

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST • JUNE 24, 2021

ADVOCATE



WELCOME
PROTECT
PROMOTE
INTEGRATE

**“AND THE KING WILL ANSWER, "I TELL YOU SOLEMNLY,
IN SO FAR AS YOU DID THIS TO ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE
BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF MINE, YOU DID IT TO ME.”**

JESUS CHRIST



The Advocate Magazine prepared for
The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Port of Spain, Trinidad, W.I.
Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ), Archdiocese Ministry For Migrants and Refugees (AMMR)
by Matthew Pierre, Community Liaison Officer for the AMMR.

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Holy Family by Martin Erspamer, OSB.

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PRINCIPLE ONE
CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHING

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES THAT THE SANCTITY OF LIFE AND THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON ARE THE FOUNDATION OF A MORAL VISION FOR SOCIETY.

"THE JOYS AND THE HOPES, THE GRIEFS AND THE ANXIETIES OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THIS AGE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE POOR OR IN ANY WAY AFFLICTED, THESE ARE THE JOYS AND HOPES, THE GRIEFS AND ANXIETIES OF THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST...WHATEVER IS OPPOSED TO LIFE ITSELF, SUCH AS ANY TYPE OF MURDER, GENOCIDE, ABORTION, EUTHANASIA OR WILFUL 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."

THE PASTORAL CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH IN THE
MODERN WORLD, GAUDIUM ET SPES

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN

**THE MOST REVEREND
CHARLES JASON GORDON**

It is my sincere hope that this Advocate Magazine will raise awareness of the need for each of us to work together to build inclusive, fraternal communities, based on love; love for God, our Creator, and for our neighbour, including our brothers and sisters who have come to our shores seeking peace.

In 2018, I established the Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR) and located it within the Archdiocese's Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ), with the aim of assisting parishes and religious communities in establishing and operationalising this important ministry.

AMMR is supported by a Committee comprising Rhonda Maingot, Founder & Director of the Ecclesial Community, Living Water Community (LWC); Rochelle Nakhid, Coordinator of LWC's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees; Fr Simon Peter Ango, and Simone Francois-Whittier, Attorney-at-Law and former AMMR Coordinator.

Since LWC is the implementing partner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – the UN Refugee Agency – and has been working with migrants and refugees for over 30 years, collaboration between LWC, CCSJ/AMMR and other local and international organisations, is essential if we are to achieve our goal of welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants and refugees in Trinidad and Tobago.

The current COVID-19 pandemic makes us aware of our interconnectedness. As countries seek to build "herd" immunity, we realise that none of us is safe until all of us are safe. It is significant that Pope Francis' Message for this year's World Day of Migrants and Refugees on 21 September is entitled: Towards An Ever Wider "We", in order to indicate a clear horizon for our common journey in this world."

He notes that our "we," is crumbling and cracking due to myopic and aggressive forms of nationalism and radical individualism," with the highest price paid by "those who most easily become viewed as others," including foreigners, migrants, the marginalized, and those living on the existential peripheries.

I encourage you to work with CCSJ and AMMR to build more inclusive communities as we are all made in God's image and likeness.



THE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE & THE ARCHDIOCESE'S MINISTRY FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

**CHAIR,
LEELA RAMDEEN**



Welcome to the first issue of CCSJ's & AMMR's Advocate Magazine! Way back in 2013, Pope Francis made a profound statement when he said: "Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity." Mistreatment of migrants, he said, is part of what he has often denounced as a "throw-away culture."

Sadly, 8 years later, as the world finds itself in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the plight of migrants and refugees are even more urgent, as the "throw-away culture" continues apace. Because our Church teaches that human life must be respected and protected absolutely from conception until natural death,

CCSJ & AMMR are committed to do as Pope Francis has said and welcome, protect, promote, and integrate migrants and refugees. They are our brothers and sisters. Each of them is made in the image and likeness of God, with an innate dignity that is inviolable and inalienable.

This year, the theme of Pope Francis' annual message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which will be observed on 21 September 2021 is: "Towards an ever wider we". He said that he is making "this appeal to journey together towards an ever wider 'we' to all men and women, for the sake of renewing the human family, building together a future of justice and peace, and ensuring that no one is left behind." He emphasizes that "this focus calls on us to ensure that 'after all this, we will think no longer in terms of 'them' and 'those,' but only 'us'" (Fratelli Tutti, no. 35). And this universal us must become a reality first of all within the Church which is called to cultivate communion in diversity."

In striving for an ever wider 'we', Pope Francis says the Church will grow and be enriched. Encouraging a more welcoming Church, he sees an opportunity to further the Church's mission and bear witness to Christ's Gospel message. As we seek to promote unity in diversity, reflect on the Holy Father's words: "We are like so many grains of sand, all of us are different and unique, but together we can form a beautiful beach, a true work of art... We are all in the same boat and we are called to commit ourselves so that no more walls separate us, so that there are no longer others but only one we, a we as wide as all of humanity."

This Magazine is aptly named: "The Advocate". Let us be advocates for migrants and refugees and do as the Holy Father says - "bear concrete witness to the Christian faith in a spirit of charity." We encourage you to pray for our Ministry and we welcome your participation in our work. Come, share your God-given gifts in the Lord's vineyard. Let's work together to build God's Kingdom of justice, truth, love, freedom and forgiveness - the pillars of peace.



THE ARCHDIOCESE'S MINISTRY TO MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

**PROGRAMME COORDINATOR,
DARRION M. NARINE**



I often times imagine what being a refugee would be like and I try my best to empathize with those who are always shifting from place to place trying to fulfil their physiological needs. I especially empathize with those who are here alone and who spent their their holidays for the first time away from their family. Although these situations are all very sad, I feel it the most for the children that cross the waters and experience trauma that will take years to undo. Beyond this I think about the children who are being trafficked through our borders or those who are unaccompanied and unattached, vulnerable to the evil forces that exist within our own country.



The migrant/refugee children are the most vulnerable especially during this pandemic and it is essential that we do everything within our capacity to assist them. I have seen many people attacking the work that various religious organizations and ministries do to assist these people across Trinidad and Tobago and I have to wonder if they have even taken a moment to consider the children. Is it that these people are considering leaving these children to fend for themselves?

The UN convention on the rights of the child states that every child has a right to not be discriminated against and that migrant/refugee children should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country. It is our responsibility to ensure that these social justice principles are upheld. In fact, I will even state that it is our Catholic duty to do so.

On another note, I believe that we need to have further research done on the impact of the migrants and refugees on our economy. I have heard many people say that the Government is spending all the money on migrants or that the migrants are "thieving dey jobs" but when I ask how or if they have the statistical data to support their claims, they are unable to answer. Many people engage in othering because it gives them social power over a group in society. It is essential that we be cautious and ensure that we do not fall into this trap but rather that we truly engage in deep conversation and analysis before making arbitrary claims. It is also essential that we notice that even though resources are spent on migrants and refugees, they are also active contributors to our labour force and wider society, in many ways. I have even seen cases where migrants and refugees are willing to help others in need. Let us continue to explore ways in which we can work together rather than apart.

THE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
ARCHDIOCESAN MINISTRY FOR MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

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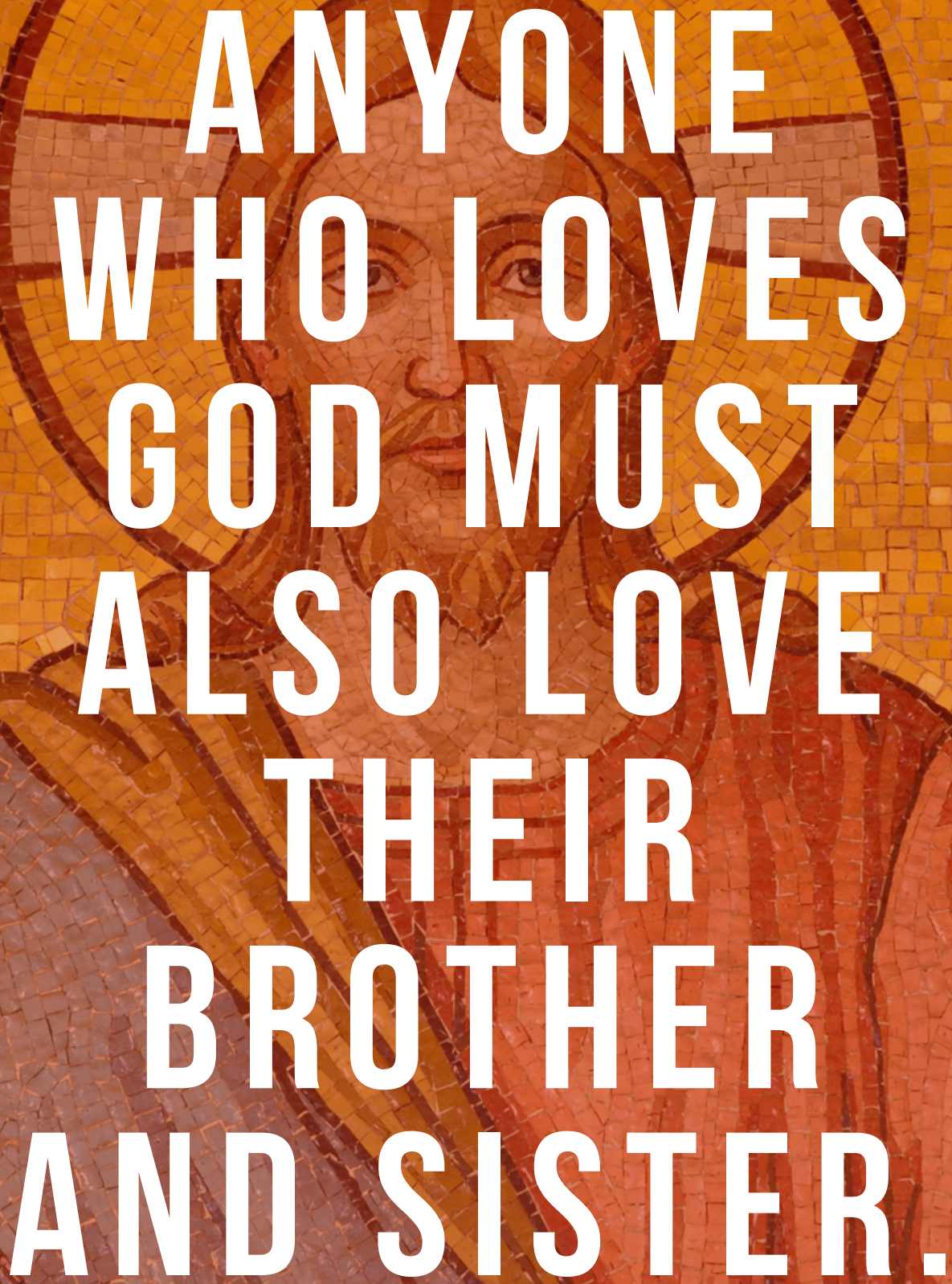
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A mosaic background featuring a religious figure, likely Jesus, with a halo. The mosaic is composed of small, square tiles in various shades of orange, yellow, and brown. The figure's face is the central focus, with a halo around the head. The text is overlaid on the mosaic in a large, white, sans-serif font.

**ANYONE
WHO LOVES
GOD MUST
ALSO LOVE
THEIR
BROTHER
AND SISTER.**

JOHN 4:19-21

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY & PARTICIPATION

THE PERSON IS NOT ONLY SACRED BUT ALSO SOCIAL. 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. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY ARE THE CENTRAL SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT MUST BE SUPPORTED AND STRENGTHENED, NOT UNDERMINED. WE BELIEVE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT AND A DUTY TO PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETY, SEEKING TOGETHER THE COMMON GOOD AND WELL-BEING OF ALL, ESPECIALLY THE POOR AND VULNERABLE.



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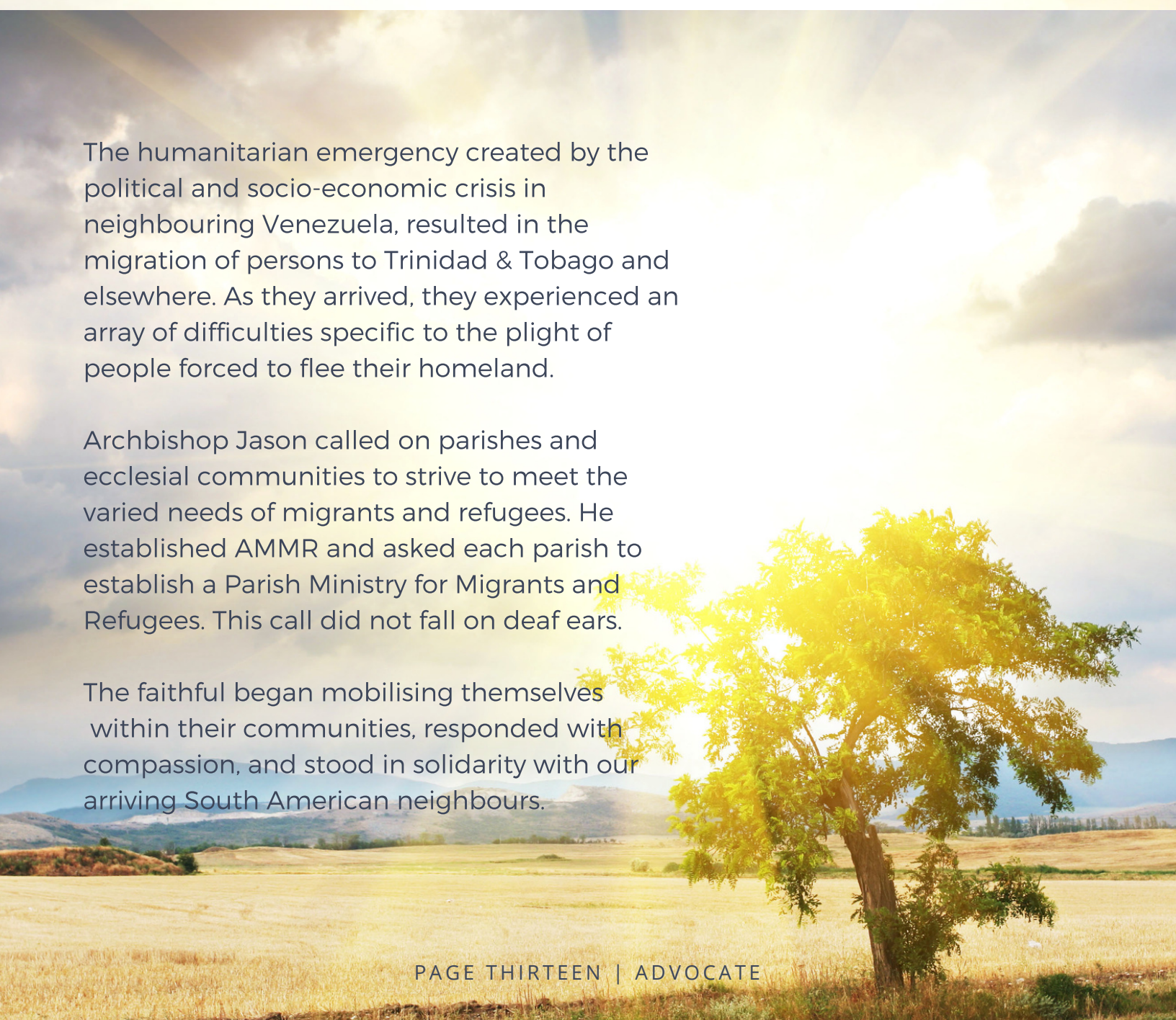
PARISH MINISTRIES FOR MIGRANTS & REFUGEES



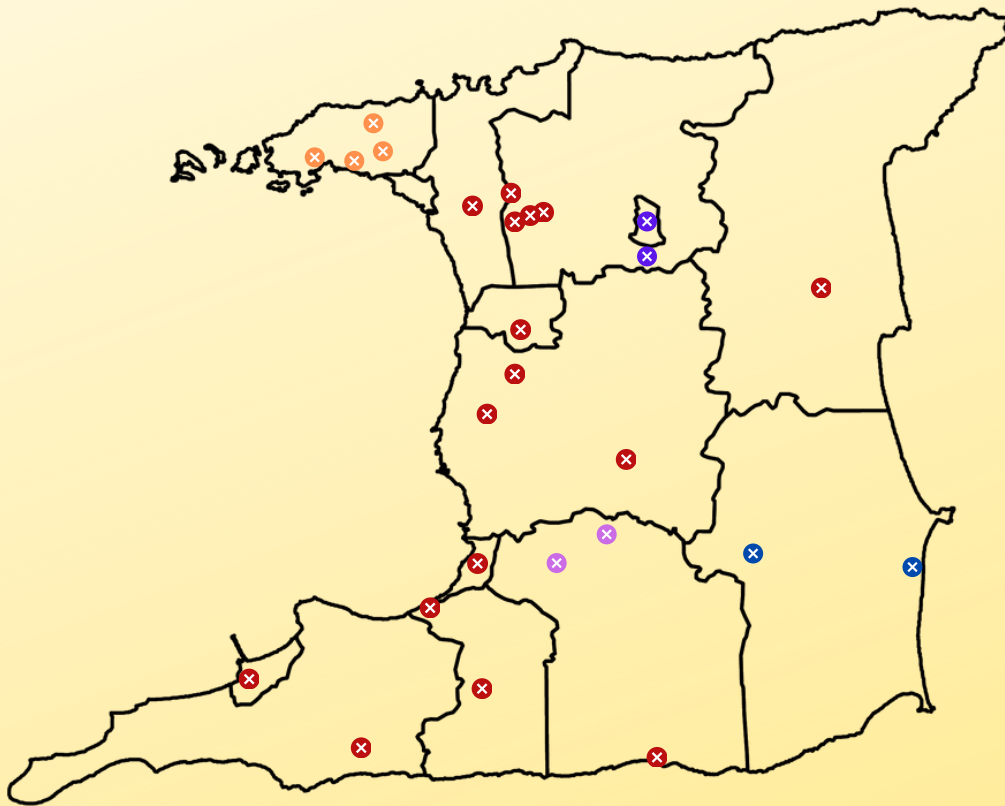
The humanitarian emergency created by the political and socio-economic crisis in neighbouring Venezuela, resulted in the migration of persons to Trinidad & Tobago and elsewhere. As they arrived, they experienced an array of difficulties specific to the plight of people forced to flee their homeland.

Archbishop Jason called on parishes and ecclesial communities to strive to meet the varied needs of migrants and refugees. He established AMMR and asked each parish to establish a Parish Ministry for Migrants and Refugees. This call did not fall on deaf ears.

The faithful began mobilising themselves within their communities, responded with compassion, and stood in solidarity with our arriving South American neighbours.



COVERAGE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE'S PARISH MINISTRIES



- | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Arima | Diego Martin (2) | Petit Valley | Scarborough |
| Carenage | La Horquetta | Princes Town | Siparia |
| Carapichaima | La Romain | Point Fortin | St. Augustine |
| Chaguanas | Mayaro | Rio Claro | St. Joseph |
| Couva | Moruga | San Fernando | Tabaquite |
| Curepe | New Grant | San Juan | Tunapuna |
| Delaford | Penal | Sangre Grande | |

Each PMMR determines its focus and charism, and belongs to the various parishes of the church. They make use of their resourcefulness to alleviate, through ministry outreaches, the suffering of migrants & refugees in whom the face of Christ is recognized.

Collectively, the PMMRs form the Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees, and are the primary means for which the church provides pastoral care to all migrants & refugees of every nationality.

These ministries are distinctly Catholic in their identity, vocation and work. It's not just social work for these folks. It's a space and opportunity for them to piously show their love for God by loving their neighbour. It's missionary. And each ministry promotes the church's social justice teachings through word and action.





LOVE
YOUR
NEIGHBOUR
AS
YOURSELF.

MATTHEW 22: 37-39

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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.

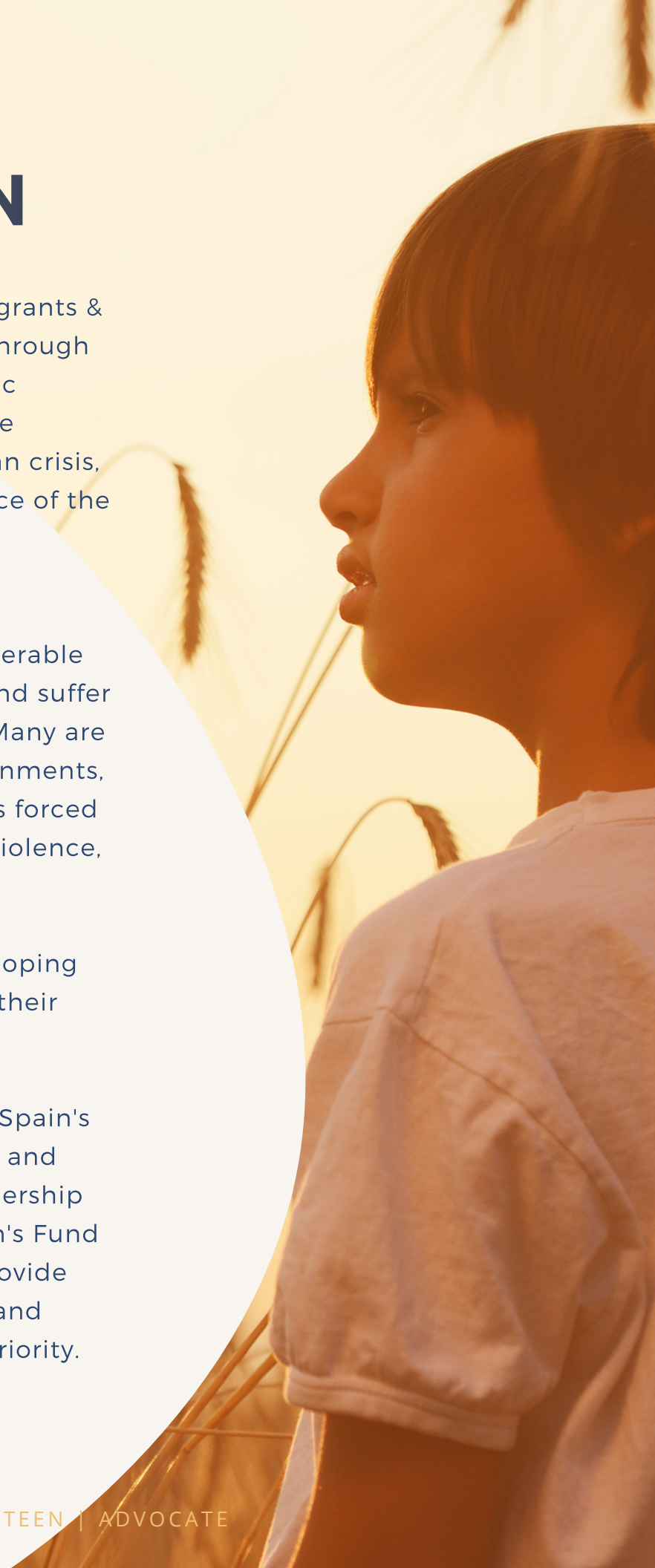
CHILD PROTECTION

The Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants & Refugees (AMMR) is addressing through interventive care, one problematic situation created as a result of the ongoing Venezuelan humanitarian crisis, namely the impact and experience of the crisis on the lives of children & adolescents.

The very young are the most vulnerable within the migrant population, and suffer as a result of the ongoing crisis. Many are unsafe, living in unhealthy environments, and subjected to dangers such as forced human trafficking, exploitation, violence, neglect, victimization and abuse.

They are also at high risk of developing deviant behaviours as a result of their lived experiences.

Using the Archdiocese of Port of Spain's community, network of churches and ministries, along with a key partnership with the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF), the AMMR is able to provide help and protection for migrant and refugee children as a matter of priority.



unicef 

for every child



CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES

The idea of creating child friendly spaces (CFS) was conceptualized for communities to protect children from danger, and at the same time provide support via a safe space for the rehabilitation of children and adolescents at risk. Child Friendly Spaces are created around the following key principles: They are secure and safe environments;

They provide a stimulating and supportive environment for children; they are built around existing structures and capacities within a community; they use a fully participatory approach to design and implementation; they provide or support integrated services and programmes; and they are inclusive and non-discriminatory.

The AMMR currently hosts child friendly spaces through Parish Ministries for Migrants & Refugees since 2019, with more being adopted by parish ministries as the programme expands throughout the Archdiocese.

CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES (CONTINUED)

The COVID-19 Pandemic currently impacting the world has presented a challenge for the programme with the temporary closure of the physical spaces. Presented with this challenge, a creative solution was introduced. A fully virtual CFS was developed to make available a virtual space for children while at home.

Although this also came with its own set of challenges, it has provided us with the opportunity to expand the programme into the online environment to make available activities and resources to participants where they live. This introduction unexpectedly added value to the programme.

Our CFS now offers a digital library of content available 24hrs to keep our kids occupied and educated. It expanded the reach of CFS to Children not in close proximity to physical spaces, and allowed for much more access, flexibility, cohesion, diversity of offerings, and better programme management, along with providing some measure of companionship while at home.



So what does a typical CFS programme include? Free & organized play, storytelling, therapy through play, non-formal educational activities, language learning, peer-counselling, life-skills training, psychosocial activities, spiritual and pastoral care.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

POPE FRANCIS CONTINUES TO URGE US TO HEAR THE CRY OF THE POOR, WHO HE SAYS: "ARE A TRUE PRESENCE OF JESUS IN OUR MIDST (MATTHEW 25:40)." HE REMINDS US OF THE NEED TO STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR. REMEMBER THE WORDS OF ST PAUL: "IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL SUFFER TOGETHER." 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...LAZARUS IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE SILENT CRY OF THE POOR THROUGHOUT THE AGES."

ALTERNATIVE CARE



The Alternative Care Programme (ACP) provides family and/or community-based care for unaccompanied and separated Venezuelan migrant and refugee children, as well as children within this community at risk of violence, abuse, exploitation, or whose parents/caregivers lack the capacity to care for them adequately.

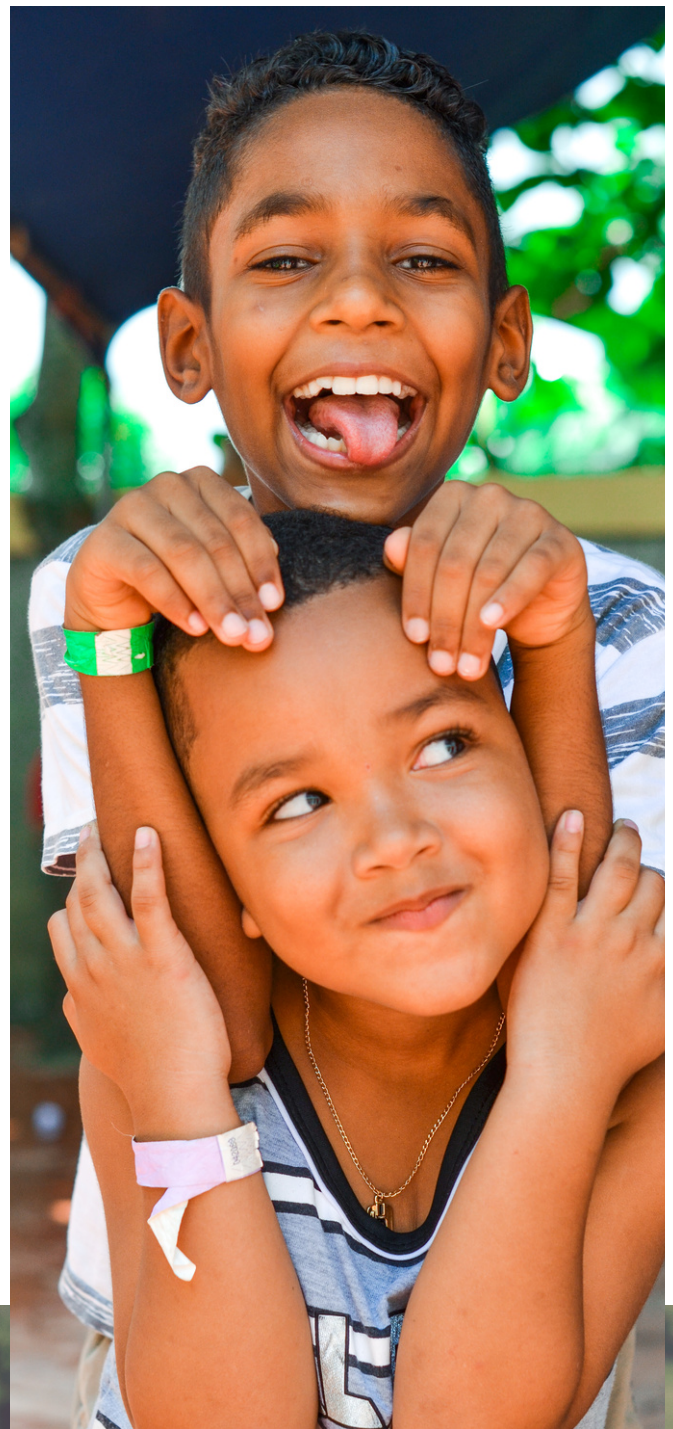
The ACP offered by the AMMR, and its parish ministry network, allows for a temporary, structured solution to address this issue in two ways: Firstly, by attracting persons interested in becoming foster parents or care supporters (which can take the form of kinship care or another type of family-based arrangement), and secondly through parish ministries' parent-based committees.



ALTERNATIVE CARE (CONTINUED)

A Familial-type support offers the best type of care and transition for children as it makes dealing with cultural differences more manageable, and provides better support for a child's development.

In the absence of a safe, family-type arrangement to care for these children, the programme is being integrated into existing parish ministry outreaches to children and families. By introducing Parent-based committees to include an oversight function of these outreaches, ministries will act as gate-keepers for children identified as being at risk, and to assist with the child protection objectives of the programme.



Through regular supervision and communication with affected children, the AMMR will provide psycho-social support to the affected children, and develop a trust relationship with them for their health & wellbeing.

HEALTH CARE OUTREACH

The Government has stated that "the only free healthcare which will be made available to registered Venezuelans is emergency medical services, primary healthcare and public health." However, even those migrants and refugees who have registered sometimes experience difficulty in accessing healthcare services at hospitals or clinics, due to a certain level of hostility towards them. Most of them are unable to afford private healthcare.

Parish ministries have taken it upon themselves to assist where they can using their own resources, to support migrants on a case by case basis to help treat their ailments. To support these ministry outreaches, the AMMR organizes health fairs across the country and hosts a virtual

'Meet the Doctor' series. We collaborate with different healthcare service providers to attend to the needs of our migrant & refugee population, offering them the opportunity to see health professionals, get medical advice, checkups, prescriptions, referrals etc. in a safe space, regardless of their documented status, mostly for free.



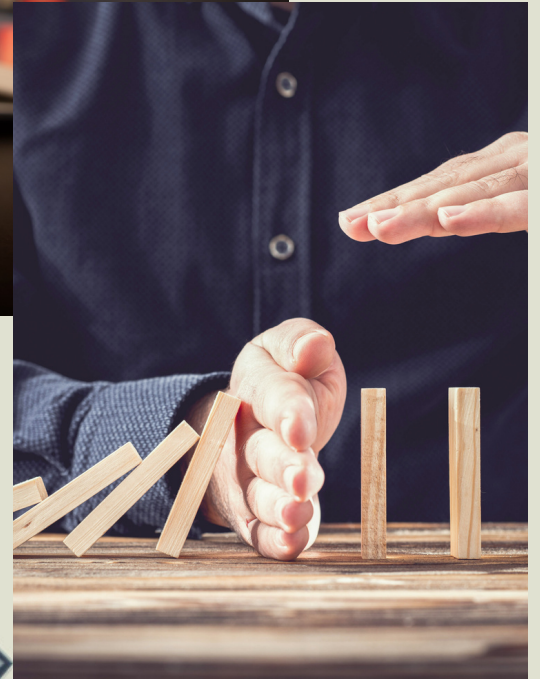


HEALTHCARE OUTREACH (CONTINUED)

The AMMR continues to expand our healthfair offerings as we partner with more actors in the field. Thus far we've been able to offer a variety of services for the benefit of participants, such as medical consultations, vaccinations, testing of sexually transmitted diseases and cervical cancer, medicine assistance, and counselling services. The local population are not excluded and can also access services offered, unless specified.

The other way the AMMR seeks to intervene is through our bi-monthly 'Meet the Doctor' Series. This series provide persons with the opportunity to meet privately with doctors in a virtual room to seek their aid and consultation. This outreach allows us to extend the reach of our healthcare service, offering access to doctors for persons unable to visit a health clinic, health fair, move around freely, live in remote areas, or feel unsafe to do so, among other reasons.

The outreach campaign facilitates the AMMR's gradual intervention into providing health services, attending to the needs of the sick, with the hope of offering more advanced healthcare opportunities to alleviate the difficulties of migrant healthcare experiences and access.



LEGAL AID CLINICS

Safety and justice are a prerequisite for peace. Social justice requires us to uphold, defend, and protect the human rights and dignity of persons.

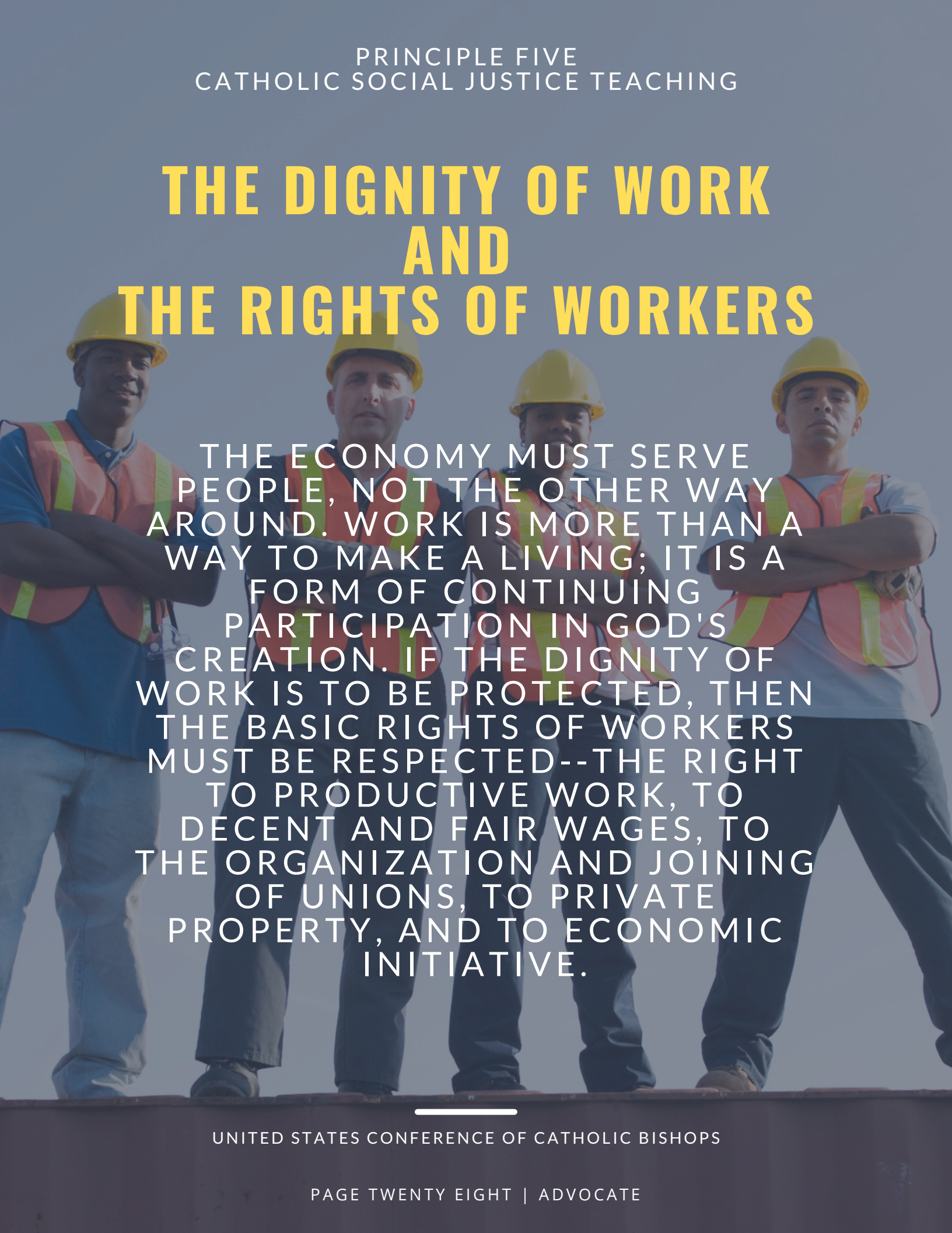
In Trinidad & Tobago, refugee laws do not exist to provide a definite measure of peace and stability to migrants & refugees fleeing their homeland, seeking safety and hopes of a better life for themselves and their families.

Due to their political and social status they face many legal challenges. and experience many forms of maltreatment, exploitation, and abuse, with little options available for

seeking legal assistance or mediation services to resolve conflicts in their daily lives.

Our Legal Aid Clinics attempt to fill this gap by offering these services to the community. They are conducted bi-monthly both virtually and in person at parishes, with the support of a team of lawyers and officials specializing in the different branches of law and community protection, to address the varied cases migrants and refugees present.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS



THE ECONOMY MUST SERVE PEOPLE, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND. 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--THE RIGHT TO PRODUCTIVE WORK, TO DECENT AND FAIR WAGES, TO THE ORGANIZATION AND JOINING OF UNIONS, TO PRIVATE PROPERTY, AND TO ECONOMIC INITIATIVE.

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY PROGRAMME

In consultation with Parish Ministries for Migrants & Refugees, it was found that available human resources was one of the main hinderances to the ability of ministries to effectively serve within their parish communities.

Along with this finding, there are a number of factors impacting on PMMRs' work in parishes, for example, insecurity/unavailability of finances, lack/absence of clerical support for their ministries, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on society, including migrants and refugees.

To address the challenge of human resources, The AMMR has developed a Social Justice Advocacy Programme. It is an immersive, humanitarian, missionary, volunteer work programme, whose mission is to inspire and promote Catholic Christian culture & social responsibility through social justice ministry action within our catholic community.

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY PROGRAMME (CONTINUED)

The Programme is open to adults aged 21-35, is three weeks long, and offered in three consecutive cycles during the months of September, October, and November,

It takes the form of a resident missionary community camp, imitating a family setting, and hosted within or in proximity to the parish community being served,

Participants are responsible for the upkeep and livelihood of the community as a family unit for the duration of the three weeks in true missionary fashion, with the support of our PMMRs.

The Advocacy Programme

Extends the reach and impact of the AMMR through our Parish Ministries to under-served migrant persons, families and communities.

Provides and develops Catholic human resources for supporting the work of Parish Ministries to Migrants & Refugees within the Archdiocese of Port of Spain.

Supports the CCSJ/AMMR in carrying out its apostolic mission through social justice advocacy and meets its humanitarian programme objectives.

Inspires and promotes a socially responsible, Catholic Christian culture, via social action, faith formation, lay community life, and missionary activity

SOCIAL JUSTICE MEDIA OUTREACH



Our Social Justice Media outreach primarily targets our local and Catholic populations. We generate all forms of media content and publications which support and highlight the religious and humanitarian work we engage in, within Trinidad & Tobago, as a united ministry to migrants and refugees within the church/community.

This outreach allows us to promote solidarity with the plight of migrants and refugees, sensitize the local community to their plight, advocate for their wellbeing, and be a channel to voice their concerns and lived experiences.

It is also used as a means to promote content which advances the Catholic Church's social justice teachings, principles and pillars, as well as our Christian values and culture.





THE VOLUNTEER OPTION

Our ministry promotes volunteerism within our communities, with the aim of creating a culture of altruism and Christian social responsibility for the support of all our parish ministries, programmes and work to care for migrants & refugees.

Recruitment of volunteers is done via our parish outreach campaigning, social media advertisements, personal invitations, and collaborating with persons, groups and institutions from within our christian community and other non-governmental, civil society organizations. Our volunteers must agree to our governing policies protecting migrants & refugees, and benefit from gaining professional

training, development, and hands on experience in the humanitarian work we engage in.

Our volunteer option not only include locals, but also members of the migrant population, as they too possess and offer their own skills and talents to serve their own community, through our ministry programmes and outreaches. Their inclusion helps make our work more effective, and creates a culture of inclusion and equality.

The AMMR is presently working to create a robust volunteer programme to further encourage and enrich all our volunteers.



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SOLIDARITY

WE ARE ONE HUMAN FAMILY WHATEVER OUR NATIONAL, RACIAL, ETHNIC, ECONOMIC, AND IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES. WE ARE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS KEEPERS, WHEREVER THEY MAY BE. LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR HAS GLOBAL DIMENSIONS IN A SHRINKING WORLD. AT THE CORE OF THE VIRTUE OF SOLIDARITY IS THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE AND PEACE. POPE PAUL VI TAUGHT THAT IF YOU WANT PEACE, WORK FOR JUSTICE.¹ THE GOSPEL CALLS US TO BE PEACEMAKERS. OUR LOVE FOR ALL OUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS DEMANDS THAT WE PROMOTE PEACE IN A WORLD SURROUNDED BY VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT.

Introducing



infospott.org

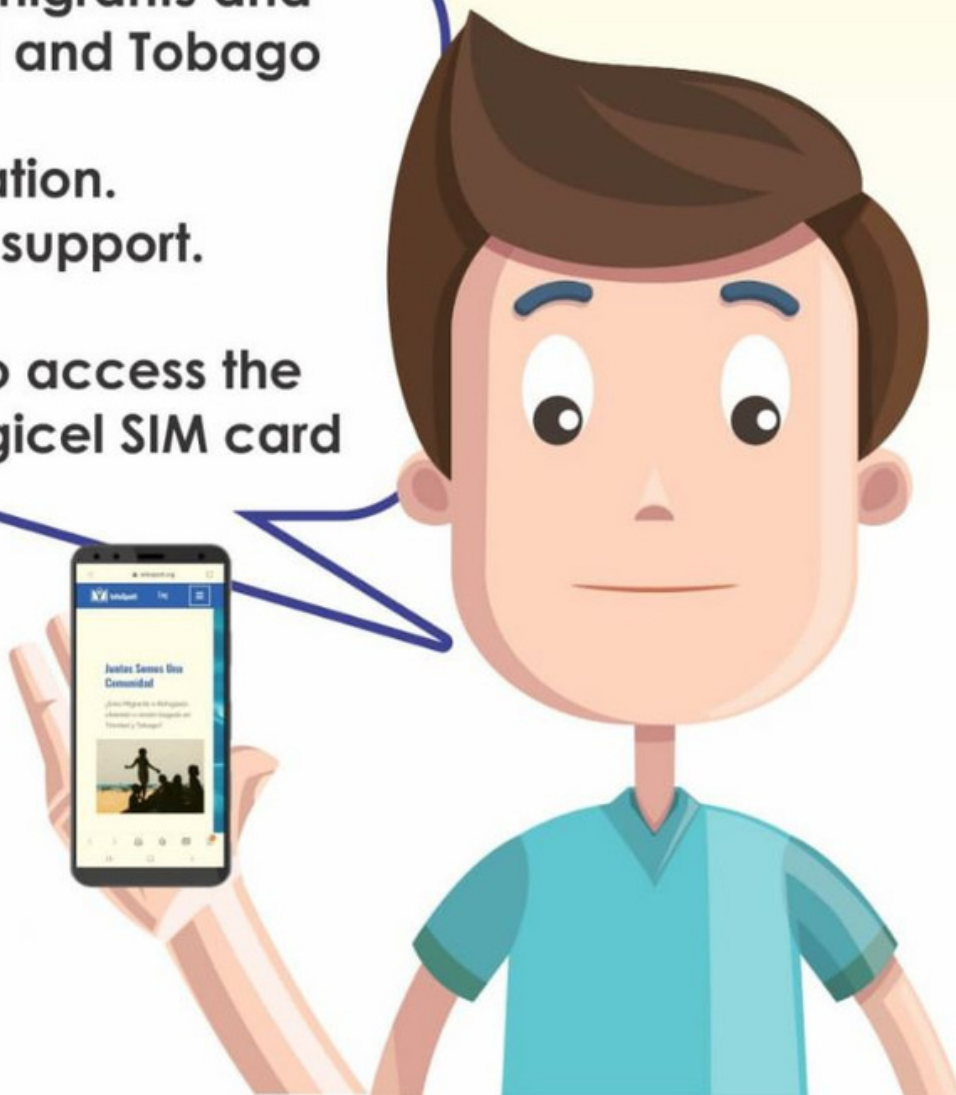
A new website for migrants and refugees in Trinidad and Tobago

Get information.
Find out about support.

No data needed to access the site if you have a Digicel SIM card



LIVING WATER
COMMUNITY



InfoSpott provides vital information to migrants and refugees from organizations across the country. For up to date and essential information on life in Trinidad and Tobago, visit our zero rated website at infospott.org. InfoSpott.org does not require cellular data if you have a Digicel SIM card, is available in Spanish and English, and is easy to use.

Find out more on <https://infospott.org>
Follow InfoSpott for more information!

Instagram: @info.spott
Facebook: @info.spott

infoSpott.org

Una fuente vital de información para
migrantes y refugiados
en Trinidad y Tobago.

Manténgase actualizado y
obtenga asistencia.

* No se necesita plan de datos
(* Solo red Digicel)



InfoSpott proporciona información vital a los migrantes y refugiados de organizaciones de todo el país. Para obtener información actualizada y esencial sobre la vida en Trinidad y Tobago, visite nuestro sitio web con calificación cero en infoSpott.org. InfoSpott.org no requiere de datos celular si tiene una tarjeta SIM Digicel, está disponible en español e inglés, y es fácil de acceso.

Descubre más sobre <https://infoSpott.org>
¡Siga InfoSpott para obtener más información!

Instagram: @info.spott
Facebook: @info.spott

MEET *Maria!*

Living Water Community: Ministry for Migrants and Refugees'
NEW Virtual Support Specialist.

Maria is here to answer
all your questions and
offer support to your
needs where possible

- Available 24/7, 365 days
- Bilingual in Spanish
and English
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Trinidad and Tobago is home to just over 24,000 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants from 39 countries. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency's mission is to uphold the human rights and dignity of these vulnerable people as they seek safety and a better life for themselves and their families. Our work focuses on ensuring those forcibly displaced are able to rebuild their lives safely. We also engage host communities to embrace inclusion and integration, and to combat xenophobia, racism and discrimination towards refugees and migrants. We work with the Government, other UN agencies, as well as our implementing partners - The Living Water Community, the Rape Crisis Society and the Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago - to provide the protection, access to services and solutions these people of concern desperately need.

UNHCR also administers the Equal Place programme, along with its partners, UNICEF and the Living Water Community. Equal Place is a temporary solution that allows refugee and migrant children access to education, since they are currently unable to enroll in public school without special permission. The programme, therefore, provides a smooth transition for non-national children into the formal education system. There are currently about 1,300 students in the programme, which is delivered through online learning platforms, NotesMaster in English and Dawere in Spanish. Equal Place is also supported by the TT-Venezuela Solidarity Network; the Ministry of Education; the Catholic Education Board of Management (CEBM); the Pan-American Development Foundation (PADF); and the Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR).

CONTACT

ADDRESS: PRINCES COURT, CORNER OF KEATE & PEMBROKE STREETS, PORT-OF-SPAIN, TRINIDAD
HOURS OF OPERATION: MONDAY TO FRIDAY 8:00 AM TO 4:00 PM, EXCEPT FOR UN HOLIDAYS
TELEPHONE: +1 868 235 3810 (FROM 8:00 AM TO 4:00 PM)

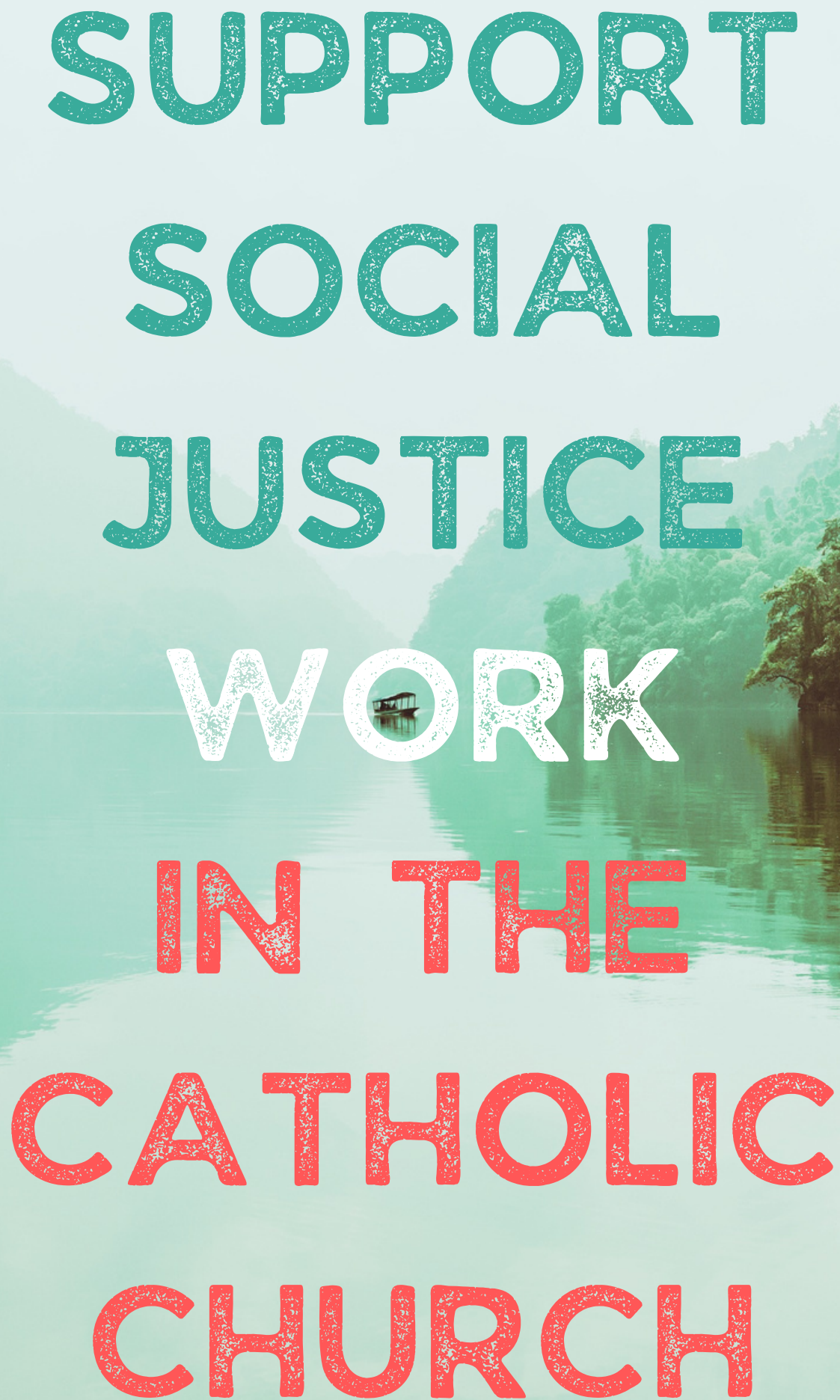
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CHURCH**



**CATHOLIC COMMISSION
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
(CCSJ)/ ARCHDIOCESE'S
MINISTRY FOR MIGRANTS
AND REFUGEES (AMMR)**

The Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ) /Archdiocese's Ministry For Migrants & Refugees (AMMR)

**SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY | CHILD-FRIENDLY
SPACES | ALTERNATIVE CARE | VOLUNTEERISM |
PARISH MINISTRIES FOR MIGRANTS & REFUGEES |
HEALTHCARE OUTREACH CAMPAIGN | LEGAL AID**

Catholic Social Teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. The CCSJ/AMMR envision a transformed community/world where Justice, Peace and Love prevail, as divinely ordained by God.

In 2018 the Catholic Commission for Social Justice was asked by Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon to lead this ministry in the Archdiocese and to assist parishes and religious communities in establishing and operationalising this important ministry.

For information on how to volunteer with us or to donate please visit our website www.rcsocialjustice.org or our Facebook page CCSJ Trinidad and Tobago. You can also follow us on Instagram social_justicett.





LIVING WATER COMMUNITY

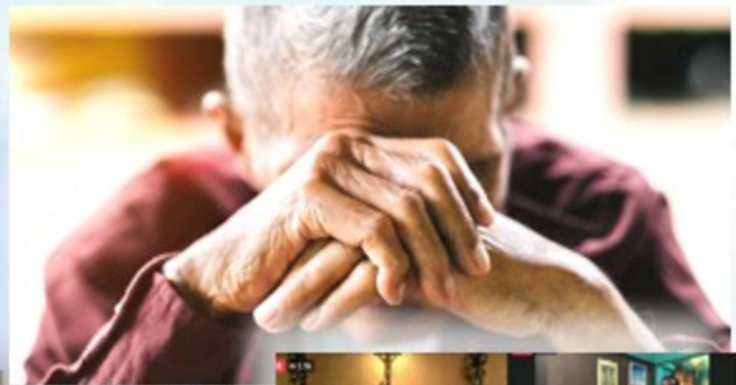
is a lay Catholic, non-profit organisation seeking to bring refuge and strength through its various social, pastoral and communications life-giving ministries.

Its Social Ministries include feeding and clothing the poor and destitute; housing and caring for abandoned children and youth; providing for the needs of migrants and refugees, the underserved, the homeless and many others.

Its Pastoral Ministries bring inspiration and spiritual nourishment through prayer meetings, Catholic liturgy, virtual bible and formation classes, seminars, counselling and spiritual direction.



Its Communications Ministry, through Trinity TV, a 24/7 cable television station and the digital presence of websites and active social media pages, offers the Good News of the gospel message and serves the wider Archdiocesan community.



Every little drop can help!

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- Deed of Covenant
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- Donations of grocery items towards Helping Hand Ministry
- Donations of clothing/Shoes/ accessories for people in need
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- Donation of time (skill and unskilled volunteers welcomed)



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St. Andrews Home Belmont



CSDP Riverside Carpark




Mason Hall Tobago

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All queries can be directed to the Secretariat at 625-3562.

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Your Contribution Counts!

You have helped the Roman Catholic Church provide **24,000 food hampers each month.**

Each hamper feeds a family severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please continue to show your care to these families and more.

Feed a family of four for two weeks

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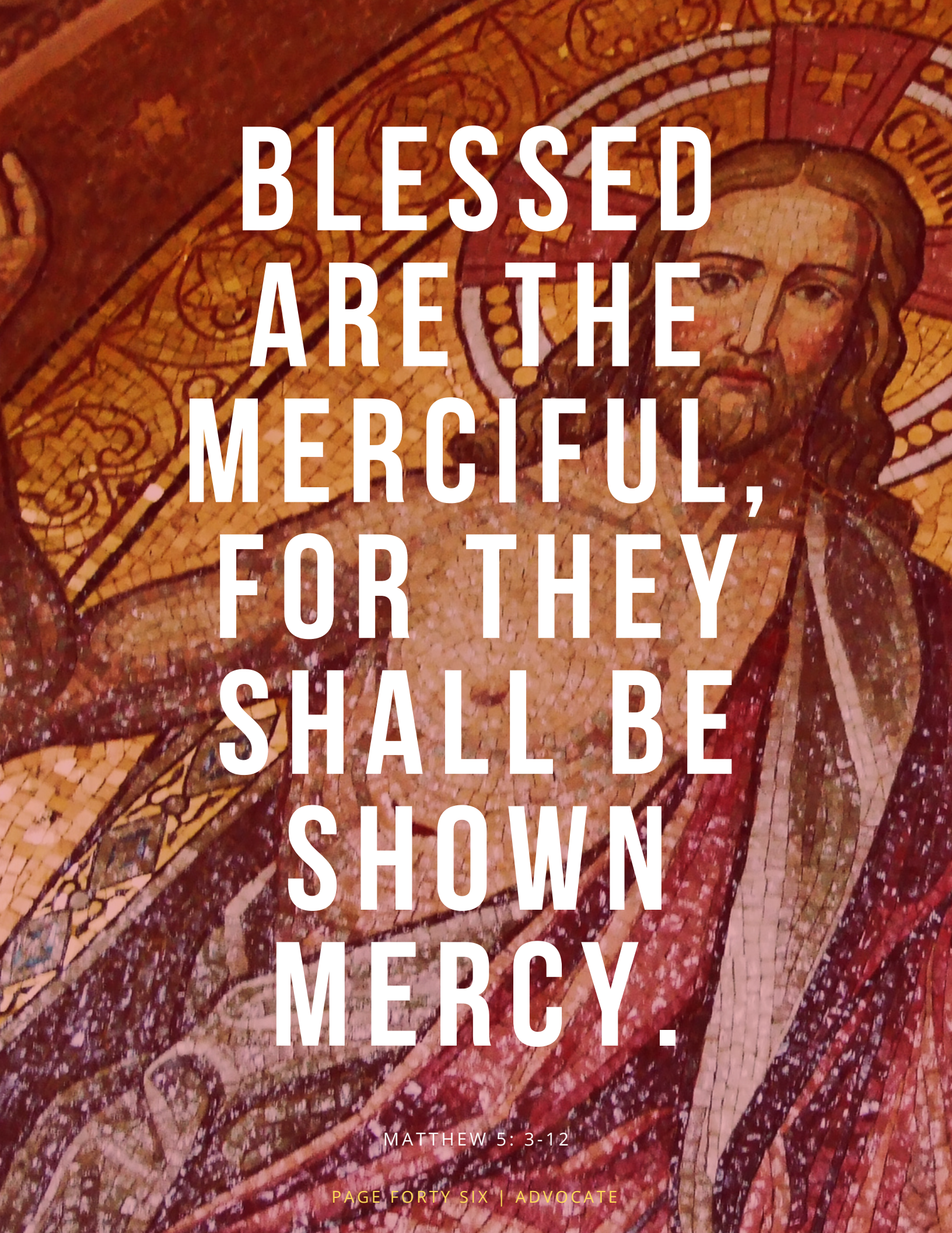
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623-7620

A detailed mosaic of Jesus Christ, showing his face with a beard and long hair, wearing a red and white robe. The background is a golden mosaic with intricate patterns. The text is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

**BLESSED
ARE THE
MERCIFUL,
FOR THEY
SHALL BE
SHOWN
MERCY.**

MATTHEW 5: 3-12

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

Recently someone remonstrated with me, stating that the Catholic Church should not “get involved in refugee and migrant issues”. I was floored by her reasoning—particularly as she is also Catholic. Our Church has always urged us to have a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. This is a key social justice principle.

If Christians are disciples of Christ, if we are to follow in His footsteps, if we are to build His Kingdom here on earth, if we are to recognise Him in the face of our neighbour, then we must take heed of His words in the Gospel of Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21): “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.”

In challenging situations, Christians often ask: “What would Jesus do?” Compassion is at the heart of the tenets of all Faith communities.

Compassion should lead each one of us to reach out and help refugees and migrants in our communities, in whatever way we can.

World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2020 (WDMR) was observed on Sunday, September 27. The theme of Pope Francis’ message in 2020 year was: Like Jesus Christ, forced to flee, reminding us that the young Jesus and His family were displaced persons and refugees, forced to flee to Egypt to save Jesus. We have seen the result of the fire that gutted Moria, the largest migrant camp in Europe on the Greek island of Lesbos, where nearly 13,000 persons are now without shelter. Migrants from more than 70 different countries lived there, and some had been diagnosed with COVID-19.

In his message, Pope Francis urged us to discover the reality of internally displaced. He focused on the need for pastoral care for them, recognising that their suffering has only been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vatican News stated: “The issue of migrants and refugees has been one of the focal points of the pontificate of Pope Francis. This year he has devoted his Message to the millions of men, women and children who are internally displaced by conflict, poverty and climate change. He calls for attention and new policies for the world’s growing number of internally displaced people, and embraces all who are

suffering precariousness, abandonment, marginalization and rejection as a result of Covid-19. The Pope pointed out that ‘Situations of conflict and humanitarian emergencies, aggravated by climate change, are increasing the numbers of displaced persons and affecting people already living in a state of dire poverty.’

According to the 2020 Global Report on Internal Displacement, conflict and disasters triggered 33.4 million new internal displacements across 145 countries and territories in 2019. The Pope noted that conflict, violence, and disasters continue to uproot millions of people from their homes every year. He said the severity of the global crisis caused by the pandemic has ‘relegated to the bottom of national political agendas those urgent international efforts essential to saving lives.’

Reminding Christians that we are called to see the face of Christ in the faces of those who suffer, he urges Christians to respond to this pastoral challenge with the four verbs indicated in his Message for this Day in 2018: welcome, protect, promote and integrate.” The six sub-themes in his Message are expressed by six pairs of verbs that, he said, “deal with very practical actions and are linked together in a relationship of cause and effect”:

to know in order to understand
to draw near so as to serve
to listen in order to reconcile
to share and thus to grow
to involve in order to promote
to collaborate and therefore to build

Pope Francis concludes his message with a prayer that reflects the theme of the Message. CCSJ/AMMR is asking the Faithful to say this prayer daily. As we pray, let’s also remember the many migrants and refugees who have come to our shores seeking peace, and who face many challenges. Let’s promote a culture of encounter/solidarity/inclusivity.





World Day of Migrants and Refugees

2020

Father, you entrusted to Saint Joseph what you held most precious: the child Jesus and his Mother, in order to protect them from the dangers and threats of the wicked. Grant that we may experience his protection and help. May he, who shared in the sufferings of those who flee from the hatred of the powerful, console and protect all our brothers and sisters driven by war, poverty and necessity to leave their homes and their lands to set out as refugees for safer places.

Help them, through the intercession of Saint Joseph, to find the strength to persevere, give them comfort in sorrows and courage amid their trials. Grant to those who welcome them some of the tender love of this just and wise father, who loved Jesus as a true son and sustained Mary at every step of the way. May he, who earned his bread by the work of his hands, watch over those who have seen everything in life taken away and obtain for them the dignity of a job and the serenity of a home.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, whom Saint Joseph saved by fleeing to Egypt, and trusting in the intercession of the Virgin Mary, whom he loved as a faithful husband in accordance with your will.

Amen.

BUILDING BRIDGES

“The Church is ever mindful that Jesus Christ was himself a refugee, that as a child he had to flee with his parents from his native land in order to escape persecution. In every age, therefore, the Church feels herself called to help refugees.” – St Pope John Paul II, 1981.


Pope Francis has mandated the Roman Catholic church internationally to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate migrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking. Sadly, while Trinidad and Tobago acceded to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol in November 2000, to date, these have not been incorporated into domestic legislation. A National Policy to Address Refugee and Asylum Matters in Trinidad & Tobago was adopted by Cabinet in June 2014. Currently, it is understood that this is being amended. However, to date there is no legislation to give weight to any policy.

In May 2018, Archbishop Jason Gordon, following a meeting with members of the Vicars' Council, established the Archdiocese's Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR) to support work that has been in train for more than 30 years by the Ecclesial Community, Living Water Community, and other organisations. Living Water Community is the implementing partner of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

The work of the AMMR falls within the remit of the Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ), whose work is grounded in the Biblical concept of Social Justice and Catholic Social Teaching. We are challenged by the Mission of Jesus to bring about a New World Order based on truth, love, justice, freedom, and forgiveness - the pillars of peace.

NOT WALLS

BY LEELA RAMDEEN, CHAIR, CCSJ & AMMR,
& DIRECTOR, CREDI



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.

AMMR has been working diligently to support parishes as they launch their Parish Ministries for Migrants and Refugees (PMMR), seeking to strengthen the capacity of Catholics in our Archdiocese and by extension, the wider community, to meet the varied needs of migrants and refugees in T&T. Materials, including 2 Toolkits, have been produced and distributed to all Parishes. Training for PMMRs is on-going.

We know that transformation won't take place overnight. It is important to start/maintain a conversation in each parish to raise awareness of the issues involved in building such a Ministry and to ask questions when necessary. Those involved to date are aware of the difference that parishioners can make in the lives of migrants and refugees who come to our shores.

We urge parishes to ensure that this Ministry is not built in isolation from other parish ministries. For example, it is imperative that the Society of St Vincent de Paul works collaboratively with PMMRs so that tasks are not duplicated. Indeed, the entire parish should work together to welcome the stranger. Matthew 25: 31-46 remains a key scriptural message underpinning this Ministry.

In spite of the challenges that we face in seeking to build this Ministry in the absence of domestic legislation, there is much that we can and must do as Catholics to reach out in love and solidarity as we seek to build bridges of hope and to build an inclusive, fraternal society. Parishes have recognised the need to provide: food, clothing, shelter, basic health care, psycho-social and spiritual support, education for children and adults e.g., English language instruction, translation services, help in adjusting to T&T's culturally diverse society, friendship, spaces where they can meet to socialise and so on.

While it is acknowledged that xenophobia exists in our society, we must celebrate the openness and generosity demonstrated by parishioners and others in the wider community to date. This is heartening and augurs well for this Ministry. The positive attitudes being expressed at parish level is an indication that the faithful is up to meeting the challenges and opportunities that exist.

Love of neighbour requires us to build BRIDGES and not walls. It is important to recognise that migrants and refugees arrived here with many skills and talents. Many are unable to use these as they are unable to work. However, parishes are finding ways of drawing on these skills and of promoting the dignity of each one. What has been useful also at parish meetings, is the presence of individuals who now live here but who came from the countries from which some migrants and refugees originate. Parishes should draw on their knowledge in any needs analysis that is being conducted.

Let us pray to Our Lady of the Wayside, to whom His Grace has entrusted this Ministry, to intercede for us that this initiative bears much fruit.



CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

WE SHOW OUR RESPECT FOR THE CREATOR BY OUR STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION. CARE FOR THE EARTH IS NOT JUST AN EARTH DAY SLOGAN, IT IS A REQUIREMENT OF OUR FAITH. WE ARE CALLED TO PROTECT PEOPLE AND THE PLANET, LIVING OUR FAITH IN RELATIONSHIP WITH ALL OF GODS CREATION. THIS ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE HAS FUNDAMENTAL MORAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED.

TOWARDS AN EVER WIDER “WE”

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE 107th WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2021
27 September 2021



TOWARDS AN EVER WIDER “WE”

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 107th WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2021 27 September 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, I expressed a concern and a hope that remain uppermost in my thoughts: “Once this health crisis passes, our worst response would be to plunge even more deeply into feverish consumerism and new forms of egotistic self-preservation. God willing, after all this, we will think no longer in terms of ‘them’ and ‘those’, but only ‘us’” (No. 35). For this reason, I have wished to devote the Message for this year’s World Day of Migrants and Refugees to the theme, *Towards An Ever Wider “We”*, in order to indicate a clear horizon for our common journey in this world.

The history of this “we” That horizon is already present in God’s creative plan: “God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply’” (Gen 1:27-28). God created us male and female, different yet complementary, in order to form a “we” destined to become ever more numerous in the succession of generations. God created us in his image, in the image of his own triune being, a communion in diversity. When, in disobedience we turned away from God, he in his mercy wished to offer us a path of reconciliation, not as individuals but as a people, a “we”, meant to embrace the entire human family, without exception: “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them” (Rev 21:3).

Salvation history thus has a “we” in its beginning and a “we” at its end, and at its centre the mystery of Christ, who died and rose so “that they may all be one” (Jn 17:21). The present time, however, shows that this “we” willed by God is broken and fragmented, wounded and disfigured. This becomes all the more evident in moments of great crisis, as is the case with the current pandemic. Our “we”, both in the wider world and within the Church, is crumbling and cracking due to myopic and aggressive forms of nationalism (cf. *Fratelli Tutti*, 11) and radical individualism (cf. *ibid.*, 105). And the highest price is being paid by those who most easily become viewed as others: foreigners, migrants, the marginalized, those living on the existential peripheries. The truth however is that we are all in the same boat and called to work together so that there will be no more walls that separate us, no longer others, but only a single “we”, encompassing all of humanity.

TOWARDS AN EVER WIDER “WE”

Thus I would like to use this World Day to address a twofold appeal, first to the Catholic faithful and then all the men and women of our world, to advance together towards an ever wider “we”. A Church that is more and more “catholic” For the members of the Catholic Church, this appeal entails a commitment to becoming ever more faithful to our being “catholic”, as Saint Paul reminded the community in Ephesus: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph 4:4-5).

Indeed the Church’s catholicity, her universality, must be embraced and expressed in every age, according to the will and grace of the Lord who promised to be with us always, until the end of the age (cf. Mt 28:20). The Holy Spirit enables us to embrace everyone, to build communion in diversity, to unify differences without imposing a depersonalized uniformity. In encountering the diversity of foreigners, migrants and refugees, and in the intercultural dialogue that can emerge from this encounter, we have an opportunity to grow as Church and to enrich one another. All the baptized, wherever they find themselves, are by right members of both their local ecclesial community and the one Church, dwellers in one home and part of one family.

The Catholic faithful are called to work together, each in the midst of his or her own community, to make the Church become ever more inclusive as she carries out the mission entrusted to the Apostles by Jesus Christ: “As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment” (Mt 10:7-8).

In our day, the Church is called to go out into the streets of every existential periphery in order to heal wounds and to seek out the straying, without prejudice or fear, without proselytising, but ready to widen her tent to embrace everyone. Among those dwelling in those existential peripheries, we find many migrants and refugees, displaced persons and victims of trafficking, to whom the Lord wants his love to be manifested and his salvation preached. “The current influx of migrants can be seen as a new “frontier” for mission, a privileged opportunity to proclaim Jesus Christ and the Gospel message at home, and to bear concrete witness to the Christian faith in a spirit of charity and profound esteem for other religious communities. The encounter with migrants and refugees of other denominations and religions represents a fertile ground for the growth of open and enriching ecumenical and interreligious dialogue” (Address to the National Directors of Pastoral Care for Migrants, 22 September 2017).

TOWARDS AN EVER WIDER “WE”

An Ever More Inclusive World

I also make this appeal to journey together towards an ever wider “we” to all men and women, for the sake of renewing the human family, building together a future of justice and peace, and ensuring that no one is left behind. Our societies will have a “colourful” future, enriched by diversity and by cultural exchanges. Consequently, we must even now learn to live together in harmony and peace. I am always touched by the scene in the Acts of the Apostles when, on the day of the Church’s “baptism” at Pentecost, immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit, the people of Jerusalem hear the proclamation of salvation: “We... Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power” (2:9-11).

This is the ideal of the new Jerusalem (cf. Is 60; Rev 21:3), where all peoples are united in peace and harmony, celebrating the goodness of God and the wonders of creation. To achieve this ideal, however, we must make every effort to break down the walls that separate us and, in acknowledging our profound interconnection, build bridges that foster a culture of encounter. Today’s migration movements offer an opportunity for us to overcome our fears and let ourselves be enriched by the diversity of each person’s gifts. Then, if we so desire, we can transform borders into privileged places of encounter, where the miracle of an ever wider “we” can come about.

I invite all men and women in our world to make good use of the gifts that the Lord has entrusted to us to preserve and make his creation even more beautiful. “A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, ‘Do business with these until I come back’” (Lk 19:12-13). The Lord will also demand of us an account of our work! In order to ensure the proper care of our common home, we must become a “we” that is ever wider and more co-responsible, in the profound conviction that whatever good is done in our world is done for present and future generations. Ours must be a personal and collective commitment that cares for all our brothers and sisters who continue to suffer, even as we work towards a more sustainable, balanced and inclusive development. A commitment that makes no distinction between natives and foreigners, between residents and guests, since it is a matter of a treasure we hold in common, from whose care and benefits no one should be excluded.

TOWARDS AN EVER WIDER “WE”

The Dream Begins

The prophet Joel predicted that the messianic future would be a time of dreams and visions inspired by the Spirit: “I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:28). We are called to dream together, fearlessly, as a single human family, as companions on the same journey, as sons and daughters of the same earth that is our common home, sisters and brothers all (cf. Fratelli Tutti, 8).

Prayer

Holy, beloved Father,
your Son Jesus taught us
that there is great rejoicing in heaven
whenever someone lost is found,
whenever someone excluded,
rejected or discarded
is gathered into our “we”,
which thus becomes ever wider.

We ask you to grant the followers
of Jesus, and all people of good will,
the grace to do your will on earth.

Bless each act of welcome and
outreach that draws those in exile
into the “we” of community and of the
Church, so that our earth may truly
become what you yourself created it to
be: the common home of all our brothers
and sisters. Amen.

Rome, Saint John Lateran,
3 May 2021
Feast of Saints Philip and James,
Apostles

Oración

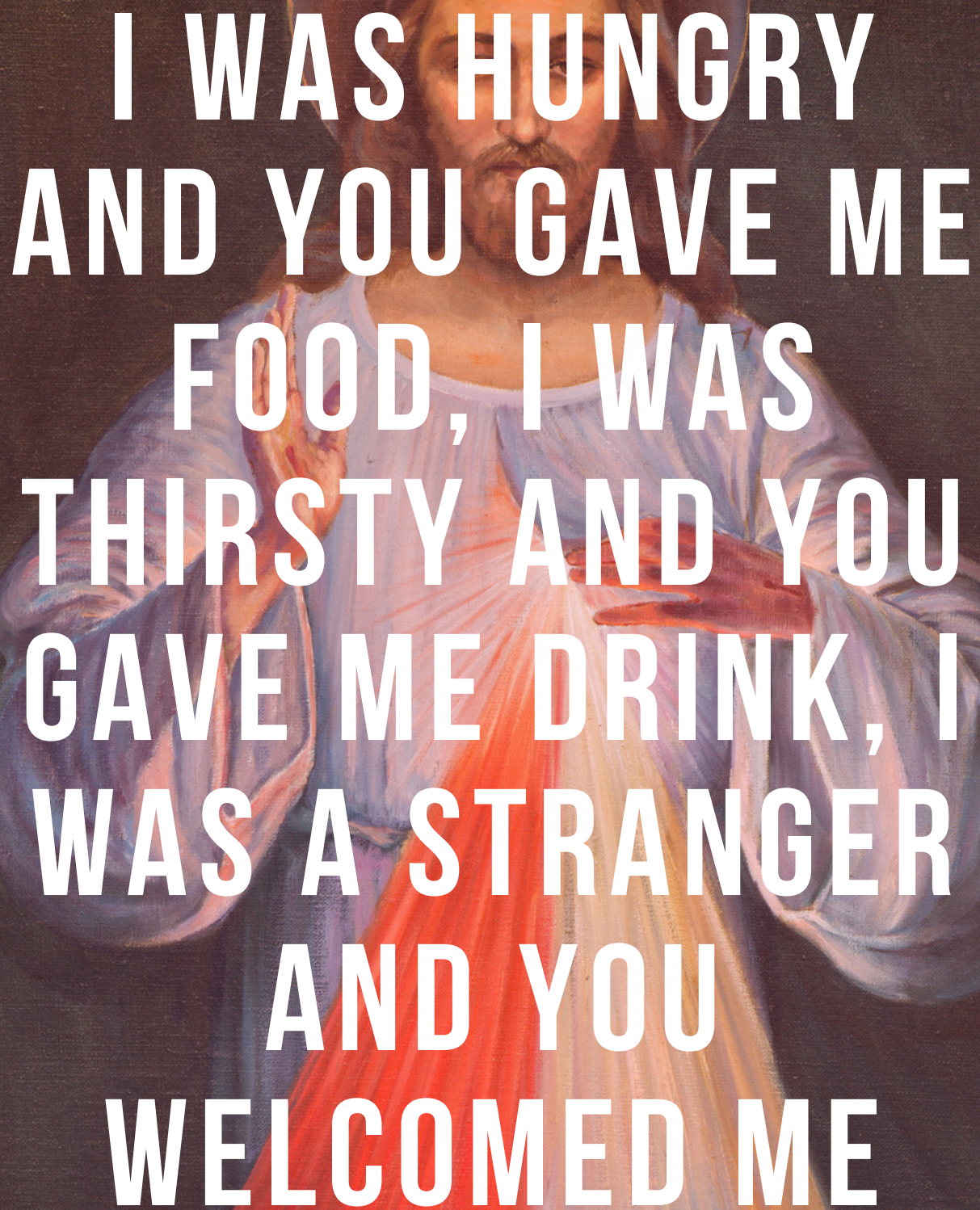
Santo y amado Padre,
tu Hijo Jesús nos enseñó
que hay un gran regocijo en el cielo
cada vez que se encuentra a alguien
perdido cuando alguien excluido,
rechazado o descartado es reunido en
nuestro “nosotros”, que así se amplía
cada vez más.

Te pedimos que concedas a los
seguidores de Jesús y a todas las
personas de buena voluntad, la gracia de
hacer tu voluntad en la tierra.

Bendice cada acto de acogida y de
divulgación que atrae a los exiliados
al “nosotros” de la comunidad y de la
Iglesia para que nuestra tierra llegue a
ser realmente lo que tú mismo has
creado que sea la casa común de todos
nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Amén.

Roma, San Juan de Letrán,
3 de mayo de 2021
Fiesta de los Santos Felipe y Santiago,
Apóstoles

Franciscus



**I WAS HUNGRY
AND YOU GAVE ME
FOOD, I WAS
THIRSTY AND YOU
GAVE ME DRINK, I
WAS A STRANGER
AND YOU
WELCOMED ME**

MATTHEW 25: 34 - 36

CONTACT US



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