

THE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (CCSJ)

Pastoral Plan for 2014 by **Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ**

SYNOD RESOLUTIONS:

Following Synod 2009, CCSJ was charged with responsibility for taking a lead to implement Pastoral Priority 3 (PP): REGENERATING THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES OF OUR SOCIETY. The Goal of this PP and the 7 Resolutions relating to this Goal are as follows. It is to be noted that not all resolutions fall within the remit of CCSJ:

GOAL: *That each Catholic, as a committed disciple of Christ, knows, lives and witnesses to the rich moral teaching of the Church and actively partners with people of goodwill towards the moral and spiritual renewal of Trinidad and Tobago.*

RESOLUTION #1a: 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.

RESOLUTION #1b: Lead Department: Catechetical Team: Be it resolved that the Catholic parishes and schools, as well as the Archdiocesan Departments, be responsible for the implementation of the comprehensive strategy of #1a.

RESOLUTION #2: Lead Department – Family Life Commission: Be it resolved that the Archdiocese develop a comprehensive strategy for the formation of families as the domestic Church – the first moral community, for the moral and spiritual renewal of Trinidad and Tobago.

RESOLUTION #3a: Be it resolved that each Catholic parish and school become a community celebrating the dignity of human life, from conception to natural death, affirming and developing the whole person.

RESOLUTION #3b: Be it resolved that the Archdiocese develop a comprehensive programme as it relates to pro-life (including the topical issues of abortion and contraception) given our belief in, and our celebration of, the sanctity of life.

RESOLUTION #4: Be it resolved that Catholic families, schools and parishes commit themselves to spiritual and moral renewal; and that as Church we seek ways to partner with people of good will in the building of a just and harmonious society.

RESOLUTION #5: Be it resolved that Catholic parishes, in the spirit of solidarity and stewardship, serve the community by promoting and creating opportunities, structures and programmes to achieve social justice.

RESOLUTION #6: 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.

RESOLUTION #7: Be it resolved that Catholics be educated and advised concerning matters of respect, reverence and modesty in dress and conduct at all times, particularly during Mass, other religious occasions and parish events. NB: Res. 7 will be achieved if all the other resolutions are achieved.

LOCATING CCSJ'S PLAN WITHIN A WIDER CONTEXT:

OUR VISION: We envision a transformed national/world community where Justice, Peace and Love prevails, 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

OUR MISSION

The CCSJ is grounded in the Biblical concept of Social Justice and Catholic Social Teaching and is challenged by the Mission of Jesus to bring about a New World Order based on truth, love, justice, peace and freedom.

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.

CORE VALUES

- We recognise our duties and obligations to the wider community
- “To bring good news to the poor, liberty to captives, new sight to the blind, and to free the downtrodden”. (Luke 14)
- Always respecting the dignity of the human person
- We value the process of Reflection, Research and Action.

CCSJ's Vision, Mission and Core values remain the same and are in sync with the Archdiocese's Mission Statement and with the Holy Father's Apostolic Letter for the Year of Faith (Porta Fidei).

The Archdiocese's 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
- Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society.

CCSJ also has responsibility for linking its work to the other 2 Archdiocesan Pastoral Priorities: The New Evangelization and Revitalizing Catholic Culture and Identity. SIT reminded the Faithful in Catholic News on 5 June, 2011:

“The Mission, to build the Civilisation of Love, is the reason for the Church's existence. It is what we are called to do and the deeper meaning and logic behind all of our activities. The three Pastoral Priorities are three interlocking and inseparable aspects of the Mission of the Church. New Evangelization, Catholic Culture and Identity and Moral and Spiritual Renewal refer back to the threefold mission of Prophet, Priest and King, and as such give focus to these in our unique context.

“In this sense a Pastoral Priority does not really end. It is the moving of the light from one part of the painting (New Evangelization) to another part (Catholic Culture and Identity). Because the Pastoral Priorities are integral to the Mission of the Church, they do not really begin or end. They are given more or less prominence.”

The overall Goals of the three PPs are as follows:

First: The New Evangelization: That all Catholics come to know Jesus and live their lives animated by His love, example and values resulting in the evangelization of culture and integral human development.

Second: Revitalizing Catholic Culture and Identity: That our Eucharistic worldview, our daily living and our celebrations are in the service of building a culture and identity that keeps the “memory of Jesus” alive; Jesus who died, to gather all who were scattered.

Third: Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society: That each Catholic, as a committed disciple of Christ, knows, lives and witnesses to the rich moral teaching of the Church and actively partners with people of goodwill towards the moral and spiritual renewal of Trinidad and Tobago.

THE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (CCSJ) Pastoral Plan for 2014

January

a. Parish Link Coordinators (PLCs) and Vicariate Link Coordinators (VLCs) to establish/strengthen SJ links in parishes and to enhance CCSJ's database in relation to these link persons/teams. PLCs to ask Parish Councils to identify a SJ link person on the Parish Council

CCSJ will continue its efforts to raise awareness of the Faithful/Citizens of the social doctrine of the Church; to encourage them and the wider community:

- to demonstrate our love for God, for our neighbour and for all creation by reaching out in solidarity e.g. to those who are poor/socially excluded and to build the common good;
- to be true witnesses to our faith by integrating our faith with our daily lives.

As CCSJ works to implement the 3rd Pastoral Priority, Regenerating the Moral and Spiritual Values of our Society, we will continue to stress the need for the Faithful to acknowledge the centrality of morals and values to the followers of Christ. To regenerate the morals and values of our society, we must commit ourselves to be active in Ministry. An integral part of our Ministry must be a commitment to promote justice:

“The teaching and spreading of her social doctrine are part of the Church's evangelizing mission. Since it is a doctrine aimed at guiding people's behaviour, it consequently gives rise to a ‘commitment to justice,’ according to each individual's role, vocation, and circumstances.” (The Social Concern of the Church, n.41, Blessed John Paul II).

We will achieve our mission if we stand in solidarity with each other to:

- protect and promote the sanctity of life and the dignity of each human person (this means being vigilant and speaking out against attempts to liberalize laws that will allow abortions, homosexuality, and striving to abolish the death penalty);
- promote integral human development (the development of all dimensions of a person and of each person);
- act as advocates for the poor and vulnerable, including our children, the differently - abled, and senior citizens;
- strengthen family life, build community and the common good;
- promote human rights and meet our responsibilities;
- promote economic justice e.g. by ensuring that the economy works for the people;
- promote participation in the economic, political, social and cultural life of society;
- be good stewards of God's creation by promoting environmental/ecological justice - recognising that the gifts of the earth that God has given to us is for all to share – including future generations;
- build a nation/world in which truth, justice, love, freedom and forgiveness – the pillars of peace, become a reality.

b. PLCs and VLCs to plan activities in parishes on the 3rd Pastoral Priority

c. Awareness-raising of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation: The Joy of the Gospel – link to his Peace Message for 2014: "*Fraternity, the foundation and pathway to peace.*" Activities to include:

- a panel discussion on CCSJ's monthly Ask Why TV programme on TCN in January 2014;
- CCSJ's Newsletter for Jan will include the Pope's Peace Message. (NB: CCSJ's Newsletter will be published and distributed quarterly during the year).
- Leela's articles on 15 Dec 2013 and on 29 Dec 2013 will focus on The Joy of the Gospel and on Pope Francis' Peace Message for 2014 respectively;
- Sessions for reflection on the Pope's Peace Message for 2014 in parishes/Vicariates: to be organised by PLCs and VLCs

d. CCSJ to organize Panel Discussion to discuss Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation: The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)

e. Ongoing activities to promote morals and values:

- Workshops focusing on Social Justice and Parables in the Bible - in our 5 Vicariates e.g. The Good Samaritan, The Prodigal Son, Lazarus & Dives, The Lost Coin, Lost Sheep etc. (see links below). Also, parishes to focus on the Pope's document: Porta Fidei.

- Working with the team at Mary Care Centre - 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:

- To provide a safe and secure environment for the pregnant mother to give birth to her child.
- To enable the young mother to be employable at the end of her stay at the Centre.

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.

- Other pro-life work: CCSJ will continue to promote and defend life in all forms and at all stages: from conception until natural death. Other issues that are on the front burner will be the death penalty, abortion, and human sexuality.

- Maintenance of CCSJ's Website (Webmaster - Raymond Syms)

- Tues 28 Jan: Ask Why TV programme (TCN, Channel 10): Pope's Apostolic Exhortation: The Joy of the Gospel – link to his Peace Message on Fraternity for 2014
- CCSJ's weekly articles in Catholic News
- CCSJ's quarterly Newsletter. Inter alia, the Newsletter is a useful tool for sharing examples of good social justice practices that are being implemented in various parishes in our Archdiocese.
- Education on the Social Doctrine of the Church – to be organized in parishes by PLCs and VLCs – in consultation with Leela
- CCSJ to recruit new students for Online Social Justice course – in collaboration with CREDI and Dayton University. CCSJ will continue to draw on the support of those who have completed the course as well as current students on the course
- Production/distribution of SJ resources, particularly relating to the 3rd Pastoral Priority.
- Collaboration with other Catholic Departments in the Archdiocese and with FBOs, NGOs, CBOs, Government Ministries, regional and international organizations etc.: CCSJ will continue to take the opportunity to collaborate with others within and outside the Church to bring a Catholic Social Justice perspective to discussions.
- Some CCSJ activities will be linked to UN Days (at parish and Archdiocesan level) – See list of UN Days and UN Years below.
- Communications strategy – including media releases/media involvement as appropriate.
- Personal contact e.g. see those who come to Archbishop's House for assistance or who telephone for help
- Participation by CCSJ's Chair on The Faith Based Organization of TT– see report in Catholic News of Sun 30 Dec. On Fri 23 Nov, 2012, Msgr Llanos signed a Declaration at an event entitled: Building a Network of Faith Based Leaders for a Better Response to HIV and AIDS in T&T. CCSJ's Chair was asked to represent the Archdiocese on the Committee formed to take this initiative forward. The Faith Based Organization of TT has expanded the focus of its work to include all issues relating to health and family life.
- CCSJ to link with Youth Commission to organize Youth Events – Youth and Social Justice – what social justice issues face our youths today? Solutions? Panel discussions, Workshops etc?
- Facilitating VIRTUS training in conjunction with Family Life Commission. The programme focuses “on the education and training of clergy, staff, volunteers, parents, and other adults about the nature of child abuse, child sexual abuse, and how adults can

help prevent harm to children. The Protecting God's Children program turns every parish into a child-safe haven. Through expert trainers, the VIRTUS programs bring education and awareness to the entire faith community, and ongoing training is provided through VIRTUS Online." The training programme comes with a video: Part 1 = A time to protect God's children. Here children who have been abused (and actors) share their story. Also, 2 abusers share the strategies they used to 'lure' children. Part II = A plan to protect God's children.

Family Life Commission has overall responsibility for this programme. CCSJ's Chair is a Facilitator. To date training sessions have been held with members of the clergy, religious, principals, teachers, workers in Catholic institutions, Catechists etc. Training is ongoing.

- CCSJ to maintain links with Trinidad and Tobago Reintegration Foundation/the Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre (TTRF/APRC)

February

- a. Media release pleading for modesty in dress and behaviour during Carnival
- b. Pope Francis' Lenten Message – encourage each parish/Vicariate to organise Sessions to reflect on the Pope's Lenten Message
- c. Tues 25 Feb: Ask Why TV programme: Morals and Values and Carnival (Carnival will fall on 3 and 4 March.
- d. World Social Justice Day (Thurs 20 Feb) – Media Release and Panel Discussion

March

Cont. from Feb. - Pope's Lenten Message – encourage each parish/Vicariate to organise Sessions to reflect on the Pope's Lenten Message

Sat 8 March: International Women's Day – Vigil (venue to be arranged)

Fri 21 March: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination –

Tues 25 March: Ask Why TV programme: Pope's Lenten Message

April

April 7 – World Health Day: PLCs and VLCs to organize Vicariate events.

Easter Sunday – 20 April 2014: PLCs and VLCs to organize at least 1 event in their respective Vicariate to prepare the Faithful for Easter – from a SJ perspective e.g. *Easter and why social justice matters*

Ask Why TV Programme: Tues 22 April: Reflection on the Pope's Easter Message

April 22 – International Mother Earth Day: PLCs and VLCs to organize Vicariate events

May

a. CCSJ's Retreat (include PLC and VLCs): Theme: *Promoting Morals and Values in our Society today*.

We must seek to develop our own spirituality/deepen our relationship with God. Our annual retreat provides an opportunity for Members and Staff to come together in prayer and contemplation.

b. May 15: UN Day of Families – Seminar to be organized by CCSJ.

c. May 27: Ask Why TV programme: Strengthening Family Life

June – see ongoing activities

CCSJ's Fundraising Dinner – funds to go to the Anthony Pantin Reintegration Centre (TTRF) for former prisoners.

Wed June 19 = Labour Day: Richard (VLC) to organize event on The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers – in the Southern Vicariate since that is where the Labour Day March is held (Oropouche to Fyzabad).

24 June: Ask Why TV programme – Focus on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking which falls on Thurs 26 June

July – see ongoing activities

22 July: Ask Why – Drawing on the creativity of our Youth (link to International Youth Day on 12 August)

Wed 30 July: International Day of Friendship - proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2011 to promote international understanding and a respect for diversity. "It is a reminder that human solidarity is essential to promoting lasting peace and fostering sustainable development." (Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon) – PLCs and VLCs to organize events in Vicariates.

August – see ongoing activities

31 Aug: Independence Day: activities in parishes

September – see ongoing activities

8 Sept – International Literacy Day: PLCs and VLCs to organize events in Vicariates

21 Sept – International Day of Peace

24 Sept Republic Day: activities in parishes

Tues 22 Sept: Ask Why – Ethics, Transparency and Accountability

Essay Competition for Respect for Life Week

October – see ongoing activities

Respect for Life Week: Theme: Transforming Society to reflect Gospel Values - Week of activities planned (Sat 25 Oct – Sat 1 Nov) – activities include: Opening Conference, Youth Event, Prayer Session, TCN Programmes: Breakfast with the Deacons and Ask Why, Panel Discussion with Ecumenical Group, Parish Panel Discussion on Combatting Child Abuse, Vigil, Holy Hour in parishes, Essay Competition for youths. Prayer Supplement to be published in Catholic News. Poster and Prayer book to be circulated widely to support parish/school activities.

Tues 28 Oct: Ask Why – Promoting moral and spiritual values: Empathy and Sympathy

Organise Art Competition for Universal Children’s Day (20 Nov) ?

November – see ongoing activities

25 November: Ask Why – Meeting the needs of our women and children (link to Universal Children’s Day (20 Nov) and International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 Nov)).

Display Art work from Competition for Universal Children’s Day (20 Nov)

CCSJ’s AGM: 26 November

December – see ongoing activities

Monday 1 Dec: World AIDS Day – Vigil

Wed 3 Dec: International Day of Persons with Disabilities - Panel Discussion

Wed 10 Dec: Human Rights Day - Seminar

Wed 17 Dec: CCSJ’s Christmas Dinner

