SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
FOUNDED IN PARIS 1833 – ESTABLISHED IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO 1857
INCORPORATED BY ACT NO. 35 OF 1950

NATIONAL COUNCIL REPORT 2002 –2003
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2003.
NAPARIMA BOWL, SAN FERNANDO

TRUSTEEES: BROS. CLIVE BELGRAVE, CECIL MILNE, HUGH A.S. CLERK, KENNETH AUGIER AND JOHN JARDIM

MEMBERS OF NATIONAL COUNCIL

MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President		-	**Bro. Anthony Wong Doo**
Honorary National Secretary		-	**Bro. Clive Belgrave**
Senior Vice President		-	**Sr. Leah Gordon**
Spiritual Advisor		-	**Rev. Fr. Rudolph Mohammed**
Vice President	**- Emeritus**	-	**Bro. Hugh A.S. Clerk**
	- South	-	**Bro. Kenneth Solomon**
	- Central	-	**Bro. Ronald Ho**
	- North East	-	**Bro. Rudolph Boneo**
Chairman	**- Finance**	-	**Bro Kenneth Augier**
	- Development & Communication	-	**Bro. Winston Mathura**
Administrative Secretary		-	**Sr. Yvette Woodruffe**
Recording Secretary		-	**Sr. Alake Atiba**

PARTICULAR COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

Port of Spain	-	**Bro. William Callendar**
Central	-	**Sr. Cynthia Soodeen**
North West	-	**Sr. Heather Alleyne**
North East	-	**Sr. Cynthia Etienne**
Tobago	-	**Sr. Crescent Parisienne**
Sub-urban	-	**Bro. Patrick Baptiste**
South	-	**Bro. Paul Fitzwilliam**
South West	-	**Bro. Mc Donald Bedeau**
Institutions	-	**Bro. Thomas Assing**

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SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Finance	**-**	**Bro. Kenneth Augier**
Legal	**-**	**Bro. Isidore Smart**
Development/Communication	**-**	**Bro. Winston Mathura**
Institutions	**-**	**Sr. Yvette Woodruffe**
Communication	**-**	**Fr. Rudy Mohammed**
Employment/Social Relief	**-**	**Bro. Horatio Nelson**
Local Twinning	**-**	**Sr. Leah Gordon**
Foreign Twinning	**-**	**Bro. Ignatius Ferreira**
Care of the Aged	**-**	**Bro. Evans Foncette**
Training	**-**	**Bro. Dennis Bryan**
Tobago	**-**	**Sr. Evelyn Stewart**
Prisons/YTC	**-**	**Sr. Cynthia Soodeen**
Ecumenism	**-**	**Fr. Pascal Tiernan O.P.**

NATIONAL COUNCIL/EXECUTIVE/PRESIDENTS

Our National Executive continues to meet on the first Monday of each month, and holds special meetings when necessary.

National Council meetings were held once every three (3) months. The National Council meets occasionally with Particular Councils to keep them abreast of developments in the Society and also ensuring the links with our Conferences and Committees.

Presidents' Meetings were held three (3) times during the past year.

ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW – ERNST & YOUNG

The recommendations contained in the Ernst & Young Report are being implemented with the following action undertaken to date:

1. The provision of refurbished offices for the Secretariat to include an integrated telephone system, internet and e-mail facilities, computerized accounting system and the provision of the services of a trained social worker for dealing with members of the public.
2. The provision of formalised contracts for employees of the Society and the signing of same.
3. The initiation of discussions with Conferences/Committees attached to the Society's Homes with a view to giving these bodies greater autonomy and responsibility for the operation and maintenance of Homes.

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4. An organized programme of repairs/renovations to the Society's Homes. This initiative was undertaken by Bro. Louis Rodriguez of the St. Finbar's Conference who served on the National Executive during the exercise. This programme will be continued and increased.

   A review and increase of the insurance coverage provided for the Homes was also effected.

NEW PROJECTS

An arrangement was formalized with Rebirth House for the use of a section of the society's premises at Duncan Street to be used as a drop-in and Rehabilitation Centre for drug addicts.

The start of the construction of a new Home for the Aged at Independence Avenue, San Fernando is currently being pursued.

A project for the construction of a new facility for the Cyril Ross Nursery has been proposed by the Hibiscus Foundation and discussions in this regard are continuing.

YOUTH OUTREACH

In November 2002, the National Council held a special session to consider a proposal from the International President General with respect to the involvement of Youth in the Society.

Arising from this meeting, 2003 was designated as the **"Year of the Youth"** and all Conferences were urged to undertake initiatives designed to introduce more youths to the Society.

At the national level, a series of seminars/discussions involving youths were undertaken and Sr. Angelique Taylor was appointed by the National President to serve on the National Council as Youth Representative and to pursue the initiative started by the National Executive.

DIOCESAN SYNOD

The Society played a very active role at both parish and national levels in the Synod process.

A Synod Committee was established and this Committee organized meetings with Conferences and Councils to solicit views particularly in the area of Social Justice issues. The meetings were well supported and the views expressed were collated into a formal proposal document and submitted to the archdiocese foe consideration at the Sybid,

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Arising out of the Synod, a number of Commissions has been appointed and the Society is represented on the Social Justice Commission and the Communication Commission by the Honorary National Secretary.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A number of social activities, designed to foster and develop fraternal relationships among members, was organized by the Secretariat. These included:

a) The annual luncheon for residents of the Society's Homes which was held on 26th January and was very well supported.

b) The annual Rally for members and friends which was organized in Penal on 6th July. This function exceeded all expectations.

c) The annual Palm Sunday walk to give public Christian witness to our faith took place and this event continues to attract members and friends.

FUND RAISING

The annual Brunch at the Top of the mount continues to grow in popularity and this year witnessed the largest turnout to date.

The luncheon in aid of the Cyril Ross Home held at the Chinese Wok in Trincity was well patronized. The former first Lady, Mrs. Hassanali, continues to lend her patronage to this event.

The annual Tea Party was again held at Chinese Association in St. Ann's and was an outstanding success.

The National Raffle, which will be drawn today, is expected to yield greater financial results for the Society since the price of tickets has been increased to two (2) dollars.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT

The Society continues to enjoy a very good relationship with the Government.

A meeting was arranged with the new Minister for Social Development at which projects undertaken by the Society for the Government were discussed together with the general work of the Society. Arising out of this meeting, the Society experienced an immediate

improvement in the receipt of funds for the government's projects and finally received the outstanding subvention of **$120,000.00** for the Cyril Ross Nursery.

The Society has also been represented at various forums organized in respect of the government's social welfare and delivery programmes and proposed national initiatives to alleviate poverty.

CARIBBEAN ACTIVITIES

The Caribbean National Assembly took place in Dominica in June, 2003. This meeting had the highest level of country participation since the inauguration of this biennial event.

The Caribbean Rule was adopted for submission to the Council General for approval and several initiatives designed to foster the growth of the Society in the region were discussed.

In this regard, the Honorary National Secretary visited both Guyana and St. Lucia to assist in the development of the Society and its work in these islands.

COMMITTEES

Members of the **Prison Committee** continue to visit about thirty (30) young men at the Youth Training Centre (YTC) who have been abandoned and receive no visits form their family and friends and who depend on our members not only for guidance, love and assurance but for basic toiletries, clothes, classes, regaining contact with their family, social afternoons and their well being including lodging after discharge.

In our media-conscious society, one of the endeavours of the members of the **Public Relations Committee** is the publication of the S.V.P. newsletter "Voice of the Poor" every two (2) months. The Committee invites Conferences to submit articles of interest on what is happening in their Conference.

SPIRITUAL EVENTS/SPIRITUALITY

The individual Particular Councils organized Lenten "Day of Recollection" for members of their area.

They also organized Festival Meetings in their areas on the three S.V.P. Feast Days – Sacred Heart, St. Vincent de Paul and the Immaculate Conception.

The Society commemorated the anniversary of the deaths of Archbishop Anthony Pantin and Steve Solomon with the celebration of Holy Mass at the Cathedral on 11th March and 13th October respectively.

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The Palm Sunday Walk as a spiritual event was enhanced by the work of a Planning Committee headed by Sr. Heather Alleyne who worked hard to ensure that everything was in place from start to finish.

The Day of Prayer, Study and Reflection at Mt. St. Benedict was held as usual on the Feast of Christ the King. The homilist was Fr. Michel de Verteuil and he spoke on the famous Gospel passage Matthew 25:31-46.

The continued operation of the S.V.P. Documentation Centre in Gulf City Mall helps us spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and the social teachings of the Church. It is also an avenue to maintain public awareness of the Society.

RELATIONSHIP WITH TOBAGO

As in previous years, our President and members of the National Executive made several visits to Tobago members of the Society and the Mason Hall Home for the Aged. Tobago continues to be well represented at National meetings and events e.g. Synod Proposal meetings and the Rally.

COMMUNICATION

The Society's Radio Programmes continue weekly. Fr. Rudy Mohammed is the presenter on "Voice of the Poor" at Inspirational 7:30 Radio on the A.M. band every Sunday at 1:00 p.m. Bro. Winston Mathura is the presenter on "The Church Today" on Power 102 FM every Thursday at 5:30 a.m.

Members are invited to make use of these programmes to advertise their events.

The Secretariat is in constant contact with the S.V.P. Regional Co-ordinator, Sr. Mary Rose Knight in Antigua and with the International Council General in Paris.

We also maintain a close relationship with Government Ministries and agencies and are in touch with Social Welfare agencies and social services clubs.

GENERAL ITEMS

The National Executive met with His grace the Archbishop to appraise him of the Society's work and to discuss areas of concern.

The Chairman for Spirituality, Fr. Joe Harris, relinquished his position since he has proceeded abroad for further studies. Fr. Rudy Mohammed has kindly agreed to assume this portfolio and has received the approval of His Grace.

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The Cyril Ross Nursery was featured in a television programme hosted by Hollywood actor, Danny Glover, and featured on the Showtime International Network first in January 2003 and several times thereafter. A copy of the video is available at the Secretariat for viewing by members who may not have seen this feature presentation.

The Council General has circulated a new ***International Draft Rule*** together with guidelines for the development of National Rules of the Society. An assembly is planned in early October at which the International Rule will be discussed by National Presidents and finally adopted.

After several years of legal proceedings, a settlement has been reached with regard to the Wharton estate, of which, the Society is one benefactor. Bro. Ken Augier has been designated by the Society to serve as one of the executors of the estate.

During the past year the following persons passed on:

Members

Bhim Ramtahal	-	Holy Rosary, Sangre Grande
Marion Felix	-	Our Lady of Fatima, Curepe
Margaret Lewis	-	St. Francis, Belmont
Ruth Lezama	-	Santa Rosa, Arima
Emmanuel Ramnarine	-	St. Francis, Belmont
Neil & Vida Smith	-	Sacred Heart & Malabar
Lionel Cobb	-	St. Joseph, Mon Repos
Elsie Bailey	-	St. Thomas More, Fyzabad
Selwyn Rudolfo	-	Holy Spirit, Malabar
Emmanuel Flemming	-	St. Thomas More, Fyzabad
Agatha Park	-	Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Talparo
Carlton Francis	-	St. Thomas More, Fyzabad
Carlton Leopold	-	Our Lady of the Rosary, P.O.S.
Beulah Philip	-	St. Dominic's, Penal
Maude Greene	-	SS. Phillip & James, Chaguanas

Benefactors

Samuel Griffith
Doris Nelson
Melanie Pierre

Special mention is made of the late staff member, Jennifer Chanka, who worked at the San Fernando SVP Home for the aged for twenty (20) years giving unstinting service to those she served.

Let us remember these loved ones, who have gone to their reward, in our prayers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We thankfully acknowledge all who have contributed towards our success and existence during the period – ***the committed staff at the Secretariat, at our institutions and other staff, benefactors, volunteers, business suppliers, legal advisor and all others.***

Most importantly, Almighty God, Our Blessed Mother Mary, St. Vincent de Paul and Frederick Ozanam who have all been the inspiration and motivation to us all.