

Caritas Plymouth

Annual Review

May 2020



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).

Contents

Introduction	3
Values and principles - Reflection by Deacon Nick Johnson.....	4
The seven key aims of <i>Caritas Plymouth</i>	5
Core Work: Education, Formation and Development	6
Core Work: Children and Family Life	7
Core work: Refugees and Migrants.....	8
Core work: Elderly and Isolated (Vulnerable Society)	9
Core work: Homelessness	10
Care for our Common Home.....	10

Vision

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

The Caritas Plymouth Vision is a network of parishes, charities and services engaged in charitable work in the name of the Church; striving to live out the Gospel by supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable people in local communities.

Introduction

In his Encyclical on Charity, Pope Benedict XVI wrote 'The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her threefold responsibility of proclaiming the Word of God, celebrating the Sacraments and exercising the ministry of Charity'. Pope Francis has taken the lead, through his teaching and deeds, in putting the Gospel imperative of love and mercy into action. He asked, at the end of the *Year of Mercy*, that Dioceses' should establish a legacy to that year. The establishment of *Caritas Plymouth* is the Diocese of Plymouth's response to that call.

The remit of *Caritas Plymouth* is to work with organisations already existing (including schools) to put the Church's Social Teaching into action; to provide a network in which good practice can be shared and to encourage new initiatives in the service of the poor and vulnerable. We want to value what has been achieved over many years and build on those foundations. Our approach is to support others to feel inspired, supported and empowered.

Since its inception, over 300 people have attended events organized by Caritas, sharing their prayers and ideas for how we can help the poor, victims of modern slavery, refugees and asylum seekers, the elderly and isolated and vulnerable children and families. We have made great progress in our Community Sponsorship work and made new connections and shared ideas across the Diocese. 2020 has seen increased investment in the work of Caritas, with the appointment of a full time Manager. This increased resource will enable us to strengthen and grow our support for existing and new initiatives.

The Coronavirus and subsequent lockdown has had an impact on our activities. We have focused on sharing and celebrating the good work happening in our parishes and schools as well as providing resources and guidance. Going forward we see a great opportunity to build on the support for the poor and vulnerable that has been happening in our schools and parishes during this time.

This report sets out a summary of the progress of Caritas set against its strategic plan with a review of each of the areas of core action and an outline of plans for 2020-21. We hope that you find it informative and inspiring.

Canon John Deeny, Vicar General

18 May 2020

Values and principles - Reflection by Deacon Nick Johnson

We say that we have faith, hope and love and in these three, our Christianity is fulfilled. Our faith may be largely internal, sometimes strong and secure, sometimes beset by doubts. It is usually expressed in community in prayer with our brothers and sisters as the church. In our current life as a dispersed monastic community, we may be praying alone, meditating on our situation and begging the Lord, with millions of others of many faiths for deliverance from the worst of the work of the virus.

Our hope is based on the promise of Jesus at the Ascension when he promised his Spirit would be with us and that He too 'would be with us, yes, until the end of time'. And beyond our earthly life, all of our effort is driven by a desire for heaven and eternal life, where our hope will be fulfilled.



Our love is necessary to complete these founding principles and is only love when expressed in relation to another person or other people. This is not an exclusive gift that we own, that can be distributed at our whim but God in us. Caritas is Love in Action - that completion of ourselves as we share everything.

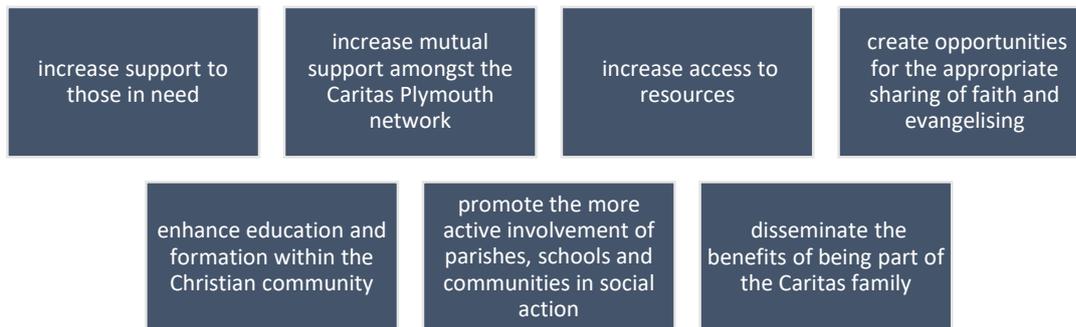
In James 2:14-26, the expectation that good deeds are a vital part of our faith cannot be clearer and one cannot exist without the other. It is our duty to do good things as part of our Christianity to the extent we can. It is also essential that our activity is supported by prayer, a founding principal of the new evangelisation agenda.

What we do may not be quantitatively significant to the world - a smile, a conversation with the person sitting at the side of the road. Where someone has the means, God expects them to apply their blessings to the work in the same way as the poorest. When some of us are out and about carrying out practical tasks for the good of others, it is equally necessary that we have as many people praying for success of that work, that it fulfils God's will for us and takes us nearer to building his Kingdom here on earth.

We are confident that the work is underway all over the Diocese and we should continue to share what we do, what we have tried and what we have as there may be another of us that needs to hear what God gave to us as the inspiration for their next work. Thank you!

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The seven key aims of *Caritas Plymouth*



Caritas Plymouth has started its journey by providing opportunities for people to network and share their faith and ideas for social action. The timeline below sets out some of the key events and actions during this initial period

April 2018	Development Officer in place
7 May 2018	Share the Journey Day – a day of prayer and support for the establishment of Caritas Plymouth.
June 2018	The Bishop’s Council agrees the structures and governance
1 December 2018	Caritas Consultation Event – bringing together over 80 people from across the Diocese to take part in workshops to shape the future work of Caritas.
18 May 2019	Caritas Plymouth launch event - A Mass and Day of reflection attended by over 100 people
June 2019	A Parish and School Mapping exercise was undertaken to understand the social action already underway across the Diocese
Autumn 2019	Work on the first Diocesan Community Sponsorship application
12 October 2019	Day of spiritual reflection and action planning around Poverty in preparation for World Day of the Poor
17 November 2019	Materials shared with parishes for World Day of the Poor
7 March 2020	Modern Slavery Event – A day of prayer and reflection bringing together nearly 90 people to learn about modern slavery and to reflect on how our Diocese can respond.
17 March 2020	Full time Caritas Manager in place
April 2020	Confirmation of the first Home Office Application for a parish proposal community sponsorship

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The following section covers each of the areas of core work of Caritas Plymouth as set out in the 2019-2021 strategy and reviews progress and next steps.

Core Work: Education, Formation and Development

This is an overarching area of work. It seeks to encourage and integrate Catholic Social Teaching and initiatives across Catholic charities, schools and parishes and link with other agencies.

Principal Activities

- Mapped existing activity in parishes and schools
- Shared information across the diocese and coordinating dates and events.
- Signposted to information and support and liaising with other agencies, particularly around the Coronavirus
- Developed a central source of information focusing initially on Community Sponsorship and Children and Family Life.
- Encouraged integration between parishes, schools and Love in Action and other programmes.
- Shared good practice amongst parishes.

The focus in the coming 12 months will be to

Develop a central source of information focusing on Children and Family Life working in close partnership with others.

Create a visual representation of social action across the Diocese Using the mapping data

Encourage integration between parishes, schools and the Love in Action and other similar programmes

Establish a mechanism for sharing good practice amongst parishes and schools

Investigate Caritas Ambassadors in schools and parishes.



Provide practical formation on how Caritas initiatives and evangelising will be naturally combined in particular through actions to mark Laudato Si' week in May 2020 and joint events with the Evangelisation and Catechesis teams

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Core Work: Children and Family Life

This strategic priority builds on the work of the local Catholic Children's Society providing material and moral support to families in need and parenting programmes. Support will also be provided through parishes, schools and other charities.

Principal Activities

- Worked through partners, in particular the Catholic Children's Society (CCS) (Plymouth) who provide a stop gap for families in need while waiting for other external support and provide grant funding for families in need. CCS gives around £30,000 of grants to the most vulnerable families each year – including refugees and asylum seekers and delivers parenting programmes.
- Collaborated with charities and agencies supporting vulnerable life in the womb and those providing diocesan support for catechesis for children with additional needs.
- Supported parishes to fundraise for and support Community Sponsorship schemes for refugee families.
- Developed strong relationships with Plymouth CAST and other schools

In the coming 12 months, we plan to

Strengthen our work around children and family life with a programme of activities in partnership with other Catholic charities

Support our partner charities to increase their capacity to reach more people

Increase our visibility and presence in Catholic Schools and links with University groups



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Core work: Refugees and Migrants

Through this priority the Caritas network will explore how the Gospel imperative to 'Welcome the Stranger' can be translated into practical action.

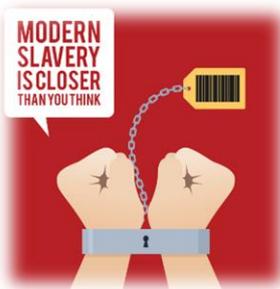
Principal Activities

- Worked with national agencies and parishes interested in becoming a Community Sponsor. Our first application has now been accepted by the Home office and there are four other parishes interested in taking this forward.



- An event in March 2020 was attended by nearly 90 people. It looked at how we can support the Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris) in their work with seafarers as well how we can tackle wider modern slavery and migration issues.
- Created new links with other charities working in this area to see how we can tackle modern slavery within our Diocese

In the coming 12 months we plan to:



Build on the 7 March event to take develop some concrete actions to tackle modern slavery in our Diocese

Study the feasibility of using empty diocesan properties for resettled families or vulnerable people.

Support parishes interested in becoming a Community Sponsor or supporting ecumenical initiatives

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Core work: Elderly and Isolated (Vulnerable Society)

Caritas' aim is to support the St Vincent de Paul Society and other groups (Catholic Women's League, the Catenians and other parish groups) to address challenges facing older people.

Principal Activities

- Three events have aimed to empower and support parishes to take forward initiatives, especially around the World Day of the Poor. In 2019, around 60 people attended an event looking at the causes of poverty and its impact.



- Provided guidance on how parishioners might identify and look out for older or isolated people, particularly in the context of Corona Virus.
- Promoted the work of SVP and others through newsletters and social media.

Over the next 12 months we plan to:

Bring people together to reflect on how we can build on the good work already happening and new links created during the Coronavirus.

Assist the Catenians to establish a 'Dragons Den' fundraising project in a local secondary school each year

Share good practice from our parishes in supporting individuals and communities to come together to provide mutual support around bereavement and loss

Promote World Day of the Poor in 2020 and organise online or face to face events to encourage people to reflect on poverty in all its forms

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Core work: Homelessness

This priority builds on the existing parish initiatives supporting local homeless charities and hostels.

Principal Activities

- Built on World Day of the Poor to encourage parishes to grow existing support for foodbanks. During the Coronavirus pandemic we have seen many examples of our schools and parishes supporting food distribution
- Supported the work of St Petrocs, Cornwall
- Shared guidance on how best to support people we meet who are homeless
- Assessed the feasibility of Diocesan properties as housing for vulnerable people



In the coming 12 months we will:

Create links with the other agencies to improve engagement with parishes.

Help interested parishes work with homelessness charities to broker positive activities

Map and support Winter Night Shelter activity.

Develop concrete proposals for unused properties

Care for our Common Home

In his encyclical 'Laudato Si' Pope Francis calls urgently 'for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. Environmental considerations will underpin all of our activities but we commit to:

Assess the environmental impact of all our work (particularly travel and events) and reduce our environmental impact

Promote and encourage existing initiatives including Live Simply and the work of CAFOD and our schools

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With Thanks to Caritas Committee members for their support:

Declan Keogh	Trustee of the Diocese of Plymouth
Steve Ellis	St Petrocs Cornwall
Deacon Nick Johnson	Clergy representative
Shelagh Fearnley	Catholic Children's Society Plymouth
Geoff Provis	SVP
Ann Donnelly	Stella Maris
Raymond Friel	Plymouth CAST

*The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." **Luke 4:17-19***