

PARTICULAR COUNCIL REPORTS

] CENTRAL

The Central Particular Council, which comprises the Conferences of:

- Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (Carapichaima),
- St. Phillip and St. James (Chaguanas),
- St. Paul (Couva),
- St. Augustine (Cunupia),
- Ugandan Martyrs (Longdenville)
- St. Joseph (Mayo)

They were elected a new President on September 27, 2003. The Council continues to convene monthly meetings where Conferences indicate their successes and shortcomings in their continuing effort to assist the underprivileged in their respective communities.

Conferences continue to afford their charges the basic amenities of food and in some cases assisting families to meet their transportation costs for children attending school. There is also assistance afforded with medical bills. Conferences have also afforded housing to needy families, (one constructed and one in early stages of construction), the construction of these houses was made possible through donations from the business community in the parishes concerned. There has been an increase in families requesting assistance from the Society in the areas under the purview of the Central Particular Council, and the respective Conferences are doing all within their means to assist.

In an effort to alleviate the hardships experienced by their families, shut-ins and other persons in the lowest strata of society, Conferences have initiated innovative methods to meet people. The introduction of a Golden Years Club by one Conference, with greater emphasis placed on evangelisation and quality time spent during visitations by another Conference and an increase in visits to institutions operated by the Society by Conferences. The Council at its monthly meetings discuss these methods with the expressed hope that they can be utilized effectively in the various Conferences.

..... *Central*

The Council in an effort to deepen the spirituality of members of Conferences, hosted its annual Lenten Day of Recollection and Prayer at St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Mayo on March 7, 2004, Holy Mass was celebrated by the Society's Spiritual Facilitator, Fr. Rudy Mohammed and two members of the Society offered talks on the theme 'Spirituality of the Society'. The event was well attended and members were left with a greater insight on the Society and its reason for existence. The Council also hosted Festival Meetings for the respective feast days.

The Council in its effort to foster camaraderie amongst the members of the various Conferences planned a Day of Fun and Games for August 1, 2004, unfortunately owing to the late cancellation by the overseers of the venue, the event had to be postponed to a later date. The idea was born from the fact that members only meet for Festival Meetings, Conference fundraisers and retreats, which do not offer ample time to foster meaningful relationships in a celebratory manner.

The Council remains focused on its vision to build a facility that will assist persons to meet the demand of ever increasing poverty, lack of adept skills, and those shunned by society owing to status. It is hoped that with the intervention of the Holy Spirit that this vision will bear fruition within the next year.

] **TOBAGO**

The Tobago Particular Council is composed of five conferences:

- 1) St. Joseph's conference, Scarborough with a membership of 12 persons.
- 2) St. Joseph's junior conference, Scarborough with a membership of 20 persons.
- 3) Our Lady of Lourdes conference, Patience Hill with a membership of eight persons.
- 4) St. John's conference, Speyside with a membership of six persons.
- 5) Sacred Heart conference, Delaford.

The St. Joseph's conference is also responsible for the operations of the Home for the Aged in Mason Hall. At present, there are 22 residents at the Home. Medical Support continues to be provided by the District Medical Officer who visits on request.

Over the year, the following improvements were made to the facility:

- The area in front of the kitchen and between the two buildings was paved.
- Eight bedside cupboards were installed in the infirmary.
- A 800 gallon water tank was purchased to replace the previous one which was leaking.
- A water pump was installed to replace the non-functional one.

..... *Tobago*

St. Joseph's conference continues to take care of twelve families via monthly grants while another thirty persons receive groceries on a regular basis. Christmas hampers are distributed to one hundred and twenty families. A family in Castara and a family in Mt. Pleasant also give groceries to a number of families in their communities. Visits are made to the sick, shut-in and two members visit the Prison.

- ✓ *Meetings of Our Lady of Lourdes conference are held every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.* Election of officers was held on 14th July 2004.
- ✓ *Meetings of St. John's conference are held every other Tuesday at 6 p.m.* Three families receive monthly grants and groceries are distributed to four needy persons.
- ✓ *Meetings of Sacred Heart conference are held every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.* Members, due to the absence of a Parish priest, conduct most of the parish duties. They conduct visitations on a regular basis as well as distribute grants and groceries.

The St. Joseph's junior conference is very active. Their e-mail address is Bajojsvp@hotmail.com. In February 2004, they held a very successful Open Day where they not only related their experiences in service to their community but also educated the youths through games and drama about negative and positive attitudes towards recipients of their service. The President Sr. Fayola Rogers is a dynamic member of the National Youth Co-ordinating Team. There are about ten members in the conference and apart from home visits; they visit residents of the S.V.P. Home for the Aged and the Jesus-care orphanage.

] **NORTH-WEST**

The North West Particular Council consists of 11 conferences, eight of which are represented at meetings. Meetings are held on the second Friday of every month at 7:00 p.m. and on an average fifteen members attend these meetings every month. Venues are shifted around so as to foster camaraderie and hospitality.

For the Christmas 2003 season, all friends received hampers from our conferences, bonuses were distributed and six conferences hosted Christmas parties for less fortunate children.

The year 2004 started off with the President, Sr. Heather Alleyne urging all members to make more home visitations to those they help and to improve their attendance at monthly Particular Council meetings and at functions hosted by the S.V.P. National Council. More visitation to institutions was also requested. There has been an increase in membership for some conferences while two others saw a decline in members during the first quarter of 2004.

.....North-West

The Finbar Ryan Geriatric Home is situated in the North West Particular Council and is assisted with funding by the Particular Council.

St. Peter's Conference- Carenage runs a home for the aged in its area and **Our Lady of Lourdes Conference- Maraval** operates a soup kitchen in its area.

St. Theresa's Conference- Woodbrook ran a clinic but was forced to halt its operations earlier this year.

In St. John's Conference- Diego Martin, there is a "Meals on Wheels" programme and a million cents programme was recently initiated in conjunction with the parish priest.

In total, the conferences in the North West Particular Council provide relief to approximately one hundred families. There has been an increase in the level of assistance for families in the area of home construction with repairs to existing houses and building of new ones. Needy children are provided with school requirements such as books, uniforms and traveling expenses. An increase in grants has been undertaken by conferences as a result of more donations from well wishers.

On May 14, 2004, the Particular Council hosted a retreat for all its members. **St. Mary's conference- Mucurapo** won the March Past at the 2004 Rally. Members from the **St. Mary's and St. John's conferences** were present at the Palm Sunday Walk.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Conference- Paramin celebrated its eight anniversary on July 18, 2004. Bro. and Mrs. Wong Doo and Sr. Yvette Woodruffe were in attendance.

Financially, the cash on hand at the end of May 2004 stood at **\$9,544.07**. Financial help is usually granted to those conferences, which are faced with projects that require urgent attention. This funding is provided by the conferences in a healthy financial status and also the Particular Council.

The conferences in this Particular Council continue to address the topics of Stewardship and Social Justice at their meetings.

] SUBURBAN

The Suburban Particular Council comprises the parishes between Barataria in the west and Tunapuna in the east. There are ten conferences functioning within this area. Meetings are held on the second Monday of every month at the San Juan Presbytery at 6:00 p.m. Although meetings are fairly well attended, our goal is to have Presidents or Representatives of all conferences attend the meetings.

The three Festival Meetings during the year were held in various parishes. These meetings were well attended as most of the members from the different conferences joined the host conference in attending Mass, having a short meeting and enjoying breakfast.

Members of our conferences assist in various ways the four institutions within our Particular Council:

- Audrey Mollineau Halfway House in Barataria,
- Tritscher Home in Bourg Mulatresse,
- Ozanam Night Shelter in Tunapuna and
- Cyril Ross Nursery in Tunapuna.

The Suburban Particular Council actively supports the National Council's events and fund raising activities, particularly the events that are held in our area i.e. the Palm Sunday Walk to Mt. Lambert R.C. Church and the Day of Reflection at Mt. St. Benedict.

The Suburban Particular Council services both the spiritual and social needs of its members. During Lent, we organize a Day of Reflection for our members. At our first meeting in January, we have a Christmas Dinner where members extend greetings to one another and pledge to fulfill the S.V.P. vocation.

The Suburban Particular Council, though functioning quite well, knows that there is room for improvement. The officers and members seek to improve themselves, and by extension, their conferences' and the Particular Council's members.

] NORTH EAST

At the **Festival Meeting** of the Council held in December 2003, Sister Etienne passed on the leadership to me.

Since then the Council has had several meetings at the Home for the Aged, Arima. Meetings have been well attended. Presidents have concentrated on ensuring that the Church Door collection continues. The general feeling seems to support that in spite of Stewardship, the second collection for the Society allows the Conferences a greater feasibility in doing and promoting the work of the Society.

The general problem as seen by the Council is the ageing membership and the fact that so few of the members are willing to accept leadership positions. This has resulted in some members reluctantly accepting positions to ensure the continuing work of the Society. This places the Council at a disadvantage, because new and greater projects cannot be undertaken since the level of enthusiasm is not at the optimum.

Visits have been made to several of the Conferences and it is hoped that as these visits continue a change can be brought about in this regard.

Finally, opportunity is taken to inform that before the end of **2005** all conferences would be **aggregated**. Efforts will be made to obtain **Aggregation Certificates** from those who are but cannot locate their Certificate.

Again, we are at a milestone with the Annual General Meeting and again we can expect great things.

] CATHEDRAL

Meetings were held regularly on the last Monday of each month. Attendances ranged from a low of five (5) to a high of fourteen (14) members from a total complement of eight Conferences.

The March 2004 meeting was graced with the presence of the National President, Bro. Anthony Wong Doo; Vice President Emeritus, Hugh Clerk; Administrative Secretary, Sr. Yvette Woodruffe and Sr. Pamela Ramchandar, Matron of Nazareth House, as well as fourteen (14) regular Conference members.

Officers elected at the last election were: Bro. Victor Cuffy of the Rosary Conference- President, Bro. Gene Samaroo of St. Patrick's Conference- Treasurer and Bro. Eurico Jardim of St. Ann's Conference- Secretary.

The Council was graced with the presence of Bro. Hugh Clerk from the National Executive at the October 2003 and May 2004 meetings; we also had the pleasure of the company of Sr. Woodruffe at the December 2003 meeting.

Fund-raising activities of the various Conferences ranged from Cake Sales, Barbecues, plant sales and pilgrimages. Fund-raising activities have been suspended at the Corpus Christi Conference with the advent of the Stewardship programme.

The St. Andrew's Home, which falls within this Council, has had some major renovations done. Residents and staff members have been increased and regularized.

We record with regret the passing of Bro. Fenwick de Four, Vice President of Rosary Conference and with pleasure a visit by Sr. Annette Abbott, Former President of the Council in February 2004.

The continuing "brouhaha" with the Republic Bank branch on Abercromby Street where the Council's account is located was finally satisfactorily resolved.

At present, the account has One thousand five Hundred and thirty two dollars and eighty-four cents (\$1,532.84) and Cash in hand is One hundred and forty six dollars and fifty cents (\$146.50). The general-purpose fund stands at Sixty dollars (\$60.00).