



CARITAS DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

“ *The Church’s deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and exercising the ministry of charity (caritas).* ”



OUR VISION

Our Vision

'To live the Gospel by following Christ's Command to love our neighbour as He loved us.'

Our Mission

Our mission is to help those across the Diocese of Plymouth experiencing poverty, disadvantage and discrimination, to transform their lives with dignity. We support the network of social action charities, schools and parishes within the Diocese, working in partnership to tackle poverty and injustice. We call for a better, more just world where the voices of the poor are heard and acted upon and positively influence the systems, decisions and resources that affect those in need.

MESSAGE FROM CANON JOHN DEENY

Speaking to the staff of Caritas Internationalis last May, Pope Francis said: "We must never forget that, at the origin of all our charitable and social activity, is Christ Himself who, 'having loved His own who were in the world, loved them to the end.'"

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the origin and the heart of the ministry of Caritas in this diocese, as we seek to put our faith in him into action through love and support for the poor.

This annual report shows the many ways in which Caritas Plymouth, as a vital part of the Church's mission, is reaching out to support those in need, especially focusing on the key priorities in our strategy, including promoting a greater understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and what that means for us in living out our faith.

During the past year we have seen a significant development in that Caritas Diocese of Plymouth has become a registered charity and thanks to the generous support of Diocesan Trustees we now also have an expanded team.

These developments will help Caritas Plymouth, together with our partners, build on the excellent work already being done reflected in this document, to reach growing numbers of people, and continue even more effectively to support those who are poor and in need.

In 2023 Caritas Diocese of Plymouth focused on the key priorities in our strategy. The following sections offer a small glimpse of the great work that Caritas has supported in our schools, parishes and communities. In 2023, we registered as an independent Charity under the leadership of the Diocese of Plymouth and hope this will enable us to grow our work in the coming years. Our work will remain rooted in Catholic Social Teaching (CST), based in Scripture, formed by the wisdom of Church leaders, and influenced by grassroots movements. It guides us in our Mission of Charity.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

‘The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church.’ Amoris Laetitia #31

- We work closely with Catholic Children’s Society (Plymouth) and support a network of catholic charities and groups supporting children and families.
- We work closely with the Diocesan Schools Commission (DES). In September 2023, over 60 classes participated in an online event led by the DES to celebrate Season of Creation.
- We support intergenerational linking and encourage schools and parishes to connect young people and care home residents through joint activities and projects. We currently have 12 links.

The pictures below shows children from St Joseph’s RC Primary Poole making Easter cards with residents from Richmondwood Care Home.



Our crisis grant applications support struggling families and in 2023 we have spent over £8500 supporting around 200 people. We have provided £400 to prison chaplaincies to enable them to offer practical support to prisoners.

We are increasing our project work and hope to see this grow in 2024. This year, our Plymouth outreach project supported the development of a Welcome Mondays group at Holy Trinity Plymouth, a Craft and Chat session at Christ the King, a Feast of Fun to offer a summer holiday break to families, and collections for foodbanks and the Plymouth soup run.



SUPPORTING PEOPLE WHO ARE REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, MIGRANTS & TRAFFICKED

***'I was a stranger and you welcomed me.'* Matthew 25:35**

- One parish in the Diocese finished their two-year support for a family arriving through the UK Resettlement Scheme and another welcomed a family in December 2022. A third parish group is preparing to welcome a family in 2024.
- We provided guidance for people hosting Ukrainian families and offered training and information-sharing events.
- We recruited a refugee and migration project lead to develop our work in this area.



- Over 90 people attended events to raise awareness of refugee and migrant issues in 2023. We celebrate the Feast of St Bakhita each year and held a partnership event with the Church of England and Transforming Plymouth Together. We work closely with Stella Maris to support their work tackling modern slavery in the maritime industry.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WHO ARE VULNERABLE, ELDERLY AND ISOLATED

***'The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.'* Galatians 5:6**

Our Support for Those Experiencing Poverty, Destitution or Social Isolation:

- We work closely with SVP and share the great work happening through their conferences.
- We offer information, signposting and aim to inspire faith in action through our events. Feedback suggests that over 95% attending plan to take action as a result.
- Our Plymouth Outreach project explored new ways to reach out to those in need. New development workers in Torbay and Dorset will extend this work in 2024.
- 18 parishes set up Warm Spaces in winter 2022/23. 100% of parishes who responded to our survey (28 responses) said they offer social events. Over 90% have foodbank collections or other outreach activities.

Plymouth Outreach Case Study – A Warm Space

Tanya Trevena, Plymouth Outreach project lead, helped to set up 'Welcome Mondays' hosted by Holy Family Church, Beacon Park. These sessions started as a Winter Warm Space, but it was clear that both volunteers and visitors enjoyed the opportunity to come together and experience community. When asked what the benefits of coming are, people replied, "It's a chance to see a smiling face", "It's made a difference to my life, I think the people that are coming here are lovely, very, very friendly and I really do enjoy it". "I meet new people every week and I leave every time, no matter how long of short it is with a spring in my step."



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING, ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

***'Faith without works is dead.'* James 2:14-18**

Through our education, formation and development we share Catholic Social Teaching and new initiatives across Catholic Charities, schools and parishes.

- Over 500 people have attended our training, presentations and events in 2023 (over 1200 since 2021)
- We actively promote Faith in Action, supporting organisations like PACT as they establish new services in our local prisons; encouraging people to reflect on the issues facing migrants and refugees; responding to the cost of living crisis.
- We are active on social media sharing messages of faith and hope.

HOMELESSNESS

‘The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.’ Luke 4:18

- We provided advice and guidance to parishes about supporting those who are homeless, working in partnership with St Petrocs Cornwall.
 - We encouraged parish support for food banks and our Curia offices regularly collect and donate to the local foodbank.
 - We provided guidance on Warm Spaces and how parishes can get involved in reaching out to those affected by the housing crisis.
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CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

***‘Aspire not to have more but to be more.’
St Oscar Romero, Patron Saint of Caritas***

- Caritas acts as the Diocesan Environment Lead. We prepare a separate report on all our environmental work each year.
 - We work closely with CAFOD on campaigns and organised shared activities for Laudato Si’ Week and the Season of Creation. During Season of Creation the Diocesan Education Service organised an online celebration for schools attended by approximately 1000 young people.
 - We held two days of prayer and reflection to support discernment of a sustainability strategy for the diocese as well as engaging young people from our schools and parishes.
 - We have received a CAFOD Live Simply Award for our work at the Diocesan Curia Offices in Ashburton.
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IMPACT

We know the impact our grants have on those who receive them from their feedback.

Thank you for your help, I do not think we could put into words the gratitude we hold during this horrific time we are dealing with. Your support means so much to our family so again we thank you.

Mum has just called me. She is so happy, she is going to have somewhere to sleep.

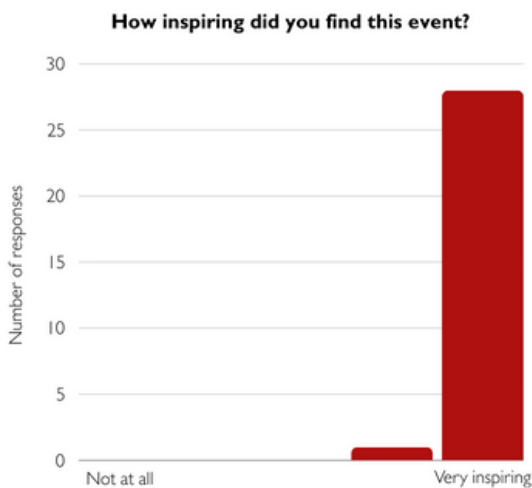
Thank you so much for all the help you give the families. Parent Support Worker

Deborah, A sincere thank you to you and the whole Caritas team for this very kind grant, it is much appreciated and will make a difference to the Roman Catholic men at HMP Exeter.

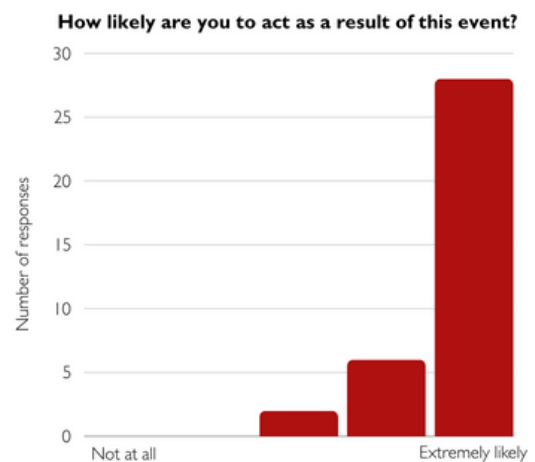
We as a family can't thank you enough, for your help. This means the world to us.

We use case studies to evaluate the difference our work makes. We gather examples of where an intervention or connection has led to social action. Our Dementia Awareness training session led to 4 parishes following up with local training to support those living with dementia and their carers. We gather feedback from our events to understand their impact. The fact that over 550 participants have joined our events shows an interest in our work and the themes we are addressing. When asked for feedback, participants have generally rated events as informative or very informative and have said that they are likely or very likely to act as a result.

Catholic Social Teaching, Event, April 2023



World Day of the Poor event, October 2023



"That was an excellent presentation with a wealth of information and clear signposting which will be a real source of support and action for those who need it and those working to support others in their communities." Cost of Living Online Session Feb '23

"Amazing. Yet again I go away inspired to do more and to share what I can and to do so joyfully." CST Plymouth Event April '23

"I felt the day was very good - the location was excellent and all the activities and discussions were very good. I also felt the information sent in advance was excellent." Environment Day May '23

"...just wonderful! So thought-provoking! Thank you for all you did to organise it. It was lovely to spend the day with like minded individuals and leave feeling enlightened and empowered." World Day of the Poor Oct '23



WITH THANKS



Partnership working is essential for our Mission. We are only as effective as our network of schools, parishes, groups and individuals who support our goal to be a witness to the Gospel by encouraging and supporting Catholic Social Action and integrating it into the structures of the Church.

We are grateful for the support of our Diocesan Administrator, our Diocesan Trustees, the Deans and all the Clergy who support our efforts. We are also grateful for donations this year from the Exeter Catenian Circle, from parish collections and online donations by generous individuals.

We thank Caritas Committee (now advisory group) members: Canon John Deeny (Chair), Deacon Nick Johnson (Clergy Representative), Declan Keogh (Trustee) Geoff Provis (SVP), Andrea Rogers (CCSP), Ann Donnelly (Stella Maris), Lois Wild (St Petrocs, Cornwall) and Zoe Batten (CEO of Plymouth CAST).

Most of all we are grateful to all those individuals who share our information, volunteer, attend our events and carry out social action every day in our schools, parishes and communities.

The Caritas Diocese of Plymouth team has grown: Canon John Deeny is Trustee of the new Charity and Chair of the Caritas Advisory Group, Deborah Fisher OBE, Caritas Manager; Fran McMullan, Project Administrator; Development Workers: Tanya Trevena (Plymouth and Cornwall Deaneries), Teresa Maguire (Dorset Deanery) and Carole Bryant (Torbay Deanery); and Alexandra Miranda, Refugee and Migration Project - 'All Welcome'. The team would like to thank everyone for their support and look forward to working with you in 2024.

We entrust our mission to Mary, Mother of Christian Charity

Mary, Virgin and Mother,
shows us what love is and whence it draws
its origin and its constantly renewed power.

To her we entrust the Church and her
mission in the service of love:

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
you have given the world
its true light,
Jesus, your Son - the Son of God.

You abandoned yourself completely to
God's call
and this became a wellspring
of the goodness which flows forth from
him.

Show us Jesus. Lead us to him.
Teach us to know and love him,
so that we too can become capable of
true love
and be fountains of living water.

(By Pope Benedict XVI: Deus Caritas Est [42])