faith. Will that faith save him? If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, 'I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty', without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead."

"Take the case, my brothers, of someone who has never done a single good act but claims that he has faith. Will that faith save him?" James 2:14-24

In his encyclical, Charity in Truth, Pope Benedict XVI said that "to desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity." In our Archdiocese, there are many who

are working diligently to build the common good, that is, to create conditions that will allow each person to realise his/her potential.



We have been called to BE Christ's Church in T&T; to build the civilisation of love; to be the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World (Matthew 5:3-16); to make our Church alive and present in T&T/the world. Let us open our hearts and minds like the many heroes and heroines in our country who are quietly demonstrating their concern for their "neighbour" in so many ways.

In this Newsletter, we share some examples of good practice in our Archdiocese and urge you to take action in your home and in your parish community to reach out to those in need. Remember that as we develop our relationship with God, we are required to see Him in our "neighbour".

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COMPUTER LITERACY FOR THE ELDERLY

by Rhonda Earle

On October 1 2011 at the parish of Santa Rosa, Arima, an exciting event occurred in the lives of many mature persons who came from within the parish and beyond. The day was the United Nations International Day of the Elderly and in a social justice initiative the parish welcomed about 35 mature persons to expand their horizons fully into the world of computers by participating in a basic computer literacy course. The hurdle of provision of computers for classes was crossed by an invitation issued at Masses for more

knowledge – as had actually happened in quite a few instances we knew about!

This initial literacy course was scheduled to be conducted over a period of six weeks in which an attempt would be made to ensure that no elderly person was left behind as the society in general and the church in particular, embarks full speed into a world that can seem confusing at best and totally impenetrable at worst, to those left behind. Many of the participants were persons whose working life may not have encompassed the familiarity with a computer that so many of us take for granted and offered the opportunity to re-tool to meet the needs of an ever changing society.



It was intended that the course ideally would present the opportunity for persons to expand their horizons into the future, while allowing everyone in the parish access to the wealth of life experience the elderly could then freely share with all. In a recent New York Times article it has been said that retirement is a fading concept when retired persons are now frequently matched with new areas

of activity in a paid position. For some mature persons such a computer course could expand their horizons into a possible new career or could also enhance their private lives in which they have more tools of communication in common with other family members.

mature parishioners to “Bring your laptop and come!” This day marked the launch of the possibility of a brand new chapter in the lives of the elderly, in which their ability to communicate and function fully in today’s world could be enhanced. No longer would a family gift of a laptop be unused and even given back because of a lack of

of activity in a paid position. For some mature persons such a computer course could expand their horizons into a possible new career or could also enhance their private lives in which they have more tools of communication in common with other family members.

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Computer Literacy for the Elderly continued from Pg 3



The course was facilitated by Louise Mathura, both a former catechist at Santa Rosa and an experienced teacher of computer literacy to teenagers. It was agreed by all that Louise did a superb job in facilitating this exercise for the more mature student. A wonderful spirit of volunteerism and community spirit in the parish was evident as family members who came to learn about a particular aspect of computer usage ended up attending as weekly helpers until that aspect was reached. Most participants concluded that they wanted to continue for at least two sessions more and also wished that the sessions from 2:30p.m. to 4:00p.m. were longer each week. It was delightful to hear many expressions of satisfaction in the room as many "Aha!" moments occurred frequently.

Several lessons emerged from this initial session though, and will be applied when the next session is held. It had been anticipated for example, that

Louise would conduct the programme with a few tutors to assist participants but the response exceeded expectations and the number of tutors who were parishioners who were more computer literate themselves, proved insufficient to properly ensure that individuals were provided with the individual assistance and guidance that proved necessary. In cases, for example, where persons with laptops were not fully aware of its features, special help was needed as laptop features can vary widely. In planning for a repeat of the programme the volunteers who assisted have suggested that more tutors need to be scheduled to assist.

Youths from the youth group at Santa Rosa assisted periodically in the sessions but this would need to be planned well in advance to ensure that sufficient are available to ensure ideally a 2:1 ratio of participant: tutor.

cont'd on Pg 5



Computer Literacy for the Elderly continued from Pg 4

One aspect being explored is the service possible from the Confirmation candidates who could in this social justice initiative, be provided with the opportunity to be of service to the elderly as they are themselves gifted with the opportunity to be exposed to the unique wisdom and wit of the elderly who truly embrace and enjoy the new learning.

All parishioners who assist would also need to be sensitised to the need for participants to learn them-

selves and not be left with a sense of dependence on the helper: a fine line but one that is particularly necessary if the mature can truly go bravely into the new expanded horizons. We thank God for the opportunity provided within the parish for empowerment of parishioners to continue in a practical realm. We also thank God for the opportunity for all to learn from each other and look forward to planning and executing another in the near future as the parish itself expands its own social justice horizons.



EUCHARIST CELEBRATION AND BREAKFAST AT ST THERESA'S

The Social Justice Team at St Theresa's, Barataria, headed by Cheridan Woodruffe, in recognition for the UN International Day of the Aged, honoured the senior citizens at a Eucharistic celebration followed by a breakfast. Our senior citizens came out in their numbers, beautifully and handsomely dressed, including the differently-abled with walkers and walking sticks in a very dignified manner. One senior citizen was very proud to disclose her age and expressed how fit she is - and she looked fit!

All in all it was a morning enjoyed by everyone. In his address to those gathered Mr. Woodruffe expressed his grati-

tude for their wisdom, dedication, commitment and thanked God for their longevity. He vouched on behalf of his Social Justice Team to continue to organize similar activities to honour senior citizens who have much to contribute to society.



...Meanwhile AT ST THERESA'S, Rio Claro

Parishioners have embarked on a project to provide housing for a pensioner who is presently without a home in Rio Claro and whose living arrangements with relatives leave much to be desired. Her plight is a very sad one and has touched the hearts of parishioners who are willing to assist. The first phase of getting a piece of land for constructing her house has been successful, thanks to a friend, who is not of our faith but who shares in

our desire to show love and compassion. Work on the house is only just beginning. Funding and completion of this project depends totally on grace and blessings from God and generous people. This project at present seems like having to plant a tree at the top of a very high mountain and one is standing at the foot of the mountain with only the seed in our hands. We have a mighty long way to go but we know Jesus will see us through.

LAUNCH OF SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP IN ST JOSEPH/MT. D'OR

The first meeting of this group was held on Thursday 16 February, 2012. In attendance was a small group of 4 parishioners, including Christine Walcott who undertook to serve as Chair. The first order of business was to schedule the formal launch of the group which was successfully conducted to coincide with World Day of Social Justice observed on February 20, 2012. At the Launch, Pamphlets from the Archdiocesan Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ) were distributed at all the week-end masses in an attempt to sensitize the parish community to the work of the Commission and its future within the parish. The group has adopted the following as major initiatives:

- *Collaboration with the Parish Council and its implementation team*
- *Outreach to other parish groups and institutions in the community*
- *Expanding the ideals of Social Justice through the establishment of groups in surrounding parishes*
- *Promoting projects and observances that reflect the interests of CCSJ*

In support of these initiatives the group has published two articles in the Parish Blog. The first; *"Connecting Girls, Inspiring Future"*, in commemoration of International Women's Day celebrated on March 08, 2012. The second; *"Mea Culpa"*, a reflection on Divine Mercy Sunday celebrated on April 15, 2012. It has also undertaken a long term project to promote protection of the environment through a *"Recycle, Reuse, Reduce and Restore"* programme.

To this end a refuse sorting bin was installed in the St. Joseph Church car park for the collection of Glass, Cans and Plastic. The first phase of this project was commissioned on April 22, 2012 in observance of Earth Day.

Meetings are scheduled for first Sunday of the month at 10:00am at the Presbytery of St. Joseph's R.C. Church. To date the group has held three meetings with Core Members only in attendance.

The group extends an invitation to all those who indicated an interest at the Launch to join us as we implement our planned activities for the second quarter of 2012.

The group has plans to extend the programme to neighbouring schools. Finally, the group thanks our parish priest Fr. Karol Wielgosz, OP for his support and encouragement and recognizes the efforts of Ms. Maria Pantin, of the Communications Dept.



SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP IN THE PARISH OF MARY IMMACULATE QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE

This group held its first meeting in September 2011. So far the group has organised many successful activities. One such activity was to highlight International Women's Day using the theme "Women as Daughters' of God" Sr. Julie Peters was invited to do a presentation for the women of the parish. Her evocative, thought provoking power point presentation was well received. She used Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb . . ." She shared that it was God's divine decision that affords one to recognise one's goodness.



However there has been a loss of the sense of that goodness through various experiences. The following questions were asked but required a bit of reflection: How do you come to experience the "daughter-ship" of God? How do we keep the daughter-ship going? Who is my Body?

After some pondering and a moment to reflect the latter question was repeated. There was the reminder



that God loves us in our bodies. The story keeper has knowledge of pain, joy and sorrow, laughter and tears. She reminded the audience of being "knitted together" and the need to claim the daughter-ship. No longer should one's body be manipulated or depersonalized.

Sr Julie used many photos from Carnival 2012 to highlight her call to women to love their bodies. She said that we need to recognise that change in one's body is a natural aging process. This requires one to surrender the body to God and to be obedient to the body. Sr. Julie highlighted the fact that consumerism has reduced the dignity of the female body. The body is meant for the Lord 1 Cor. 6:13. The body is an inner view of the outer self. The call was made to befriend one's body and to perceive it as Lovely, Limited and Holy. She said we need to uphold Christian values to deal with social issues that are usually supported by ignorance. Sr. Julie concluded her presentation by a prayer ritual of Blessing the body.

ST BENEDICT'S HEALTH FAIR

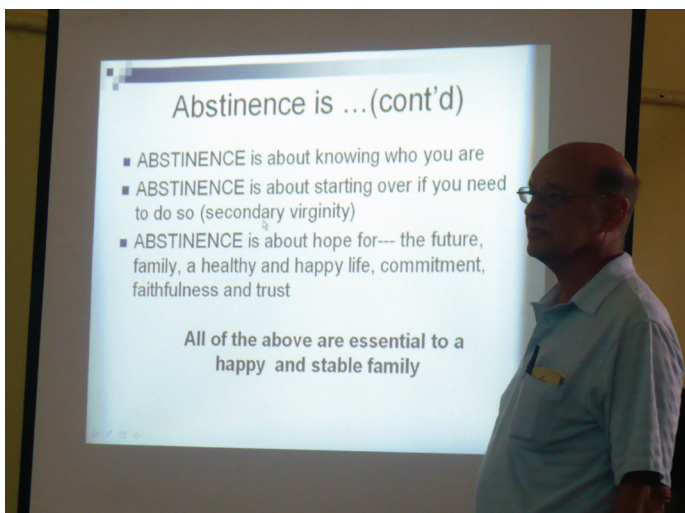
2012

2012 saw the return of the ever-popular Health Fair hosted by the Family Life Unit (FLU) of St. Benedict's R.C. Parish at its Parish Hall, 14, Alice Street, La Romaine.

Educational seminars were offered on Diabetes and Foot care, Sexually Transmitted Infections, Noise and Hearing loss, breastfeeding and Nutrition. Energising and Instructive Blood and Pressure Testing were done on site and Breast and Prostate examinations were done by qualified Family Planning Mobile at a subsidised cost of \$50 per person.

This is the fourth consecutive Health fair event held in the Parish and it continues to have a regular and growing participation among all the ages. Initiated in 2009, the St. Benedict's FLU observed aging church demographic and the increased afflictions across all age groups.

The FLU's concern to more effectively deliver its mission as a true and compassionate " partner in the pastoral care " of the La Romaine and Picton



communities led them to host this event. These values are also congruent with the CCSJ's mission of people-centred development, education and advocacy regarding social justice issues relating to primary health care and information.

The FLU's intent is to foster a holistic approach to the healthcare and well-being of our families by first "fostering good, wholesome" stewardship of our bodies, the living temples of Jesus Christ. This approach, we believe comprises all of the following:

- *Being informed*
- *Understanding correct information*
- *Being proactive and preventative in our approach to disease*
- *When prevention is not possible, ready, regular testing, diagnosis, treatment and sensitive care.*
- *In solidarity since 2011 we co-opt the services of the Parish medical practitioners, doctors, nurses, and other NGOs and social services to help defray the cost of the specialist examinations that are done on-site.*

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St. Benedict's Health Fair continued from Pg 9



- *While we aim at catering to the needs of the various demographic groups within the parish, we recognize that the aged and debilitated are very often alienated, misunderstood and even abused. Since 2011 we have brought groups of approximately twelve senior citizens*

from various hospices within the communities to

celebrate a special time with us.

Last year, the aged received a special Mother's Day celebration by being pampered with a personal "mani-pedi" treatment and hair-styling. This year we celebrated with both men and women, giving them personal hair grooming and nail care.



MAKING SPACE FOR MISSIONARY WORK

Renessa Tang Pack, a Graduate of CCSJ's Social Justice Course, which is organized in partnership with CREDI and the University of Dayton, links faith with good works by volun-

teering to do Missionary work in Mexico for 1 year. See CCSJ's web-

site for a detailed article from her on UN World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (May 21). Inter alia, she said: "From May 2011, the start of my International Dominican Volunteer year in Mexico, I began giving more in-depth thought to the topic of cultural diversity. It was inevitable that I should, having taken a year off from civil law practice to spend the larger part of my volunteer year at none other than Cuernavaca Centre for Intercultural Dialogue on Development (CCIDD) in Cuernavaca, Mexico (www.ccidd.org)



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“CCIDD is a Christian, ecumenical, social justice center engaging participants in cross cultural immersion experiences and intercultural dialogue, spiritual reflection, and social analysis. This year the

centre celebrates 35 years as an organization... Participants benefit from intercultural dialogues on themes such as ecology, unjust economic systems, globalization, capitalism, non violence, spirituality, indigenous peoples, human rights, militarism, immigration, poverty and social movements... Armed with a more in-depth cultural understanding, we have the opportunity to do development work in Mexico e.g. by rendering practical assistance to impoverished, marginalized persons who belong to a different culture from us.



“Underpinning any intercultural dialogue is the Catholic social justice theme of life, dignity and worth of the human person (who is made in the image and likeness of God).”



CCSJ DIRECTORY

DVDs of CCSJ's "Ask Why" TV Programme - 2012

24 January 2012:

Pope's Peace Message: EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE IN JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Panellists: KIJANA KING, NADINE BUSHELL, MAUREEN ARNEAUD

Moderator: LEELA RAMDEEN

13 March 2012:

Pope's Lenten Message: WE MUST NOT REMAIN SILENT BEFORE EVIL:

SHOW CONCERN FOR OTHERS

Panellists: Fr CLYDE HARVEY, Fr ROBERT CHRISTO

Moderator: LEELA RAMDEEN

24 April 2012:

ERADICATING CHILD ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Panellists: MARGARET SAMPSON-BROWNE - Manager of the Police Service's Victim and Witness Support Unit, FRANKLYN DOLLY - CEO, Dolly and Associates - Professional Training and Coaching- including trauma treatment, PHILLIP ALEXANDER - Chair of The Jericho Project

Moderator: LEELA RAMDEEN

22 May 2012: PREPARATIONS FOR MARCH FOR JESUS 1 JULY 2012

Panellist: RHONDA MAINGOT

Moderator: LEELA RAMDEEN

Social Justice Resources Now Available

DVD Series of 2011 "Ask Why" Programme & Take-a-Bite DVD Series 2010

Responses to 101 Questions on Catholic Social Teaching (KR Himes) \$80.00

Compendium of The Social Doctrine of the Church (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace)

\$140.00

NEW

Audio CD of staff at Archbishop's House praying the Divine Mercy Rosary, with a link between Sacred Space and Social Justice. Music by Gregory Wong Fu Sue. See link on CCSJ's Website. A DVD is being prepared for distribution.

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Want to start or expand a Social Justice Project in your parish?

Call Christine Walcott : CCSJ's Parish Link Co-ordinator: 299-1587