

Caritas at Christmas

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men! Luke 2:14

In his latest encyclical 'Fratelli Tutti', Pope Francis reminds us of the importance of kindness: 'every now and then, miraculously, a kind person appears and is willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference. If we make a daily effort to do exactly this, we can create a healthy social atmosphere in which misunderstandings can be overcome and conflict forestalled'.

We are called to recognise the face of Jesus in the faces of our brothers and sisters, but under the current restrictions it can be hard to know how to help people who are struggling at this time. Many people are keen to show generosity to others, particularly at Christmas, and the following are some suggestions for how you can help.

HOMELESSNESS

What can you do if you meet someone who is homeless?

- Offer the person bedding or a coat to help them keep warm (ensure you maintain social distancing when talking to them).
- Report the person sleeping rough to **StreetLink** on **0300 500 0914**. StreetLink will engage local services, but not on the night.
- Listen to the person, they often just need a listening ear and be approachable and friendly.
- If the person looks to be in immediate danger, dial 999 and ask for the police or ambulance.
- If your budget allows, assist with travel costs for short journeys as the person may be able to sleep at a friend or relation's house.
- Join the **Virtual Carol Service** with **St Petrocs** on 4th December at 7pm, including speakers, readings, and the fabulous GraceNote. Click below to book and you'll be sent a YouTube link: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/virtual-carol-service-tickets-129863847263?aff=Caritas
- St Petrocs have a Winter Appeal running throughout December to raise funds for homeless people in Cornwall during the winter months. Download a pack here: www.stpetrocs.org.uk/support-us/christmasappealdownload
- Treat people with dignity, respect and in a non-judgmental way at all times. Do inform local homelessness services.



CAFOD Advent Prayer

*Light up our lives
Christ, come into our world of
darkness
Light up our lives with your coming.
Fulfil all our longings with the joy of
your birth
Strengthen our resolve to work for
change in our world
And to share the hope of your birth
that each Advent brings
Amen*
Sr Bridgetta Rooney/CAFOD

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Many families are struggling financially due to Covid-19 and families face many pressures. Here are some ways you can help:

- Support your local food bank, they are making a huge difference to many families.
- Find out what is happening at your local school, some are asking for donations for Christmas food parcels for families in need.
- Support the **Catholic Children's Society** with your prayers and donations, their essential grants programme is really helping people who need basic home items.
- **CAFOD** have some wonderful **advent prayer resources** for children, including family advent calendars with daily activities and resources.



Caritas at Christmas

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

- You can donate to charities which help refugees and migrants in the UK including **The Red Cross** and **Jesuit Refugee Services**.
- Jesuit Refugee Services have a virtual gift service: www.jrsuk.net/refugeegifts and also have a list of items they need such as nappies and toiletries – perhaps your parish could organise a collection: www.jrsuk.net/current-needs
- Your local **Saint Vincent de Paul Society** may be supporting refugee and migrant families and would welcome your support.
- The Medaille Trust provides clothing and other items for refugees; to find out more or to donate visit: www.medaille-trust.org.uk
- Support the **Medaille Trust** by signing up to Amazon Smile, visit www.smile.amazon.co.uk select *Medaille Trust* and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to Medaille Trust, with no cost to you.
- Support CAFOD's advent appeal **This Shelter is my Treasure** and their work supporting refugees overseas.
- **Stella Maris** provide s spiritual, pastoral and welfare needs to all seafarers, regardless of faith. During the pandemic seafarers provided countries with essential food, medicine, PPE and all the cargo delivered to shores on a regular basis; many have been apart from their loved ones for months.
- On 20 December we celebrate Sea Sunday where we remember all seafarers and fishers and the important role they play; please remember them in your prayers. Visit: www.stellamaris.org.uk to find out more.



ELDERLY AND ISOLATED

Christmas is the loneliest time of year for older people, with those who have lost a loved one struggling the most. Why not:

- Give a small amount of time to an older person who's living alone in your street.
- Support a community activity in your local area - your parish may have opportunities for you to get involved such as **Saint Vincent de Paul Society** or other groups providing telephone support and befriending opportunities.
- **Age UK** has volunteering opportunities across the Diocese of Plymouth.
- If social distancing permits - pop in to check on an older neighbour.
- Drop round a Christmas card to let someone know you are thinking of them.
- If you are concerned someone is feeling lonely, why not connect them with organisations which can help? **Age UK Advice** is free to call on **0800 169 65 65** or people can call **Silverline** on **0800 4708090** for friendship and advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week.