

REPORT ON PARTICULAR COUNCILS

NORTH WEST

There are approximately ninety (90) functioning members in the north West Particular Council.

All Conferences from the North West came together and donated approximately 1000 hampers to their recipients during the Christmas Season 2002.

St. Mary's undertook a Feeding the Poor programme on May 4th 2003 where they provided meals to the vagrants and socially displaced individuals in the St. James area as well as in Woodford and Victoria Squares. The annual Poor Man's Dinner held on June 7th, 2003 was a success. A retreat for the membership was held at the Emmaus Centre recently.

St. Peter's Conference has received assistance from a U.S. based Woman's group in providing for the facility as well as the recipients of the Home for the Aged in Carenage. The Meals on Wheels Programme is part of the functions of St. Peter's Conference, in carrying out its service to the Poor and Needy. St. Peter's and Pt. Cumana Conferences have joined forces to become one Conference responsible for the Carenage and surrounding areas.

The Particular Council – North West was well represented at this year's Annual Family Day & Rally of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul held in the Penal parish. Members of St. Mary's; St. Peter's; Assumption; St. John's; St. Anthony's junior; Our Lady of Guadalupe Conferences attended the Rally.

St. Theresa's brought to a halt, operations of the clinic which it ran in the Woodbrook area. This action was taken due to a lack of administrative personnel. Subsequently the pharmaceuticals were given to the Finbar Ryan Geriatric Home. St. Theresa's continues its lunch distribution to the Laventille Conference on a regular basis.

Our Lady of Guadalupe – Paramin assisted two (2) recipients financially in paying medical expenses for their surgical operations. Through fund raising events, namely a Chinese Que and a Brunch on Palm Sunday, the Conference realized the funds to clear the medical costs.

Assumption Conference recently collaborated with candidates from the Confirmation class in carrying out visits to their friends. This was an initiative of the parish priest, Fr. Garfield Rochard. They have also treated their friends to tours of various sites throughout Trinidad.

Conferences including St. Finbar's, St. John's and St. Mary's successfully held Christmas Parties for the children they assist last December. Weekly visitation and distribution of relief is very much consistent in all Conferences of the North West Particular Council.

St. John's from time to time receive funds through the Stewardship Programme. Other Conferences also benefit from this initiative. The Conference has also assisted its friends

significantly in the areas of medical and construction by providing funds with repairs to homes as well as funding for medical costs.

There are plans by the **Nativity Conference** to team up with other sisters and brothers in the area to help their friends by way of setting up day care centers, cottage industries etc. to help develop the lives of those they assist. This is to make their friends become more innovative and independent. Nativity Conference also provided school books and uniforms to their friends in ensuring that the children are equipped with the necessary requirements.

In other matters all Conferences make monthly contributions to the Particular Council which go towards paying the T&TEC utility bill of the Finbar Ryan Geriatric Home. Regular donations are made to Conferences that may require urgent funding by others whose financial statuses are more favourable. At the moment the Conference of Our Lady of Lourdes – Maraval has not been represented at the Particular Council monthly meetings for a lengthy period this year and concerns have been raised about this matter.

CATHEDRAL PARTICULAR COUNCIL

Meetings were held regularly on the last Monday of each month and the attendance averages 90%. At the last election officers elected were Bro. Callendar of the Cathedral Conference as President, Bro. Samaroo of St. Patrick's Conference as Treasurer and Bro. Jardim of St. Ann's Conference as Secretary.

At the November meeting, the Council was graced with the presence of Bro. Hugh Clerk of the National Executive.

Starting in February, Council meetings were held in turn at the Conferences constituting the Council, except for June when it was held at Nazareth House, due to the fear of some members to venture into Laventille where it was scheduled.

During the first quarter, discussion focused on the Ernst & Young report and especially with its recommendation that the Particular Council become more involved in the maintenance of the institutions located in the Council's area.

Fund raising activities in the eight (8) Conferences ranged from tea parties, cake sales, barbecues and plant sales to pilgrimages.

At present the account has one thousand and forty-nine dollars and ninety cents (**\$1,049.90**) but since the departure of the previous treasurer, there have been all sorts of stumbling blocks over getting the account operative. Cash in hand is one hundred and thirty one dollars and four cents (**\$131.04**).

SUBURBAN PARTICULAR COUNCIL

There are ten (10) Senior Conferences and one (1) Youth Conference functioning in the Suburban Particular Council. There are two (2) parishes – *Maracas Valley and Bourg Mulatresse* – where Conferences do not exist.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of every month at the San Juan Parish Hall at 6:00 p.m. There were ten (10) meetings for the last year, and three (3) festival meetings. Our goal is to have all Conferences represented at these meetings.

There are three (3) institutions within our Particular Council. Members visit and assist these institutions as needs be. The Particular Council assists the Conferences in their fund-raising ventures.

A 'Day of Recollection' was organized by the Particular Council at St. Joseph's R.C. Church during the Lenten season. The Particular Council gave full support to national events held within our areas i.e. the Palm Sunday Walk to Mt. Lambert R.C. Church and the Day of Recollection at Mt. St. Benedict.

The Particular Council had a dinner at the first meeting in January for its members.

NORTH EAST PARTICULAR COUNCIL

The North East Particular Council holds its meetings on the third Sunday of every month at the Santa Rosa Parish Hall. This area spans from Tacarigua to Matelot and to Guayaguayare. An average of eleven (11) presidents or representatives of the Conferences attend these meetings. Much sharing takes place after the spiritual reading to assist members with their growth and the way we look at being members of the Society.

Sr. Etienne, the President brings to the attention of attending presidents all upcoming events and developments of the Society. Each president is given the opportunity to discuss the developments and hardships faced in his/her area. Most areas are faced with financial problems and access to the basic amenities of water, electricity and transportation. Conferences with a strong base assist with foodstuff, building materials and clothing. The Particular Council provides financial assistance to the weak Conferences. Fund-raisers such as cake sales, tea parties, curry-ques and bingo games are undertaken by Conferences to offset financial expenses.

Some of the Conferences undertake self reliance projects and substance abuse awareness programmes are arranged in the areas. Sr. Etienne encourages home visitation of the families and regular attendance at Conference meetings.

The Conferences comprising North East Particular Council celebrate all the Society's festivals. Celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception takes place at different locations each year where members share and experience the culture of the chosen Conference.

The Conferences play a major part in the operation of the Home for the Aged at Industry Street, Arima. One member of each Conference sits on the committee, which governs the Home. Developments are later relayed to Conferences and the Particular Council. The utility bills of the Home are paid by contributions from each Conference and one or two large fund-raisers are held to assist the Home.

The Particular Council acquires funds through the collections of the secret bag and Conference pledges at festival meetings.

There was no considerable increase in membership during the year under review. However, it is commendable that each Conference accomplished the set tasks.

CENTRAL PARTICULAR COUNCIL

The Council meets on the last Tuesday of every month at the Chaguanas R.C Church. St. Joseph Conference, Mayo is unable to attend due to distance but close contact is kept via the telephone. Food hampers or grants are given out either on a monthly or fortnightly basis and two (2) Conferences provide Sunday lunches to their friends on a monthly basis.

All Conferences continue to visit their friends in their homes and try to alleviate the problems that confront them. Some members are engaged in taking Holy Communion to the shut-ins, taking sick persons to the doctor etc. Medication is also provided where necessary. Families are encouraged to have their babies baptized or their children make First Communion. Conferences are also engaged in providing better living conditions for the needy. Chaguanas Conference built a one-room apartment for a man found living in a goat shed. Cunupia Conference has almost completed a three-bedroom house for a family with the help of Coosal, whilst Carapichaima and Couva Conferences are sourcing help to improve the living conditions of two (2) of their families. Mayo Conference assisted a family with building materials.

In order to have some families become self-sufficient, emphasis is being placed on the young adults by sending them for extra lessons and paying for courses that would make them employable. Couva Conference is sending a young girl to Servol and Chaguanas Conference is sending a girl to the YTEPP class.

Members are also engaged in visiting the lonely sick at the hospitals. Chaguanas Conference visited the Finbar Ryan Geriatric Home and the Cyril Ross Nursery.

The Lenten 'Day of Reflection' was held on the second Sunday of Lent. In addition, Longdenville and Chaguanas Conferences also had their private day of prayer.

Most members attended the Rally and the festival meetings. All Conferences distributed Christmas Hampers. Most of them served lunches/dinners to their families and distributed toys and candies to the children.

The Chaguanas youths continue to play a vibrant part in most of the senior Conference's project and are also very involved in activities at National level. Couva and Carapichaima youths have merged with their senior Conferences.

The Council plans to re-establish the Conferences at Caparo and Flanagin Town and hopes to build a multi-purpose facility where the weary wanderer can be provided with a hot meal, shower, change of clothing and a bed, the abused child can be provided with solace peace and the hurting or depressed person can be provided with a shelter and offered counseling.

The Council works in close liaison with the Secretariat and a number of members of Central Conferences are involved in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul National Committees e.g. Prison and Public Relations.