

Be peacebuilders

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MEDIA RELEASE

The Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ) urges citizens to be *Peacebuilders* in our land/world this Christmas. During this season of Advent, as we await the birth of the Christ-child, the Prince of Peace, let us remember that we must not be armchair Christians waiting passively.

This is a time of active hope; hope that the living Christ, who lives in and among us, will strengthen us to save our beloved country and our world which are scarred by violence and discord; hope that God will fill our hearts with His mercy, love, compassion and forgiveness so that we will live as honest/upright citizens.

Let us all take heed of Archbishop Harris' words in his Pastoral Letter, *Return to Hospitality*, and reflect on whether we live in silos or in community. Ask yourself: "What can I do to build peace, for example, starting with myself and extending to those in my home/family/neighbourhood/workplace/school/university?"

Let us not be daunted by the enormity of the task of building peace. Remember the words of St Teresa of Calcutta: "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

CCSJ offers some examples of ways in which we can demonstrate that we in T&T care about our fellow human beings and about our environment:

1. Pray. T&T/the world need our prayers that all wars and hostilities, including runaway crime in T&T, will cease and that people will turn their weapons into plough shares. Let us pray that the Christ-child will touch the hearts of those in authority and inspire them to govern wisely and to use the resources of the nation to build the common good.

2. Parishes should form *befriending teams* that will be active throughout the year. Befriend and build caring relationships with those in your communities who may be poor, homeless, depressed, stressed, lonely, isolated, and/or have lost loved ones. The strength of our nation depends on the strength of our people. Therefore, the mental health of our citizens should be our concern also;
3. T&T is an aging society. Reach out to the elderly during this season, particularly those who may have no one to visit them. Share some Christmas cheer with them. Discover the talents of our senior citizens and draw on these as you seek to build our knowledge-based society;
4. Advent is a good time to take action to address child abuse, domestic abuse and strife in families. This is a time of healing also, so let's all make an effort to reconcile with those with whom we have conflict.
5. Don't drink and drive, and be your brother's/sister's keeper by encouraging others to do abide by the law also.
6. With all the Christmas wrapping, empty bottles etc., remember ecological/environmental justice and dispose of your garbage responsibly.

Let us all choose to be Peacebuilders. CCSJ wishes everyone a happy and holy Christmas. May the Prince of Peace reign in our hearts always.

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