

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 To establish an effective, efficient, and economically run Justice Desk. The Commission will ensure that effective and efficient mechanisms are put in place for dealing with the Commission's finances. The Commission will be responsible for agreeing and monitoring the allocation of resources to Standing Committees and to other areas of its work via the annual budget. The planning process and on-going review will seek to ensure that appropriate management practices, processes and controls are in place and functioning effectively. This would include the appointment of a full-time Secretary to the Commission, agreement on a logo and headed paper for the Commission and so on;
- 1.2 To engage in strategic planning of the work of the Commission. This will include determining a vision and prioritising from the list of activities envisaged. This would be done in consultation with other key individuals, such as Episcopal Vicars and priests, in order to respond to their needs;
- 1.3 To analyse the structural causes of injustice in Trinidad & Tobago/the World. This will involve keeping abreast of developments in relation to social justice;
- 1.4 To work towards systemic change promoting social justice in Trinidad & Tobago/the world in the light of the Gospel and of the social teaching of the Church. The Commission would seek to act as a catalyst for change and will work with other individuals/concerned bodies, to find solutions to the social problems facing society/the world today (see 1.13 below). Strategies in this area would include creating effective working links with the 5 Episcopal Vicars, parish priests, the Vicar for Communications, the Episcopal Delegate for Education, the Youth Secretariat, Family Life Commission, other local and regional Archdiocesan groups/organisations, and all those who will be involved in implementing the Synod's resolutions as identified by His Grace;
- 1.5 To conduct an audit in parishes to identify, recognise and utilise the knowledge, skills, experience, and competence of parishioners and others whose expertise could be drawn on to support the work of the Commission and its Standing Committees;
- 1.6 To maintain the prophetic voice of the Church by:
 - 1.6.1 becoming involved in advocacy and public debate on selected issues relating to social injustice in order to be a social conscience and a moral force, for example, responding to political, social and economic issues of national/international significance that arise in society/societies, including comment on government(s) policies, awareness raising, and the promotion of social justice in the broader community;
 - 1.6.2 advocating appropriate changes in public policy. The Commission will use the principles of Catholic social teaching to test the justness of public

policy. For example, Catholic social teaching is concerned that public policy does not undermine the primacy of the family. The State exists in order to protect the rights of the individual, the family and society and not stifle them. God requires both charity and justice, and justice can often be achieved only through the mechanism of Government.

As stated in Gaudium et Spes 76: "The Church is not bound to any political system. But she has the right to pass moral judgements, even on matters touching the political order whenever basic personal rights...make such judgements necessary;

- 1.6.3 contributing to the public debate on directions for TT;
 - 1.6.4 standing in solidarity with those who are marginalised or whose human rights have been violated; and
 - 1.6.5 using a variety of media to promote social justice e.g. speaking/writing to the press, including the Catholic News, promptly and with clarity on social justice issues when it is felt to be in the public interest, or in defence of the Church's position; working collaboratively with the Team that produces the Cable TV programme, 'Ask Why?' which addresses social justice issues from a Catholic perspective.
- 1.7 To develop and implement strategies to educate Catholics on the Biblical concept of social justice and Catholic Social Teaching and to encourage them to apply these in their daily lives by providing information to enable them to act.

The spirituality of social justice calls each Catholic to envision and to work for a world of right relationships in which all creation is seen as sacred and interconnected. In such a world all people are equal and free from oppression, have a right to a just distribution of resources, and live in harmony with all God's creation.

The Commission will seek to inform/awaken people's consciences about these and other issues and of their rights and duties in the promotion of social justice. Parish priests, religious, pastoral workers, Seminarians, ecclesial communities, Public Associations of Christ's Faithful, catechists, RCIA teachers, Catholic Educators, and Church organisations will be encouraged to strengthen the promotion of Catholic Social Teaching and its implementation. Effective formation on social concern will be greatly enriched when it is accompanied by a guided exposure to realities of life in TT/the world.

Strategies related to this objective will include:

- 1.7.1 planning, publicising and implementing workshops, seminars, conferences, round-table discussions, lectures, exhibitions, drop-in/open days at the centre, retreats, vigils, and prayer group sessions;

- 1.7.2 publishing discussion papers and reports on issues relating to social injustice;
 - 1.7.3 acting as a catalyst for activities/events relating to social justice;
 - 1.7.4 establishing working groups in parishes to prepare the above papers, conferences and so on.
- 1.8 To establish monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure that there is on-going review of the work of the Commission. The Commission will seek to ensure proper accountability and appropriate reporting to stakeholders. It will also undertake an overall evaluation of its work before the Synod planned to take place in January 2005, ensuring that indicators/assessment criteria are integrated in the programme at an early stage. To support this process, specific strategies will be developed and implemented to facilitate effective communication flow between all those involved in the Commission's work, including those at parish level.
- 1.9 To establish and maintain a database/resource base/information centre/website to support its work, the work of the Standing Committees, parishes and the wider community in relation to social justice.
- 1.10 To foster relations with/seek affiliation to the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace in Rome and the Regional Catholic Commission for Social Justice in the Caribbean. The Commission will also seek to develop active contact with Commissions in other Countries. The promotion of social justice in our Archdiocese will need ongoing support, vitality and intellectual grounding. Regional and international links will help to inform the work of the Commission and its Standing Committees;
- 1.11 To establish, oversee, and co-ordinate the work of Standing Committees; to support each Committee in its work; and to establish parish and community outreach in relation to social justice. The Commission will delegate authority to each Standing Committee as it sees fit. The co-ordination of the initiatives of each Committee should assist in achieving a more effective use of resources and a higher impact of policies. In areas of overlap, Committees will work collaboratively to achieve their aims.

It is to be noted that these Standing Committees will not duplicate the work of other Church groups or Commissions/Secretariat, for example, on Education, Communications, Youth, and Family Life but will focus specifically on social justice issues and, where necessary, will collaborate with other groups to optimise the use of resources. The aim would be to advance the mission of the Church through the responsible use of human and financial resources;

- 1.12 To plan and implement appropriate training programmes for members of the

Commission and the Standing Committees to facilitate their work.

1.13 To establish collaborative/consultative networks with parishes and other concerned organisations involved in social justice work. Christians working for social justice cannot restrict themselves to working with each other within a closed community. Christians can be the salt of the earth by working with others who are not Christians and by seeking to spread God's word by example, by the way in which we allow Gospel values to be reflected in our daily lives and in our relationship with people. The work of the Commission would include

1.13.1 establishing structures at parish level to promote social justice. As well as establishing Archdiocesan-wide structures, it is recognised that since mission is where people are, in their parishes, there would be a need to inspire all parishioners to work with clergy, religious, ecclesial communities, and Public Associations of Christ's Faithful, to bring about changes locally and nationally and to celebrate small steps.

The contribution of each member of the Body of Christ to this process is crucial. The following references are particularly noteworthy in relation to parish involvement: "The parish is not principally a structure, a territory, or a building, but rather, the family of God, a fellowship afire with a unifying spirit, a familial and welcoming home, the community of the faithful...the parish is to be a place in the world for the community of believers to gather together as a sign and instrument of the vocation of all to communion, a house of welcome to all and a place of service to all..."(Cristifideles Laici 26,27);

"Let the lay faithful continually foster a feeling for their own diocese, of which the parish is a kind of cell, and be always ready at their bishops' invitation to participate in diocesan projects...lay people should not limit their co-operation to the parochial or diocesan boundaries, but strive to extend it to interparochial, interdiocesan, national and international fields..." Apostolicam Actuositatem 10

1.13.2 collaborating/networking with other concerned individuals/bodies in TT to create a culture of solidarity and conditions for dialogue and information exchange to promote social justice, for example, Government Departments, Local Government, NGOs, CBOs, the business world, the Inter- Religious Organisation, Ecumenical groups. Such networks could lead to the establishment of collaborative activities such as joint funding and programmes of implementation to promote social justice;

1.13.3 arranging for representation, by the Catholic Church, where possible, at relevant meetings of other organisations, secular or religious, nationally, regionally, internationally and also on public marches, rallies, vigils and so on in relation to social justice issues;

- 1.13.4 supporting the move by the Spiritan Community to establish a rehabilitation centre for ex-prisoners;
 - 1.13.5 fostering relations with international Catholic organisations and with other bodies, be they Catholic or not, that are committed to the promotion of social justice in the world;
 - 1.13.6 holding meetings, ad hoc exchanges of views and so on with interested parties;
 - 1.13.7 preparing and sharing opinions on policy issues with other interested individuals/groups;
 - 1.13.8 providing a forum, when necessary, at local and national levels to discuss issues relating to social justice; for identification/sharing of strategies/solutions to injustices. Such fora will serve as a channel for individuals/groups, for example youth, to express their opinions and offer solutions to problems affecting them;
- 1.14 To deepen the spirituality of members of the Commission and the Standing Committees.
- 1.15 To pray constantly that the work of the Commission and the Standing Committees is being guided by the Holy Spirit in discerning and responding appropriately to the “signs of the times”.
- 1.16 To publish a newsletter which will be circulated to parishes, and other interested individuals/groups three times a year. The purpose of the publication would be to spread knowledge of the social teaching of the Church, especially among those who can in turn make it known directly or indirectly to others; to identify and disseminate examples of good practice in relation to social justice issues; to highlight issues of social injustice in TT/the World and about actual and possible Church responses to these issues; and to encourage Catholics and others to address these issues in whatever way they can.
- 1.17 To undertake, commission, co-ordinate and/or support research necessary to the Commission’s objectives.