

CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

STEWARDSHIP SINCE SYNOD 2003

Leela Ramdeen - Chair, CCSJ (<http://rcsocialjusticett.org>)

It is with great love and respect for His Grace that CCSJ members submit this report of our stewardship since 2003 under the extraordinary leadership of our Shepherd, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert C.Ss.R. who was appointed Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Port of Spain in 2001.

When he demits office in December, CCSJ will joyfully support Coadjutor Archbishop Joseph Everard Harris C.S.Sp. by working with him to achieve the Mission of the Church.

It is worth noting that this report is being written in the year in which the Catholic Church marks the 40th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops 1971 document, *Justice in the World*. Arthur McCormack, a scholar of development and population issues, said that the 1971 Synod “put the theme of justice and especially social justice and concern for this world, into the very centre of the Church's life.” One of the most notable quotations from this important document confirms McCormack's opinion:

“Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel.” (Justice in the World, 1971, a.6).

THE EARLY YEARS

It is little wonder, therefore, that during the first sitting of Synod in Trinidad and Tobago in 2003, there was a cry from those gathered for Archbishop Gilbert to be the clarion voice for justice for those who feel the brunt of injustice in our society and further afield. This was one of the Resolutions that emanated from that first sitting of SYNOD.

Archbishop Gilbert acted immediately on it. To assist him in the Archdiocese's attempts to build a just society/world and to pursue with vigour the social mission of the Church, he appointed Leela Ramdeen, Attorney-at-Law and Education Consultant, as Episcopal Delegate for Social Justice and mandated her to establish a Commission to assist her.

Individuals from various walks of life accepted Ms. Ramdeen's invitation to join the Commission and on March 29, 2003, Archbishop Gilbert commissioned the 20 members of the Commission with Ms. Ramdeen as its Chair.

One of the first tasks was to start building a team that would work towards a common vision. Many hours were spent refining the following vision and mission:

CCSJ'S VISION

We envision a transformed national/world community where Justice, Peace and Love prevail, 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.

MISSION

To be a fearless united voice challenging injustice, awakening social consciousness and fostering integral development. 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.

LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

On 2 September, 2004, CCSJ was incorporated as a non-profit making Company. Our By-Laws are available on our website.

In memory of **Fr. Michael Moses**, it is fitting at this point in our report to acknowledge his outstanding contribution to CCSJ's work. At the end of her 3-year term: 2003 - 2006, Leela Ramdeen tendered her resignation. Fr. Michael Moses was appointed to the position of Episcopal Vicar/Chair of CCSJ on March 2, 2006. During his tenure, Fr. Moses, with the assistance of Selwyn Bhajan, reviewed the operations of CCSJ and restructured its priorities and activities. CCSJ Members were involved in a strategic retreat, facilitated by Selwyn Bhajan, to plan the way forward. Five major areas of focus were identified: Sustainable Development and the Environment, National issues - Education and Advocacy, Parish Link programme, Values and Virtues programme, Trinidad and Tobago Reintegration Foundation.

In 2007, Fr. Moses resigned due to ill health. He passed away on March 12, 2008.

Clive Belgrave, CCSJ's Vice-Chair, acted as Chair from the date of Fr. Moses' resignation until the appointment of Leela Ramdeen as Chair once again - in December, 2008. At the time of writing this report in 2011, there are **8** members of CCSJ, including the Chair, a Parish Link Coordinator and 5 volunteers (*see Appendix 1*).

Inter alia, Fr. Moses championed the cause of the Cedros community and the nation to prevent the construction of an aluminium smelter plant in the south-west peninsula of Trinidad. He provided information and access to technical expertise that aided in making a case against the project to the Government.

As was reported by Melissa Dassrath in Newsday following his funeral on March 16, 2008:

“During his time as the Chair of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice he focused on many issues affecting the country, including the Anti-Smelter Campaign. Fr. Moses visited

many of the proposed sites and played a very crucial role in avoiding violence when tensions mounted to dangerous levels.”

Those who spoke at his funeral praised him *"for his youth outreach initiatives such as the Abstinence Programme and Post-SEA Values and Virtues Programme."* His brother, Elias, spoke about his zeal for souls. *"His evangelical efforts even extended to preaching the word to partygoers at night clubs across the country."* (Newsday).

Fr. Moses' ministry as a Parish Priest should also be acknowledged. Sandra Ramharack's words in her article: ***Cherished memories of Fr. Michael Moses*** on the first anniversary of his death (Catholic News March 29, 2009) are noteworthy. She said: *"We love you, Fr Moses. We know that God took you away for a purpose. We thank you for giving us Kite Flying, Easter Bonnet Parade, Families United in Dance, Healing of Souls Seminar and all other events we truly enjoyed working hard at and being successful. You certainly knew how to keep the youths and your parish busy for the Lord and out of trouble. You're an inspiration to many of us."*

CCSJ also wishes to thank our Vice-Chair, Clive Belgrave, for his sterling support from the inception of the Commission. Communication is a key aspect of our work and Clive continues to use his extensive knowledge and expertise in this area to guide the Commission and to ensure that our publications are of a high standard. He is always ready to serve and to take up the mantle of leadership e.g. when Fr. Moses passed away and whenever Leela Ramdeen is out of the country. His selfless service is greatly appreciated.

ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES IN 2003 - 2004

Once the Commission was established in 2003, the Chair sought to harness the expertise and strengths of each member of the Commission. Each member was asked to Chair/be a member of a Standing Committee (SC). Each SC focused on a particular aspect of Social Justice e.g. Poverty and Social Exclusion, Prayer, Youth, including Youth-at-Risk, Family Life and Community, Restorative Justice and Post-Prison Support, Pro-Life issues, Health Care in Trinidad and Tobago, Education on the Social Teachings of the Church, Communications, Tobago SC, Research SC etc.

Membership of each SC was drawn from individual Catholics with relevant expertise/interests.

Three further SCs were phased in in 2004: Human Development, Consumer Rights and Protection and The Environment/Ecological Justice SC.

APPOINTMENT OF PARISH LINK COORDINATOR

Early in the life of the Commission, CCSJ appointed a Parish Link Coordinator whose main task was to promote the Commissions objectives at parish level e.g. by

- establishing Social Justice Teams in parishes and guiding them as they address social justice issues at a local level

- educating the faithful about the social teachings of the Church.

CCSJ'S FIRST MAJOR PROJECT:

The first major Project/Programme in which CCSJ was involved was the Community Intervention Transforming Youth (CITY) Programme which commenced in Gonzales, Port of Spain, in 2003 and which sought to empower youths so that, as Fr. Jason said: *“they will develop into better integrated adolescents and acquire emotional stability and skills required to access better education and jobs. This should ultimately alleviate poverty and the temptation to turn to crime.”*

Gonzales is an area adversely affected by crime, poverty and social exclusion. Between January and June 2003, there were 7 murders and numerous shootouts in that area. The Central Statistical Office's 2000 Census showed that 60% of Heads of Households in Gonzales had no income and that a growing number of Heads of Households were in the 15-19 years age range.

CCSJ partnered with Fr. Jason Gordon (*now Bishop-elect for the Dioceses of Bridgetown, Barbados and Kingstown, St Vincent and the Grenadines*) who was at that time Parish Priest of St. Martin de Porres, the Holy Rosary Parish, Gonzales and Director of the Programme. Activities included: Adolescent Formation Programme; CITY Internet Café; CITY Homework Clinic; a Pre-School; Photography Club; the Necessary Arts programme; CITY Vacation Camps in 2004 and 2005 e.g. a preteens camp, a music camp and a football camp; Gang and Crisis intervention; Crime Prevention; Infrastructure Projects and Village Revitalization.

CITY was developed in phases. As Fr. Jason said: *“The long-term goals are to empower people, build capacity of existing leaders and have them mentor the next generation of leaders, increase community participation, foster social cohesion, enhance cultural identity and strengthen institutional development. If community members have a sense of ownership in the decision-making processes and feel that resources have been distributed in an equitable and fair manner, the likelihood of success is vastly improved.”*

In 2004, the City Corporation and the Canadian Institute of Planning joined forces with Fr. Jason in an urbanization project for the Gonzales community and a pilot project entitled, *Pride in Gonzales* was born. This was an excellent example of participatory governance in which citizens in the area participated in Village Meetings and had a say in the development of their community. Key stakeholders who participated in the Project also included the Ministry of Local Government, other key Government Ministries and the business community.

Further details about this model for human development/capacity building are available in CCSJ's AGM reports for 2004, 2005 and 2006 on the Commission's website: <http://rcsocialjusticett.org>.

All other AGM reports are also available on the website.

CCSJ'S WORK WITHIN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

CCSJ is one of a number of Commissions and Departments in the Archdiocese. Ultimately we are all working towards the same goal - proclaiming the Gospel and transforming our communities/country/world to reflect Gospel values.

Our Shepherd, Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert C.Ss.R., has presided over 3 sittings of SYNOD: 2003, 2005 and 2009. At the 3rd sitting of SYNOD in January 2009, the Archdiocese adopted a Mission Statement and various Resolutions. The Archdiocesan Mission statement reads:

"We are the people of God in Trinidad and Tobago building the civilization of love - reconciliation with God, neighbour, creation and self - through The New Evangelization; Revitalizing Catholic Culture and Identity and Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society."

Three Pastoral Priorities were adopted after the third sitting of SYNOD: *The New Evangelization; Revitalizing Catholic Culture and Identity and Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society.*

CCSJ has responsibility for taking a lead in implementing the third Pastoral Priority which comes into focus across the Archdiocese in 2012/2013. As Archbishop Gilbert has said: *"We must begin trying to reclaim the nation. The first step in the reclaiming process is to concentrate on values and recommit to virtuous living...The good people have to work hard together to build a society on values/virtuous living. They must give to the young an experience of living with values and virtues."*

CCSJ's Chair is a member of the Synod Implementation Team - appointed by Archbishop Gilbert after the 3rd sitting of Synod. She also reports to His Grace on CCSJ's work on a monthly basis. CCSJ holds Annual General Meetings annually (*see CCSJ's website*) and retreats are organized for members to support their spiritual development.

The following is a brief summary of other key activities in which CCSJ has been involved since its inception in 2003:

- 1. Parish Link Programme:** CCSJ has had a number of Parish Link Coordinators (PLCs) over the years and have recently appointed Sr. Christine Walcott, O.P. to this post. She will seek to work closely not only with parishes but with the Vicariate Coordinators. Her work at Parish level is critical if CCSJ is to educate the faithful and motivate them to 'see, judge, and act' from a Catholic perspective. Through this programme we will continue to establish outreach projects in parishes, plan education programmes, share good practice, empower and mobilize parishioners to walk with the 2 feet of justice - works of mercy and social action.

CCSJ's Newsletters (*see our website*), contains examples of the work of PLCs e.g. in 2005 the PLC set up Social Justice booths at parish harvests and family days, inter alia, to raise

awareness of the social teaching of the Church and to gather data/opinions from participants on local and national needs and issues

2. **Framework towards an Archdiocesan Environmental Policy:** On February 23, 2010, Archbishop Gilbert launched this Framework which was developed by CCSJ to fulfill **SYNOD Resolutions #6** (under the 3rd Pastoral Priority - *Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society*)

“Be it resolved that in keeping with the Catholic position on Creation, our families, schools and parishes recognize our responsibility as stewards of Creation and express this in relevant tangible ways.”

It was widely circulated for consultation within the Archdiocese to all Departments, parishes and Catholic organizations. Three final documents are available on CCSJ's website as a guide for Catholics as we seek to promote ecology justice.

3. **Values and Virtues Formation Programme in RC Primary Schools (V&VFP):** This programme was first introduced in 2007 for Post-SEA students. In 2010, a second edition of a more localized Students' Workbook and a Teachers' Guide (*available on CCSJ's website*) were produced by a Focus Group of teachers, a Principal and CCSJ's Chair. An Archdiocesan Cross-Departmental Committee, Chaired by CCSJ's Chair, oversees the work of the V&VFP.

Aspects of the current Students' Workbook have been incorporated in the Religious Education syllabus for infants. From 2012, the Catechetical team, under the leadership of Sr. Juliet Rajah, will have responsibility for this Programme. CCSJ's Chair will continue to Chair the Archdiocesan Committee to facilitate the development, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme. Responsibility for this area of work will remain with CCSJ.

RC Schools will be encouraged to work with parents to instill in students Catholic values and virtues. It is recognized that to promote integral human development, Catholic Education must incorporate in the teaching and learning process, character and conscience formation - based on Gospel values.

4. **Respect for Life Week (RFLW):** In seeking to implement *Synod Resolution 3a* (under 'Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society' Pastoral Priority), CCSJ agreed to dedicate a week every year to the theme: *'Respect For Life.'* CCSJ has responsibility for organizing activities for the week. All Commissions, Departments, Parishes, Schools, Catholic organizations, Religious Congregations etc are invited to participate in these events.

Activities to mark the first such week took place from September 24 - October 3, 2010.

Plans are in train to observe the 2nd such week from November 12-19, 2011. The following is a list of some of the activities held during the week and material produced for the week:

- ✓ a Seminar at which the late Sir Ellis Clarke TC.GCMG was the feature speaker on the theme: *Our People, Our Land: Journey to becoming a Republic*. The proceedings were taped - copies available at CCSJ's Office
- ✓ an Interfaith Service
- ✓ a 4-page pull-out Supplement and articles in Catholic News
- ✓ Media Release, Calendar of Events, and Poster relating to the week
- ✓ a Prayer Session praying for the grace to allow us to build a culture of Life
- ✓ TV appearances/programmes to raise awareness of RFLW
- ✓ an Interfaith Panel Discussion on the theme: "Threats to Life and Opportunities to promote 'integral human development'" (Pope Benedict XVI)
- ✓ a Vigil
- ✓ Youths leading Holy Hour in certain parishes
- ✓ activities in schools based on the theme
- ✓ an Interfaith Procession and Prayers around part of Queen's Park Savannah

5. **CCSJ's Wellness Programme:** The promotion of integral human development and the common good requires that we create conditions that will allow each person to realise his/her potential. As part of this process and linked to CCSJ's Respect for Life thrust, the Commission is working with Dr. Kenwyn Nicholls to establish a Wellness Programme in the Archdiocese - entitled: *Diabetes self-management and Prevention*. The programme was launched in Assumption RC Parish Hall on Saturday December 4, 2010. The aim of the project is to: raise awareness of the faithful of issues relating to diabetes, empower people to manage their diabetes Type 2, and promote prevention strategies for those who may be likely to get diabetes if they don't take action.

Dr. Nicholls produced a paper for CCSJ, entitled: *The diabetes epidemic in TT: Attacking a burdensome disease with conventional weapons (see CCSJ's website)*, contains some frightening statistics about the number of people with Type 2 diabetes in Trinidad and Tobago (143,000+) and those who are pre-diabetic (102,000+). Participation in society is a key social justice principle. Many people can't participate in society because they are ill and spend a lot of time dealing with their illness. Integral human development includes a concern to promote "wellness".

6. **Rededication of Mary Care Centre by His Grace:**

On June 29, Mary Care Centre in Woodbrook was rededicated by His Grace. CCSJ has overall responsibility for the work of the Centre which is being run on behalf of the Archdiocese by a Management Committee of Eternal Light Community (ELC).

Mary Care Centre is a sanctuary for unmarried, pregnant, young women. It was founded in 1980 by the late Archbishop of Port of Spain, Most Reverend Anthony Pantin, in his concern for and commitment to the preservation of life. The centre is a non-profit organization funded by donations received from the private and public sector. The objectives of Mary Care Centre are two-fold: (1) To provide a safe and secure environment for the pregnant mother to give

birth to her child and (2) to enable the young mother to be employable at the end of her stay at the Centre.

Pro-life work remains a key aspect of CCSJ's work. CCSJ maintains links with e.g. The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, UK, Elliott Institute, USA, Human Life International, Emmanuel Community, Lawyers for Jesus in T&T. During 2010, CCSJ's Chair participated in discussions on radio and TV about pro-life issues e.g. abortion, the death penalty etc. In 2007, CCSJ's Chair and Fr. Leonard Alfonso from Barbados were guests on a one hour programme on EWTN, Atlanta. The programme focused on pro-life issues in the Caribbean. The trip was sponsored by Human Life International.

CCSJ was represented at the 2008 Conference organized by the Family Life Commission and entitled: *Created and Redeemed*, which focused on Theology of the Body. Christopher West was the feature speaker.

7. **Morals and Values Standing Committee:** This Committee is Chaired by Prof. Surendra Arjoon, UWI, Senior Lecturer in Ethics and Decision Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences. Maria Diaz-James coordinates the Committee's work on a voluntary basis.

Through the work of this Committee, CCSJ hopes to implement

Synod Resolution #1a:(Pastoral Priority-Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society)

Be it resolved that the Archdiocese develop a comprehensive strategy to educate the People of God in values and virtuous living, based on the rich tradition of magisterial teaching and theological heritage of the Catholic moral tradition.

Strategies to implement this Resolution

1. Identify performance indicators to inform a system of monitoring and evaluation of all the proposed strategies under this Pastoral Priority
2. Conduct an analysis of factors which have contributed to the decline of values in society.
 - a. Produce a baseline study
 - b. Determine what programmes have worked in society. Determine what more can be done in terms of programmes to address social problems.

Information has been gathered from local, regional and international sources to assist with the baseline study as to which factors have contributed to the decline of values in T&T's society. Prof. Arjoon arranged for some of his Under Graduate Students at UWI and students on the Masters Course at UWI to focus on this issue as part of their research. Their research papers have been analyzed and summarized and have informed the production of a report which will be presented to the Committee shortly by Prof. Arjoon.

The content of the report will assist CCSJ as the Commission seeks to implement *Pastoral Priority 3: Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society in 2012/2013*

8. Trinidad and Tobago Reintegration Foundation/Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre (TTRF/APRC): (*Matthew 25:37 - I was in prison and you visited me*).

Our scriptures urge us to show concern for prisoners. From its inception, CCSJ established a Standing Committee entitled: Restorative Justice and Post-Prison Support e.g. to raise public awareness of the value of a Restorative Justice approach to enhance the criminal justice system.

In November 2003, CCSJ held a Seminar at Hilton entitled: *A National Conversation on Restorative Justice*. Attendees included members of the Judiciary, Prison Administration and certain Government Ministries.

In October 2003 CCSJ launched a 40-week developmental programme for inmates, at Golden Grove prison - *The Walk Tall Programme*. It is a 2-phase programme which envisions returning to society productive, law-abiding citizens who are willing to serve family, community and country. **Phase 1** runs for 40 weeks prior to an inmate's release. **Phase 2** offers to support those inmates who leave prison and have nowhere to go. Through its fundraising efforts, CCSJ purchased about 8 acres of land in San Raphael and a facility, the APRC, opened its doors to 3 former inmates in mid-2011. A formal launch of the facility is being planned.

Strategies used on the Walk Tall programme and at the APRC are: mentoring, counselling, mediation, apprenticeship, skills training, and job placements. Each individual is provided with opportunities for spiritual, social and intellectual transformation. The Programme, which enjoys the full support of the Prison authorities, aims to help reduce recidivism which stands at about 60% in T&T. TTRF/APRC was incorporated in 2005.

At the time of writing this report, plans are in train to pass responsibility for the facility to the Society of St Vincent de Paul as SVP is better placed e.g. through its Chapter in the San Raphael area, to support this initiative.

CCSJ will continue to support TTRF/APRC, particularly as CCSJ's Vice-Chair is the Hon. Secretary of SVP.

9. CCSJ's participation in regional and international events: CCSJ's participation in such events allows the Commission for e.g. to keep abreast of developments thus enhancing the knowledge base of the Commission, share expertise by making valuable contributions to the topics under discussion, network with others, and gather material/data that will inform CCSJ's work.

a. CCSJ's Chair Participated in **4 Conferences at the Vatican** - organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (PCJC):

- i. October 27-30, 2004: First World Congress of Ecclesial Organizations Working for Justice and Peace. The congress coincided with the publication of a Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church
 - ii. October 28-29, 2005: Women, Development and Peace
 - iii. March 20-21, 2009: 1st International Conference on the theme: 'Life, Family, Development: the role of women in the promotion of human rights. (Organized by PCJC, with the World Women's Alliance for Life and Family and the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations
 - iv. May 16-18, 2011: **Justice and Globalization:** From *Mater et Magistra* to *Caritas in Veritate* - to mark the 50th Anniversary of *Mater et Magistra*.
- b. CCSJ's Chair represented the Holy See at the 16th Meeting of the **UNAIDS** Coordinating Board in Montego Bay, Jamaica, December 14-15, 2004.
 - c. **AEC Youth Leaders Training Workshop on the social teachings of the Church:** At Archbishop Robert Rivas' request, CCSJ's Chair attended the above workshop as a facilitator, focusing on key social justice principles. The workshop was held in St. Lucia from July 20 - 25, 2010 on the theme: *Empowering Youth Leaders to build a culture of Solidarity and Justice*. The participants from across the region also had an opportunity to develop their awareness of the See, Judge, Act process (Cardinal Joseph Cardijn's method).
 - d. **Training Programme in Guyana on VIRTUS: Protecting God's Children:** From October 4-6, 2010 CCSJ's Chair attended this training programme and is now a facilitator on the Training Programme that has been established in the Archdiocese. Dr. and Mrs. Shim, Family Life Commission, are the Coordinators of the Programme which will target all those who interface with children in the Archdiocese. The aim is to counteract child sexual abuse and "to turn every parish into a child-safe haven."
 - e. CCSJ's Chair attended an AEC Bishops Conference '*Trafficking in Persons, A Missionary Challenge*', from November 15-16, 2010, in Paramaribo, Suriname. (See CCSJ's website for a report of the proceedings.)
 - f. **HIV/AIDS:** Following CCSJ Chair's participation as a panellist during the Regional Consultation held in T&T in March 2011 on "Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support"(see CCSJ's website), she accepted an invitation to attend a two-day Regional Consultation in the Dominican Republic (DR) in June on the theme: "Putting Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention into action in the Caribbean region."

Combating HIV/AIDS in T&T remains a priority. On June 6, 2011, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister Rodger Samuel, stated that from statistics available as at March 2011 - based on cases tested only by public institutions, there are at least four new cases of HIV infections daily and at present, over 25,000 persons are living with AIDS.

Regionally, he said over, 260,000 persons are living with HIV/AIDS. Minister Samuel also said that only 6,000 persons with AIDS access anti-retroviral drugs although this form of treatment is readily available. At the time of writing this report, the Government is yet to establish the promised statutory body to replace the National Aids Coordinating Committee (NACC).

10. Further communication strategies employed by CCSJ include:

- ✓ **Radio and TV appearances**
- ✓ **Lobbying/liasing** with Government/participating in Govt. Seminars etc. e.g. in relation to issues such as abortion, the death penalty, human rights, "Compact Partnership" planning for national budget
- ✓ **Monthly Ask Why TV Programme** on Trinity Communications Network: focusing on social justice issues. Videotapes of these programmes are used as an educational tool. The list is also uploaded on CCSJ's website. TCN continues to draw on CCSJ's expertise by inviting members to participate in events such as its Annual Fundraising Telethon and on special programmes focusing on topical issues such as Flood Relief and Refugees
- ✓ **Media Releases:** CCSJ seeks to speak out fearlessly on social justice issues. All Media Releases are approved by Archbishop Gilbert before they are circulated (see website). CCSJ's media releases often lead to requests to appear on e.g. TV, radio and/or to interviews by journalists for articles in the print media. Given the cost of advertising, CCSJ is always pleased to respond as it is one way of spreading the Good News. It is worth reading a key joint media statement made in 2003 by Archbishop Edward J. Gilbert C.Ss.R. and CCSJ entitled: *Mobilizing the entire community to reduce crime*. In light of the recent State of Emergency in T&T in August 2011, this statement is still relevant today.
- ✓ **CCSJ's Website:** (<http://rcsocialjusticett.org>) allows the Commission to raise awareness of the Church's Social Doctrine. We record our thanks to Raymond Syms, our Webmaster, who continues to give yeoman service to us by maintaining the website. CCSJ uses this medium also to encourage readers to give generously to worthy causes in times of war, conflict or natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes e.g. Haiti, Japan, Somalia and St Lucia.
- ✓ **Catholic News:** CCSJ has a weekly column in Catholic News. Generally our articles focus on social justice issues and seek to incorporate aspects of the readings of the day as a form of reflection. This medium also allows CCSJ to address topical issues.

CCSJ also serialized the Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church - to help Catholics relate the teachings of the Church to real life situations. All articles are available on CCSJ's website.

✓ **Resource Production/Distribution:**

- **Parish Link Newsletter:** CCSJ produces 3 Newsletters per year. These are widely circulated e.g. to parishes, Archdiocesan groups, and schools. This is a useful communication tool that not only raises the faithful's awareness of social justice issues, but also facilitates networking and sharing good practice across the Archdiocese.
- **Take-a-Bite Series:** 5 DVDs focusing on social justice themes have been sent to all Parishes. They focus on: Overview of Social Justice: Msgr. Jason Gordon, Human Life and Dignity: Sr. Diane Jagdeo, Stewards of God's Creation: Dr. John Agard, Rights and Responsibilities: Leela Ramdeen, Global Solidarity: Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues.
- Other resources produced over the years include: Bumper stickers, Book Marks, Leaflets on social justice themes, annual Calendars focusing on Justice themes, pull-out supplement for Catholic News with prayers and reflections for National Day of Prayer in February 2008
- Distribution of material to educate others e.g. Pope Benedict XVI's Encyclical, *Charity in Truth* and his New Year *Peace Messages* were sent to all parishes and e.g. to His Excellency, President George Maxwell Richards; the Hon. Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition. Also, CCSJ circulated a Position Paper entitled "A Reflection by CCSJ on the General Elections, 2007". A further reflection, based on this Paper, was issued in the lead up to the 2010 elections.

✓ **Personal contact:**

Personal contact is developed/maintained with individuals/groups where necessary - by telephone, electronic media or in person. It is important that CCSJ members are available to meet with/speak to people to give advice and/or support, to act as advocates, or to empower individuals/groups to take action. Our availability is essential if we are to be servant-leaders.

✓ **Collaborating with other partners within and outside Church circles:**

CCSJ sees communication/collaboration with others as being of critical importance e.g. to optimize opportunities to promote the social teaching of the Church and to transform unjust structures, policies and practices e.g.

- in June and July, 2004 CCSJ organized a series of 3 Breakfast Meetings with key stakeholders in T&T from the business community, the IRO, leaders of the financial community, the Judiciary, the Administration of Police, Prisons, Defence Force, Coast Guard, Probation Service, Welfare Service, the Universities etc. with His Grace to foster

a culture of collaboration to address the social ills of our society - including crime - and sharing strategies for action. (*See our annual reports on our website for further information.*)

- CCSJ also participated in the Civil Society Forum at both the 5th Summit of the Americas (April 17-19, 2009) and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (November 27-29, 2009).

✓ **Training programmes:**

Training has been an important part of the work of the Commission. Since 2003, CCSJ has organized various training sessions at parish and Archdiocesan levels for the faithful at large as well as for specific groups such as teachers and Deacons. Training sessions include:

- A series of Seminars in May and October 2010 on why the world needs Christian Morals, Values and Virtues. TCN taped the Seminars for use as part of CCSJ's training programme in parishes
- A restorative justice Seminar in 2008;
- Workshops on Pope Benedict XVI's 3 Encyclicals
- Training sessions in 2 Vicariates (2011) on Social Justice Principles

✓ **Social Justice online course:**

CCSJ has partnered with CREDI and the University of Dayton, USA, to run this course which offers adult Religious Education and Faith Formation via the internet. **11** persons completed the first course: from July 12, 2009 to December 2010. Currently **5** persons in T&T are pursuing the second course.

CCSJ plans to draw on the expertise of these individuals to promote social justice in their parishes and to prepare material for use in parishes - focusing on the various social justice themes such as: the sanctity of human life and human dignity; the common good, family and community; option for the poor - poverty and social exclusion; rights and responsibilities; the role of Government and Subsidiarity; Economic Justice; Stewardship of God's Creation; Promotion of peace and disarmament; Participation; Global solidarity and integral human development.

Conclusion:

CCSJ and the Archdiocese continue to face many challenges as we seek to read the signs of the times and to respond in a timely manner in a way that reflects Gospel values. Of all CCSJ's achievements one stands out, the fact that very often some members of the secular media contact CCSJ for comments in the print media on various social justice issues or invite members of

CCSJ to present a Catholic perspective on certain issues on TV or radio. This is one way of responding to His Grace's encouragement that the Church should be alive and present in our nation and in the world.

Appendix 1 lists those who have contributed to CCSJ's work over the years. We thank them most sincerely for their dedication and commitment to build a more just society. We will continue to seek to transform society/the world and to build the civilization of love by being salt and light in the world. While there is much that remains to be done, it is important to celebrate small steps. There is enormous good-will and talent in our Archdiocese and in T&T. We need to tap into this so that we can move forward in unison.

We keep at the forefront of our minds always our mandate in Luke 4: 17-21: *“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.”*

May the Holy Spirit inspire us with grace and wisdom so that we will stay focused to do the will of God.

APPENDIX 1:

List of CCSJ members since 2003:

Current members: Clive Belgrave*, Nadine Bushell, Ken Cipriani, Annette des Iles, Mike James, Sr. Roberta O'Flaherty*, Leela Ramdeen* and Eldon Warner*

(those with an asterix next to their names have been members since 2003).

Current volunteers: Anna Ackbarali, Maria Diaz-James, Josephine-Ann Lodge, Joanne Miller.

Webmaster: Raymond Syms

Previous members of CCSJ: Anthony Hess Alexander, Taresa Best, Dennis Bryan, Verna Charles, Deborah de Rosia, Andre des Vignes, Fr. Matthew D'Hereaux, Anthony Gafoor, Her Worship Mrs. Joan Gill, Msgr. Jason Gordon, Paula-Marie Granado, Sr. Arlene Greenidge, Indal Harracksingh, Adanna James, Michael Jattan, Fr. Michael Moses, James Potter, Fr. Malcolm Rodrigues S.J., Kimberly Smith, Mikkell Trestrail, Mario Young.

Previous Parish Link Coordinators: Maureen Arneaud, Bernadette Gopaul-Ramkhalawan Robert Persaud, Anna Ackbarali, Richard Smith.

Current Parish Link Coordinator: Sr. Christine Walcott O.P.

Previous employees: Research Officer: Taresa Best; Project Manager: Josephine Anne Lodge; Administrative Assistants: Wilma Coryat, Kimberly Smith, Rita Potts, Marjorie Newallo.

Current Administrative Assistants: Lorna Chee-Wah and Theresa Dukhie.

Over the years there have also been about 40 Standing Committee members and 20 Resource Persons supporting CCSJ's work.