

**PROPOSAL FOR
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN
ANGLICAN OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR PERSONS WITH BARRIER
COMMUNICATION IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

“Spiritual Outreach and Unity through Language” (S.O.U.L.)

Submitted by

Rev. Fr. Jesus Latan

BACKGROUND

When Venezuela began the War of Independence, General Francisco de Miranda called for support for British troops. They came to Venezuela accompanied by their chaplains, and a cemetery was established for the fallen soldiers, in addition to the traditional Roman Catholic cemeteries.

The Anglican presence in Venezuela officially began in February 17, 1834 with the declaration, by José Antonio Páez the President of the Republic, of the Law of Freedom of Worship. This was supported by the Vice President Carlos Soublatte, the British Consul, Sir Robert Ker Porter, and other authorities.

The Lord Bishop William Hart Coleridge of Barbados consecrated the British Cemetery in Venezuela and, in 1872, created the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago which initially had jurisdiction over Venezuela.

After 95 years of chaplaincy for Anglophones living in Venezuela, the Suffragan Bishop the Hon. Guy Marshall (1967-1974) seceded from Trinidad and Tobago and applied to be a member of the ninth province of the United States of America. The first diocesan bishop under this new jurisdiction was the Hon. Haydn H. Jones (1976-1986).

Restablishing The Bridge between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela in the Province of the West Indies

Rev. Fr. Jesus Latán is a Spanish speaking member of the clergy residing for twelve years in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago. He is also an educator and presently convenes classes for persons who are interested in learning Spanish as a second language.

Additionally, Fr. Latán provides support to the Anglican primary schools in the North West Region and has engaged some students in learning conversational Spanish and performs as a choir in Spanish.

Based on these two experiences, Fr. Latán sees an opportunity to deepen the capacity of the local population to speak Spanish as a second language as well as to support the Spanish speaking community living in Trinidad and Tobago. At present there are no churches providing Spanish Mass and spiritual support to this community through the Anglican Diocese. Over the years, it has been customary for Spanish speaking persons, especially Venezuelans, to temporarily reside in Trinidad and Tobago in order to become fluent with the English language. This approach appears to be widening with increasing populations of Colombians, Mexicans, Chileans, Ecuadorian and Peruvians. This large Spanish speaking population, though not necessarily Anglican, needs to continue their spiritual lives in their adopted country. Fr. Latán presently

provides spiritual guidance and assistance to the Venezuelan Embassy as they seek the interest of their nationals in Trinidad and Tobago.

MISSION OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE DIOCESE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

This programme fits carefully into the mission of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago -- *To give honour and glory to God and to work towards helping the people of God to live according to the principles of His Kingdom through participation in the various programmes and ministries of the church* – with particular reference to participation of its members.

In consideration of the relationship that the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago has shared with Venezuela in the past and in view of the fact that there is a growing number of Latin American nationals residing in Trinidad and Tobago and noting that Fr. Jesus Latan is also a Latin American national with a passion for the spiritual well being of Spanish speaking individuals in Trinidad and Tobago, the proposal is that the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago create a Chaplaincy for these persons under the acronym

“SOUL”

SPIRITUAL OUTREACH and UNITY through LANGUAGE

MISSION

To re-unite the Latin American and Caribbean communities in Trinidad and Tobago by contributing to their spiritual wellbeing and facilitating learning opportunities through language and cultural exchanges.

GOALS

- To help persons with language challenges to fulfill their spiritual needs including the hearing impaired population.
- To contribute to the spiritual wellbeing of the Latin American Community in Trinidad and Tobago.
- To promote Spanish in the different regions of the Diocese.

OBJECTIVES

- To teach interested persons how to pray and follow the Mass in Spanish.
- To build a bridge between the Diocese and the different Embassies in Trinidad and Tobago.

- To develop and strengthen the relationship between the Latin American community and Anglicans in Trinidad and Tobago.
- To teach basic Spanish as a second language at the primary school level.

TARGET GROUPS

- Anglican community
- Anglican primary and secondary schools
- Latin American community in Trinidad and Tobago
- Persons interested in learning Spanish
- Latin American Embassies
- Schools which teach English as a second language to Latin Americans.
- The hearing impaired population in the Anglican community.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- An Anglican church that ministers to both Spanish and English speaking parishioners.
- Spiritual needs of the Latin American community in Trinidad and Tobago fulfilled.
- Primary and Secondary school students are fluent in Spanish with an appreciation for the Mass in Spanish.
- Persons with increased Spanish language capacity within the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The implementation will include:

- Provision of pastoral counseling and other assistance as needed,
- Convening of Spanish masses in schools and churches,
- Teaching of Spanish in different regions and primary schools,
- Singing of Spanish hymns by Church choirs and Parang groups.
- Participation in Spanish festivals through relationships with the various Spanish speaking country embassies.
- To identify persons in the Anglican community to facilitate the service in sign language, and promote Sign language training programs for those persons who are willing to support the hearing impaired population to participate in our regular services.

ACTIVITIES

Identify a church or churches in which to pilot the project.

Establish a column in the Anglican Outlook to promote the project

Invitations to the various parishes to participate

Invitations to the primary and secondary schools to participate

To promote a spiritual retreat in Spanish

To establish prayer and bible study groups, life in the spirit seminars, spiritual retreats and a weekly mass.

Cultural exchanges between Trinidadians and Latin Americans living in Trinidad and Tobago.

Establish a Spanish youth and adult choir.

Develop a "hospitality project" in collaboration with the schools and Embassies through which the Anglican community can provide accommodation to persons in need of housing.

PROFILE

FR. JESUS LATAN – PROJECT DIRECTOR

Fr. Jesus Enrique Latan began his ministry in Trinidad and Tobago in 2002. He is a national of Venezuela and is married to a Trinidadian, Dabrielle Latan a primary school teacher.

During his tenure, Fr. Latan has served in 3 parishes – Holy Saviour, St. Crispin and St. Agnes.

His affiliation to the Latin American community in Trinidad has led him to become actively involved in aspects of outreach to them including:

- Conducting Trinidadian/Venezuelan marriage ceremonies, providing interpretation to facilitate communication between the families.
- Counselling
- Social support
- Prison visits through the Venezuelan Embassy

Between 2008 and 2010 Fr. Latan conducted 16 Eucharistic masses in Spanish at St. Agnes parish during his ministry there and has initiated activities to introduce the Latin American culture to the Diocese including a Latin American festival at St. Agnes in 2008. He is also involved in teaching the Spanish language to adults and post-SEA classes in St. Catherine's Anglican School and more recently in Scarlett Anglican School.

The presence of Fr. Latan in Trinidad and Tobago, with his existing teaching and support activities, provides a unique opportunity to the Anglican Diocese in Trinidad and Tobago to extend services and to contribute to the overall wellbeing of the society and in the case of SOUL to reach out to those persons who, because of communication challenges, are not in the mainstream of our spiritual outreach.