



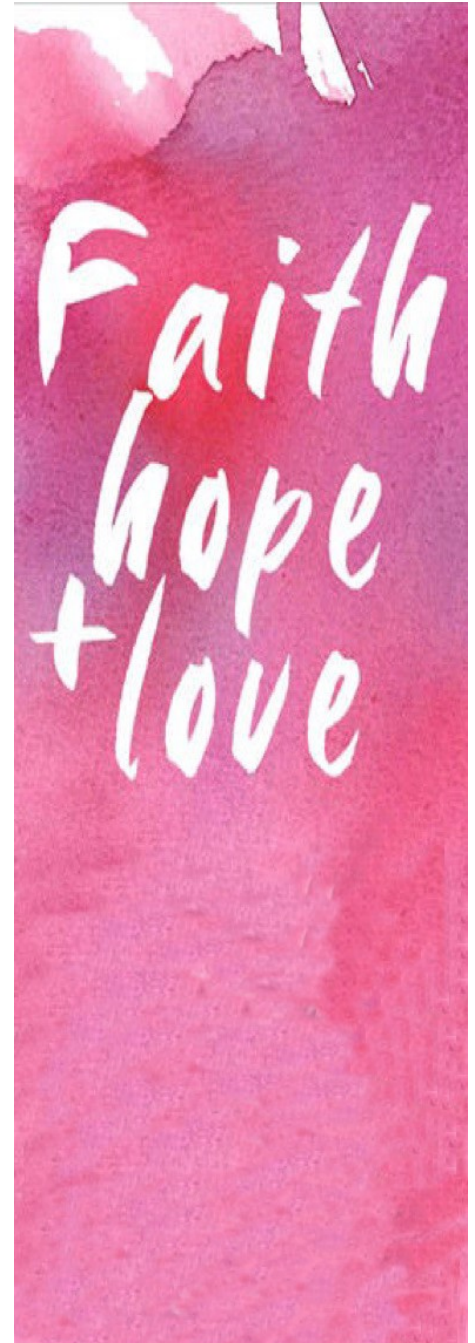
**Welcome to the fifth Caritas Plymouth
quarterly newsletter**

Caritas Plymouth's focus is on supporting and enabling parishes and communities to take action to reach out to the poor and marginalised, building on the great work that is already happening and sharing good ideas.

Caritas is a global movement. We reflect the social mission and core values of the Catholic Church. In the Plymouth Diocese, our strategy focuses on reaching out to those who are homeless, the elderly and isolated, children and families; refugees and asylum seekers (including modern slavery); tackling poverty and promoting care for our common home. The Covid-19 Pandemic has had an impact on the way we work but has shown that *Caritas* is needed more than ever.

We are all invited to be part of *Caritas* in action and on page 7 you will find some ways to get involved. We would love to hear from you!

Deborah Fisher, Caritas Manager 01364 645421



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REFLECTION FROM DEACON RICHARD EDWARDS

The Fourth World Day of the Poor, 15th November 2020

On the 13th June 2020 the Holy Father, Pope Francis, published his message for the upcoming World Day of the Poor, to be held on Sunday 15th November 2020, 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time. This will be the fourth such Day and I encourage you to read the full text, which can be downloaded from <http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2020/06/13/0332/00754.html>

It is entitled “*Extend your hand to the poor*”, a most suitable exhortation in our modern world. From the scriptural base of the Book of Sirach, Pope Francis reminds us that “...*we discover a precious compendium of suggestions on how to act (in support of the poor) in the light of an intimate relationship with God...*”. He states very clearly that “... *prayer to God and solidarity with the poor and suffering are inseparable.*”

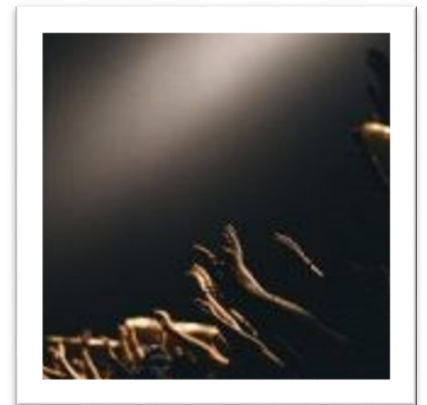
Our responsibility to the poor cannot and must not be viewed as separate from our spiritual life, in fact how can our spiritual life be fulfilled when any member of the human family is marginalised, left behind, or actively attacked?

In this issue as in others past we can see evidence of our communities reaching out to those in need, and it is good to recognise that and to celebrate it. All too often we do not see the generosity that takes place in silence – this may be to protect the dignity of those in need but as the Holy Father says “...*there is no shortage of wickedness and violence... ..but life is interwoven with acts of respect and generosity that not only compensate for evil, but push us to go further and be full of hope.*”

In the Pandemic crisis we are all too aware of the earthquake it has caused in our complacency, rocking many aspects of certainty in our lives – everyone is affected and we all can be part of a new future, both for ourselves and for the poor. The message says “...*the serious economic, financial and political crises will not cease as long as we allow the responsibility that everyone must feel towards others and each person to remain dormant.*”

In the face of both a global crisis and the enormity of need it is easy to feel discouraged or even useless; at such a juncture we must remember again that Jesus tells us that God’s love is there for all in the greatest commandment “*You will love your neighbour as yourself.*” This does not demand of us that we change the world, just that we extend our hand to someone in need close by. Someone who has economic and financial needs, debt issues, homelessness. Someone who has health, addiction, relationship difficulties. Someone who is lonely. Someone who is spiritually poor and does not feel the love of God in their lives.

The Holy Father’s message is a call to action, a reminder that faith demands it of us, but is also a message of hope and encouragement. He says “...*prayer transforms the outstretched hand into an embrace of sharing and rediscovered fraternity.*”



CARITAS PLYMOUTH WILL BE HOSTING AN EVENT ON 24 OCTOBER TO REFLECT FURTHER ON THE MESSAGE OF WORLD DAY OF THE POOR. WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US.

COVID-19—HOW WE ARE RESPONDING TO THE CRISIS

Jesus said ‘..When I was hungry you gave me something to eat, when I was thirsty you gave me something to drink’ Matthew 25: 35, and reminds us that whenever we do something for anyone, no matter how unimportant they seem, we do it for Jesus. The Diocese of Plymouth was thrilled to receive £40,000 from the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation to provide support to individuals and families struggling with financial hardship caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bishop Mark O’Toole expressed his thanks: ‘We are immensely grateful for the grant that the Diocese of Plymouth has received from the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation. The generous grant of £40,000 will allow us to support some of the most needy individuals and families in hardship and struggling, financially, because of the current Coronavirus pandemic. May the Lord continue to bless the Gubay family for their outstanding charitable leadership at this time.’

The funds are being distributed in two ways:

Support for organisations providing food hampers or vouchers

Funding has been distributed to organisations providing food to those in most need across the Diocese of Plymouth. This fund will be administered by Caritas Plymouth, on behalf of the Diocese. We will work through our schools, parishes and organisations reaching the most vulnerable. It has been humbling to see how many people have found themselves in huge difficulty due to the current virus and how much our schools, parishes and other groups (such as SVP) are doing to help.



This element of the funding is now almost fully allocated and we hope will provide emergency support to over 500 people who find themselves in difficulty at this time.

Grants for essential items for families



This scheme is managed by the Catholic Children’s Society (Plymouth). The charity accepts applications from individuals across the Diocese of Plymouth and is designed to provide essential items such as cookers, fridge/freezers, washing machines and furniture (beds, cots and mattresses) to those in most need.

More details can be obtained from ccs@prcdtr.org.uk or by calling 01364 645420.

In both cases funds can only be provided for families or individuals who are in exceptional circumstances and are facing a crisis. These funds are time limited and not for ongoing support needs. The funds will be closed to new applications when all the funding has been allocated. 3

APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA

Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris) is one of Caritas Plymouth's key partners. We are keen to support their work to tackle modern slavery and unsafe conditions facing seafarers.

Seafarers are on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic, playing an essential role in maintaining the flow of vital goods, such as food, medicines and medical supplies. However, the crisis has led to difficult working conditions for seafarers, including uncertainties and difficulties about port access, re-supply, crew changeovers and repatriation. The International Maritime Organisation has campaigned for seafarers to be recognised as key workers and provided with the support and travel options they need.



'Faith that doesn't lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead!' James 2:17 Here in the Diocese of Plymouth, we see faith in action through the work of the Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris) who are active in providing support to the many seafarers who remain stranded on ships.

Ann Donnelly, Teignmouth and Plymouth Chaplain, reminds us:

'There are about 100,000 seafarers world-wide stranded on ships or in ports unable to get home because of cancelled flights or an extension to their contracts. They are desperately anxious about their own families back at home. The plight of all seafarers is now reaching crisis point and they are suffering mental health issues which unfortunately has resulted in seafarers taking their own lives on board their vessels. They feel as if there is no end in sight .

Stella Maris Chaplains and supporters are doing their best to help relieve the seafarers suffering by taking food and essentials to crews who are unable to leave their ships, providing phone cards as well as faith resources and practical advice. Please pray for all seafarers they are frontline workers who have been forgotten in this pandemic, but without them we would have no shipment of food, medical supplies and general cargo which keeps our world running.'

To read more about this work go to www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

SEA SUNDAY POSTPONED

IN THE LIGHT OF THE CONTINUED UNCERTAINTY AROUND CORONAVIRUS, THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF ENGLAND AND WALES HAVE DECIDED TO POSTPONE SEA SUNDAY 2020 FROM JULY 12 TO DECEMBER.

THE DATE HAS NOT YET BEEN FINALISED, BUT IT IS LIKELY TO BE EITHER **SUNDAY 13 OR SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER.**

THE INCOME GENERATED FROM SEA SUNDAY IS CRUCIAL IN MAINTAINING SUPPORT FOR SEAFARERS AND FISHERS, BUT IT IS ALSO AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO SPREAD AWARENESS OF THIS WORK TO OTHERS.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO CELEBRATING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS IN CHURCHES WITH YOU IN DECEMBER.

REACHING OUT

The theme for the 4th World Day of the Poor is “Stretch forth your hand to the poor”, taken from the book of Sirach. Pope Francis insists that even amid hardship we must continue to trust in God. **Caritas Plymouth will be hosting an event on 24 October to celebrate some of the great work happening across the Diocese and to prepare for World Day of the Poor. We hope you will join us. Please email caritas@prcdtr.org.uk for more information.**



REACHING OUT TO THE LONELY AND ISOLATED

Jesus said ‘ Love your neighbor as you love yourself’ Matthew 22:37. There has been great work in many parishes during the Covid-19 pandemic to connect with and support those who are lonely or isolated. As restrictions are gradually lifted Caritas Plymouth can work with interested parishes to reflect on how we build on this to create connected communities. Here is part of a reflection shared by a parishioner about how loneliness during lockdown feels and how they have taken action to help:

‘Loneliness is not a subject that I have really needed to consider or understood in a deeply personal way before Lockdown. For me, of course I have felt alone at times, but for the most part I am surrounded by a loving family, albeit at some distance recently, a deep faith, a strong marriage and successful career. During Lockdown loneliness has stopped me in my tracks! I have spent time as a community volunteer during these last few months. It has given me a better understanding of the vulnerable and hidden BUT for the marginalised it is truly something else. My volunteering role has been to deliver shopping, collect medication, run little errands but has become much more.

... How does it feel to be faced with the same four walls and nothing else every day? As someone I visit described so beautifully to me ‘the view out of the window is getting smaller every day’. The average person could never understand what it means to be confined to a motorised wheelchair which effectively can go nowhere, a straight jacket on life during COVID 19. Personal independence cut by cruel disease and Lockdown. You have to live the life to understand its constraints on the every day in normal circumstances but during Pandemic it is unimaginable.

I have been deeply moved by the plight of the lonely and vulnerable in a way that I have never been before.. Am I alone in realising how many people live in real isolation every single day and how this has become abject in Lockdown? Maybe you should look deep inside before you answer that question.? We would all need to ‘walk in the shoes’ before even beginning to understand. Consider it, pray about it and maybe try to make contact with someone living in this kind of pain every day of their life.

REACHING OUT TO THE HOMELESS *Love one another as I have loved you’ (John 13:34-35)*

Meeting a homeless person on the streets, especially if they have nowhere to go that night, can be quite shocking and worrying. To think that an individual will be cold, wet and vulnerable can invoke a host of emotions. Decision-making around how we act for that person, however, needs to remain clear, needs to keep the homeless person at the heart of any decision, but also needs to keep you safe from harm. Caritas Plymouth has developed some new guidance for parishes and individuals looking to help <https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Homelessness-advice.pdf>

CARITAS IN ACTION IN OUR SCHOOLS

Its [the Church's] desire is that the poor should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and should better their condition in life; and for this it strives.

Rerum Novarum - 'Condition of Labour' (1981), paragraph 23

Our schools have been leading the way in showing Caritas in action across the Diocese, serving the poor and promoting charity and justice throughout the world. Thanks to the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation, Caritas Plymouth has been able to offer schools additional funding to continue their work feeding families during these challenging times. Many of our schools have been providing food hampers, vouchers and larders to help those who are struggling. Our schools have heard the 'Cry of the Poor' and have been supporting hundreds of people each week. Here are some quotes from our schools about why they have been moved to respond:

Many parents have found themselves unable to work or on the poverty line. We provide weekly food packages and signpost the families to 'food for families' for emergency care packages.'

We have been in contact with families during lockdown, some of our families have raised their concern that they are struggling to buy basic necessities due to being made redundant or lockdown has placed increasing pressure on families that were already struggling'



As if that wasn't enough, many of our schools actively responded to the call from Missio to celebrate the Day of Many Colours at the end of June and shared their brilliant work on Twitter. Sorry we only have room to share a few examples!

This annual day of prayer and fundraising reminds children that we belong to God's worldwide family. Known as the Day of Many Colours, the day is based on the five colours of the [Mission Rosary](#). When children pray the Mission Rosary they unite themselves with children in all five continents. St Mary's Poole created a beautiful wall display to share the work that the children did that day.

Keyham Barton primary created an amazing map of the world with helping hands and a border of children dressed in national costumes.

We are truly blessed to have such wonderful work going on in our communities.

"Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other." Romans 12:4



There are lots of opportunities for you to engage with Caritas. Please contact us for help or join us as a volunteer.

Catholic Social Teaching

Preach good news to all creation

We would love you to support our advocacy work, join us in working on education and formation or support your parish to take forward a Love in Action programme .

Our Common Home

Everything is connected

We can help parishes reflect on their environmental impact or support their *Live Simply* journey with CAFOD. Observe the Season of Creation this year which runs from 1 September to St Francis' day.

We can help with resources including an amazing Novena from our schools.

Poverty and homelessness

Hear the cry of the poor

We can offer mutual support, contacts, expertise and advice on things like funding, project development and governance for new groups

Mark Homeless Sunday (mid-October) and World Day of the Poor (mid-November). Sign up for our event on 24 October (details to follow).

Modern slavery and human trafficking

Let the oppressed go free

Let us know if your parish or Deanery would like to host a workshop to raise local awareness of modern slavery.

Learn more about the plight of seafarers through our events with the Apostleship of the Sea.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Welcome the stranger

We're here to help parishes host a refugee family under the **Community Sponsorship** scheme. We'll offer workshops and support to any parish which would like to host a refugee family.

Elderly and Isolated

Heal the brokenhearted

We work closely with SVP and other groups and can support development of parish **drop-in and friendship projects** and can help parishes develop new projects.

Take a look at *Reaching Out*, the Caritas 'how to' guide for parishes at csan.org.uk/embrace.

Justice and Peace

Vatican Covid-19 Commission

On 20 March 2020, Pope Francis asked the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (DPIHD) to create a Commission to express the Church's care for the whole human family facing the COVID-19 pandemic. In the coming months the commission will be developing plans to enable us to put Laudato Si' into action and promote greater understanding of the need for integral human development. You can find out more on the website <http://www.humandevlopment.va/en/vatican-covid-19.html>

Season of Creation

September 1st is the World Day of Creation. This day marks the start of the Season of Creation—a time to slow down and focus on what matters.

During this special time each year, we repair and restore our relationships with each other and with all creation. *Caritas Plymouth* is working with CAFOD and the Diocesan Schools Commission to arrange events to mark this important time.



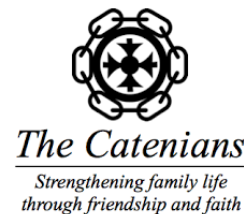
Are you interested in Justice and Peace issues? Would you like to help *Caritas Plymouth* to develop its advocacy and campaigning work? If so, please contact Deborah.fisher@prcdtr.org.uk or call for a chat on the number below.



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