



Strategy Review

2019-2021

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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.

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01364 645421

caritas@prcdtr.org.uk

www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/caritas

Caritas Plymouth • Diocese of Plymouth • St Boniface House • Ashburton • Devon • TQ13 7JL



Caritas Plymouth Strategy Review 2019-2021

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 of Plymouth, working in partnership with them 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.

Our Journey So Far

Message from Bishop Mark O'Toole

'May 2021 marks the end of the second year since the establishment of Caritas Plymouth. Caritas Plymouth was set up to give motivation, direction and support to the Church's Ministry of Charity and provide fresh impetus to the command of the Lord into practise: 'Love one another as I have loved you.' (John 13:34-35).'



Over the last two years, Caritas Plymouth has worked closely with organisations already existing to put the Church's Social Teaching into action. Hundreds of people have attended events and activities. Others have been supported through our food vouchers and essential grant programmes. As a Diocese, we have continued to invest in capacity to enable Caritas to provide new opportunities to proclaim our faith in deeds as well as words and this has enabled us to attract external funding for our work. It is our hope that Caritas Plymouth, in partnership with our parishes, schools, charities and individuals, will continue to increase our response to Jesus' example and teaching. 'The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.' (Galatians 5:6).'

Since its launch, Caritas Plymouth has carried out a wide range of activities. This report provides a snapshot of work in our core strategic areas. 2020 was a challenging year and we focused on identifying ways to support and strengthen actions to reach those most affected by the Coronavirus pandemic and to engage people through online training and events.

The Caritas team has grown. There is now a full-time manager and a part-time project support worker. In 2021 a part-time Caritas Outreach worker will join the team to support social action in Plymouth.

Over the last two years, the Diocese has committed over £100,000 to support the work of Caritas. We have also been successful in attracting external funding to support our work. Since June 2020, we have been awarded £137,000 for new projects.

We understand our context better; we have mapped social action in our parishes and set that in the context of deprivation in our communities and our ageing society. The results will inform our priorities going forward, enabling us to focus resources on where the need is greatest. The figures below are a snapshot in time in 2020 and are based on the parishes which responded.

Of the parishes across our Diocese:



83%

Support CAFOD



47%

Support Saint Vincent de Paul Society



24%

Support Apostleship of the Sea



54%

Have an activity supporting older people



38%

Actively support refugees and migrants



16%

Have a bereavement group



33%

Work to support the homeless



26%

Run a playgroup or other activity



38%

Have a group engaging young people



98%

Support their local foodbank



57%

Have an online prayer group



24%

Have an environmental project

Although our current strategy ends in May 2021, the committee have agreed to roll it over until the end of the year to enable us to engage with a wider range of people in planning the next steps for Caritas from 2022 onwards.



The current strategy has a number of key priorities and our progress is set out in the following sections. We seek to integrate Catholic Social Teaching into all our work.

Supporting Children and Families

'The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the world and that of the Church's.'

Amoris Laetitia #31

- We have created a network of catholic charities and groups which support children and families. We work closely with the Diocesan Schools Commission.
- We have received £30,000 to support an intergenerational project linking 10 schools with 10 care homes which will run from 2021-22.
- We have given £30,000 to the Catholic Children's Society Plymouth from our Gubay Funding to support their essential grants programme. The first donation in 2020 supported 238 (67 families) people.

Supporting Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Trafficked People

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

Caritas aims to support, assist and walk alongside refugees and migrants. We are a Lead Sponsor for Community Sponsorship groups.

- One parish in the Diocese has welcomed a family as part of the Community Sponsorship Syrian Refugee Resettlement scheme.
- Two parish groups are in the preparation stages of the scheme to welcome a refugee family.
- Over 100 people attended events to raise awareness of refugee and migrant issues.
- Two events on modern slavery were attended by over 130 people.
- We now celebrate the Feast of St Bakhita each year.



Supporting the Vulnerable, Elderly and Isolated Communities

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

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

- We have received £80,000 from the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation, £50,000 of which has been used to provide food parcels and food vouchers to those affected by Covid-19. Over 2400 people have been supported so far through our emergency food voucher scheme.
- We have shared good practice and published six detailed case studies about how communities are reaching out to the isolated.
- We facilitated two meetings on digital outreach to share good ideas.
- Our two events to mark World Day of the Poor were attended by over 110 people.
- We provided Saint Vincent de Paul and other groups with funding and training to signpost people in crisis.

Catholic Social Teaching, Advocacy and Engagement

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

Through our education, formation and development we seek to encourage and integrate Catholic Social Teaching and initiatives across Catholic Charities, schools and parishes.

- Over 500 people have attended our training and events since the launch of the strategy in May 2019.
- We are active on social media and shared video reflections on 'Fratelli Tutti' during the season of Advent with over 1000 views.

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 have shared advice and guidance with parishes about how best to support those who are homeless.
- We have encouraged parish support for foodbanks and provided financial support for St Petrocs which supported 274 individuals with food in 2020.



Care for our Common Home

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

- Caritas has supported the development of the Diocesan Environment Policy and action framework.
- We work closely with CAFOD on campaigns and raising awareness and organised shared activities for Laudato Si' Week and the Season of Creation in 2020.
- We have produced five environmental case studies to showcase the work in our schools and parishes.
- We have developed our website to provide advice and guidance.

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 Bishop Mark and our Diocesan Trustees, the Deans and all the Clergy who support our efforts. We thank in particular our Caritas Committee members: Canon John Deeny (Chair), Deacon Nick Johnson (Clergy Representative), Declan Keogh (Trustee) Geoff Provis (SVP), Shelagh Fearnley (CCSP), Ann Donnelly (Stella Maris), Steve Ellis (St Petrocs Cornwall) and Sarah Barreto (Diocesan Schools Commissioner). Most of all we are grateful to all those individuals who share our information, attend our events and carry out social action every day in our schools, parishes and communities.

Thank you for your support.

Canon John Deeny, Vicar General, Deborah Fisher OBE, Caritas Manager and Anna Evans, Project Support Worker.

Prayer to St Oscar Romero

Saint Oscar Romero Pray for Us

O Lord Father of Mercy, who through Jesus Christ and the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace and the action of the Holy Spirit, has bestowed on Saint Oscar Romero the grace of being an exemplary shepherd at the service of the Church, especially giving preference to the poor and needy.

Grant, Lord, that I may also learn to live according to the gospel of your Son, glorify your Saint Oscar Romero and concede, through his intercession, the favour I ask of you... Amen.