

MEDIA RELEASE:

CCSJ calls for self-control in dress and behaviour during Carnival

The Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ) urges citizens and visitors to our blessed T&T to exercise self-control and modesty in dress and behaviour during this Carnival season. A lack of modesty creates a fertile ground for individuals to rid themselves of social responsibility or ethical standards. If we don't accept our own worth as individuals and pursue personal excellence, how will we build positive relations with others?

As our country celebrates its 50th Anniversary of Independence this year, let us demonstrate that we are a people of dignity; a people who abhor reckless behaviour and who practise self respect, respect for others and responsibility for all our actions. And if such action requires us to swim against the tide, then let us be strong and be determined not to model ourselves on the behaviour of the world around us, but let our behaviour change, modelled by our new mind. (Romans 12:2)

Leela Ramdeen, Chair of CCSJ says: "You and I can put our country on the right path to achieve integral human development. We can do so by our example; by the way in which we live our lives. The dignity of the human person is the foundation of the Catholic Church's social justice principles. To live truly human lives, we must reject behaviour that diminishes our dignity; we must rise to the challenge of revitalizing our culture and identity.

"A sense of decorum seems to fly through the window at Carnival time. There seems to be no shame or embarrassment by those who are improperly dressed or who engage in lewd dancing. Those who fall prey to moral relativism believe that anything goes nowadays. If it feels good, do it. That kind of thinking has brought us to this juncture in our history. St Theresa of Avila urges: 'Be modest in all your words and works.'"

Our forebears worked long and hard to build this country. They passed the baton to us so that we will continue the important work of nation-building. Our young people look to us for leadership. We adults must model modesty so that our youths will be inspired to follow our lead. Let us be true role-models and witnesses to the various faiths that we say we profess by leading our youths in the right direction.

We are a sleeping giant. It's time to wake up and act to stem the tide of irresponsible behaviour among our citizens and regain some of the values that are fast being eroded in TT. Once again CCSJ challenges the media during this Carnival season to focus on those who are dressed decently/modestly and who behave in a decent manner. We end with the advice of Archbishop Joseph Harris C.S.Sp. as outlined in Catholic News on Sunday 12 February:

“As we draw closer to Carnival, we recognize the right of children, young people and adults to have a ‘good time. As adult Catholics (some of us are parents or teachers), we all have a responsibility to ensure by example and correction that a ‘good time’ does not have to diminish our dignity as persons or lead others along paths that are self-destructive. Let us all strive to enjoy ourselves in a manner that is harmonious with our dignity as people of God.”

CCSJ wishes you a happy and safe Carnival. **For further information contact Leela Ramdeen, Chair of CCSJ on 299 8945**