



Caritas Plymouth

Exercising the Ministry of Charity

Reflection by Canon John Deeny, Vicar General

In referring to the Synodal Journey, Pope Francis said: 'To listen to the Holy Spirit, the members of the Church must listen to each other and especially to those who are marginalised. This means for example the poor, the homeless, those with addictions, anyone that society rejects, are part of the Synod, because God says they are part of the Church.'

A big 'thank you' to all who have participated in the Synodal journey in our parishes and schools during the Advent season. Feedback from these sessions will eventually provide material to send on to the Bishops Conference, and also feed into the pastoral planning of our diocese.

As we begin this New Year the 'Walking Together', Synodal journey, continues. In the next couple of months we will especially attempt to reach out to the groups of people and individuals who are on the margins of our society, and of the Church. We thank God that our charities, parishes, schools, chaplaincies, and individuals, encouraged and supported by Caritas Plymouth, are already walking alongside many of these people. Some of their work is shared in the newsletter below,

The 'walking alongside' people in need, is not a one-way process. A key characteristic of the Synodal Journey is to listen to others. We want to listen to the voices of those, with whom Jesus closely associates himself, the poor and those on the margins. We call to mind the parable of Jesus of The Sheep and the Goats, Matthew 25.

It is apparent, though, that there are other vulnerable and excluded people with whom we have yet to establish any connection, which presents us with an opportunity and a challenge going forward. This newsletter provides some practical suggestions and ideas about how we might reach out more effectively to them.

The Church should always reach out to the poor, and listen to their voice, if she is to be faithful to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the tradition of the Church, and give credible witness in our world.

'The marginalised, the poor, those without hope, were elected to be the sacrament of Christ. This is the way the church is,' Pope Francis.

God bless you. And a very happy New Year.



NEWSLETTER

11th Edition January 2022

In this issue:

New Year—New Opportunities

Our Common Home

News from our partners

Persons with Disabilities

Intergenerational Linking

Caritas in Plymouth

Refugees and Migrants

Justice and Peace

Upcoming Events

'The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love'

Galations 5:6



Catholic Children's Society
(Plymouth)



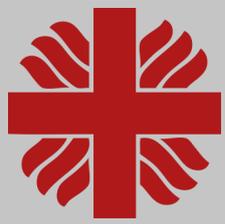
St Vincent
de Paul Society
England and Wales
Turning Concern into Action



St Petros



STELLA MARIS



NEW YEAR—NEW OPPORTUNITIES

“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people” Galatians 6:10

New Year - New Opportunity for Social Action

January is always a good time to take stock and reflect on how we live out Jesus' teaching to "love your neighbour as yourself" Matthew 22:39. Caritas is the helping hand of the Church, reaching out to the poor, vulnerable and excluded. All of us are part of Caritas: parishioners young and old, chaplaincies. Catholic organisations, clergy and religious. We want Caritas to grow but need your talents, creativity and commitment. As we start the New Year, perhaps you can reflect on how your parish can turn prayer into action. Why not:

- Set up a new activity to **break down social isolation and loneliness**. The pandemic has increased the sense of loneliness and isolation for many. Why not set up an SVP group or discuss how your parish can Reach Out csan.org.uk/embrace
- **Take action to reach out to those who are homeless**. Come to our **online event on 18 January** to find out more : <https://forms.office.com/r/NkUZYhwckf>
- **Pray for those who are marginalised**. Plan now to mark Homeless Sunday (9th October) World Day of the Poor (13th November) and Prisons Week (9th-15th October).
- **Welcome a refugee family** offering support to integrate into your local community to those who are the most vulnerable in our global family. Come to our online event on Tuesday 8th February 5pm-6pm. Visit our website to find out more:
<https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/welcome-the-stranger/>
- Why not become a **Live Simply Parish** in 2022 as part of the journey of meeting our Diocesan environmental commitments. In partnership with CAFOD we hope to organise some events in May this year to reflect on how we care for our common home.
- Every parish is a community for Mission and **Catholic Social Teaching** tells us we have a responsibility to advocate and challenge systems that create poverty and inequality. Why not work with Caritas Plymouth as an Advocacy Volunteer or start a Justice and Peace group in your parish? The Love in Action programme is a great way to get started
<https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/love-in-action.php>
- **Modern Slavery** is a hidden crime and right on our doorstep although we may fail to see it. Why not invite Caritas to deliver a workshop in your parish to raise awareness of this issue and simple steps we can all take?





CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Laudato Si

Bishop Mark recorded in his closing session for an online Laudato Si retreat in October. He reflected on *Laudato si* and what it means for us. *Creation itself is a song of Praise to the Creator. We are to re-discover our home within it.* You can find the full recording online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBaGOBP8jqs>



Current Actions

In 2019 the Diocese undertook a parish survey which suggested that around 30% of our parishes have an environmental project. In 2021 we undertook a further short survey interviewing 11 parishes. The results suggest some good work is happening but there is much still to be done and some quick wins in areas such as recycling and cutting back on paper use.



Fig 1

40% of sample parishes have environmental projects



Fig 2

70% of sample parishes use Fairtrade Goods



Fig 3

50% of sample parishes have had environment – themed events



Fig 4

29% recycled

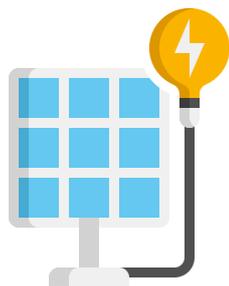


Fig 5

29% of parishes either had, or were looking into, solar panels



Fig 6

14% were entirely paperless



Fig 7

14% were transitioning to electric vehicles

We would like to thank all parishes who participated in the survey.

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STELLA MARIS

During these difficult and uncertain times ships continue to visit our ports offloading vital goods and supplies that are necessary for our everyday lives. Seafarers are always struggling with their own worries and anxieties about their loved ones back at home. When Typhoon Rai hit the Philippines in December many Seafarers were desperate to contact their families. They had to endure days waiting for news whilst out at sea and continuing their work. Stella Maris Chaplains and Ship visitors have been able to visit ships but cannot go on board due to the pandemic however, they have been able to distribute Christmas gifts that have been generously donated by supporters. With each gift they have included a Christmas card thanking seafarers for the wonderful work they do and the sacrifices they make on our behalf. You can find out more about how to support this work at www.stellamaris.org.uk

CHILDREN AND FAMILY LIFE

'The welfare of the family is decisive for the future of the World' Amoris Laetitia #31



Caritas Plymouth hosts quarterly meetings of Catholic organisations and groups working to support children and family life across the Diocese. We share information and ideas and support each other's work. Groups represented include Youth events, Formation, Ave Maria Crisis Pregnancy Service, Catholic Children's Society Plymouth, Natural Family Planning, SPUC, Marriage Care and Foster Carers. If you are supporting children and family life and would like to join our discussions please email caritas@prcdtr.org.uk.

HOMELESSNESS

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

There are concerns that the economic aftermath of COVID-19 will lead to increasing numbers of people who are homeless or vulnerably housed. When most people think of homelessness they think of someone in a sleeping bag on the street. But there are lots of types of homelessness, which affect a range of different people. It can be difficult to know what to do to reach out to those who are homeless. Caritas Plymouth is pleased to be working in partnership with St Petrocs charity in Cornwall to host an **online event on the 18th of January 2022 from 6-7 pm**. This event will offer an opportunity for prayer and reflection and some suggestions for how we can all take practical action to tackle this issue. If you can join us for this event, please register [here](#) or email caritas@prcdtr.org.uk.



PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

“Disabled people must have access to the sacraments, to Catholic parish life.” Pope Francis, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3 December 2020.

On 6 December 2021, the Vatican launched a campaign for persons with disabilities—#Iamchurch, highlighting the contribution made by people with disabilities to the life of the Church. You can see some lovely videos produced by the Vatican about the important role that persons with disabilities play in the life of the Church <https://youtu.be/U4PWSir1Ovk>.

Sidmouth SVP recently reflected on whether their parish is accessible to people with disabilities and you can find the results of their review and some suggestions for action here: <https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/SVP-Disability-Case-Study-5.pdf>

The top tips from their review are:

- The role of welcomers is crucial in ensuring people’s needs are met.
- Make sure people with disabilities have a voice.
- Changing printing font sizes on parish documentation can make a big difference.
- If you are installing screens, ensure that people with disabilities are not disadvantaged.
- Make sure the parish office can respond to requests for mailing out notices, etc., so that people can make use of their adaptive technology.

There is also a guide for parishes produced by the Catholic Disability Fellowship which includes a checklist for parish provision www.csan.org.uk/guidance/parish-guide-to-disability/

PRISONS AND PRISONERS

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

In November 2021, Caritas visited Fr Anthony Onuoha, Lead Prison Chaplain, at Channings Wood. It was humbling to hear the amazing unseen work of our Prison Chaplaincy and in particular its role in supporting prisoners in transition to the community. We heard how the prison population is increasing but there are challenges in the lack of capacity to offer each person one to one support in the 12 weeks prior to leaving prison and afterwards in the community. Prisoners are very anxious about their release. They need outside mentors, but the chaplains in the prison are not able to offer this support to everyone who needs it. Caritas will be working with the Chaplains and South West Community Chaplaincy in 2022 to see what more we can do in our local communities to support people and help to prevent the cycle of re-offending. Why not consider whether your parish could be a place where people who leave prison find acceptance and sign up to the Directory of faith communities who have declared a commitment to welcoming prison leavers [The Welcome Directory](#).



INTERGENERATIONAL LINKING

Matthew 18:2-5 He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven"

The intergenerational linking project is Caritas Plymouth initiative in partnership with Plymouth CAST, funded by a grant from the Dunhill Medical Trust. This project is part of a national initiative: [Care Home Friends and Neighbours: Intergenerational Linking](#)

The project has connected ten schools from Plymouth CAST and ten care home partners and it is great to see some of the activities already underway.

Despite the challenges still posed by Covid, many pupils and residents are getting to know each other through letters, drawings and online.

So far 338 children have participated in 9 activities between 7 schools and care homes.

At a meeting between Caritas and the Care Homes in November we received lots of great feedback:

"The residents received handprints from the children which was lovely for the residents, and they are going to do the same thing back for the children."

"There will be children from year 6 to sing carols for the residents in the garden.....it has probably felt quite insular for many of the residents recently and so it is lovely for them to connect with the outside world."

We are really looking forward to seeing how these relationships grow and develop in the coming months and years but wanted to share a lovely Covid-secure meeting between pupils and residents in Wool. Having linked together via Zoom, the residents visited the children in their minibus for Children in Need (see the picture below). The children came outside and waved to them and the residents made some special gifts for them.



Proudly supporting
youth social action



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



Remarkable
research for
healthy ageing
THE DUNHILL MEDICAL TRUST

CARITAS OUTREACH IN PLYMOUTH

Tanya Trevena is a Caritas Project lead based at Beacon Park parish in Plymouth. Her role is to work with all the Plymouth parishes to explore what activities are taking place and where Caritas can support and promote new activities. She started the project in September and shares her progress so far:

“When I started this job, I wasn’t sure what to expect. However, the past three months working for Caritas in Plymouth have been very interesting. I have had the pleasure of meeting genuinely loving people, not just in our churches but in the broader community as well. Those who have a real zeal for supporting and growing our communities to create spaces of belonging and family.

Inspired by the Catholic Social teaching of; Promoting dignity, Supporting dignity in the work place, Upholding solidarity, Developing the community, Caring for our world and Promoting peace, I am looking to engage our churches to form social action projects to run this year. For this I have sent out a parish survey to gather ideas and the passion of our parishioners. Responses already show that the heart of the people is to reach out in love to one another, to build connections, and to know that people are safe and well cared for.

After the disruption of the past couple of years, I find that many of us are gathering ourselves back together again. Starting a-new and finding our way in a changing world. However, the desire to follow the Holy Fathers quest in Fratelli Tutti, “to forge bonds of unity, common projects and shared dreams”, is very much aligned with the spirit in Plymouth. As I engage and gather people who are interested to act on their dreams, I hope that through God’s grace, this year will be one of exciting opportunities and movement forward, towards a community that builds on the loving heart that I have found there.

Any Plymouth parishioners who are interested in contributing towards my work can follow the link to my survey <https://forms.office.com/r/AXZpCwZXZa> or are welcome to contact me at tanya.trevena@prcdtr.org.uk or on 07470 638158.

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

“I was a stranger and you welcomed me” Matthew 25:35

Community Sponsorship is where a parish group sponsors a refugee family to settle in the UK. It is hugely rewarding for both the family and the local community. It is always amazing how supportive local people can be. The Co-op in Sidmouth has been particularly generous supporting Companions Sidmouth and recently donated over £1700 which will go towards the cost of providing English lessons to the family. We have three other parishes interested in taking forward applications for community sponsorship. Brigid from the Sidmouth group will be talking at our event on 8 February about this great opportunity, so do come along. You can [register here](#) or email caritas@prcdtr.org.uk



Justice and Peace



Fairtrade Fortnight — 21 February to 6 March 2022

For two weeks each year, thousands of individuals, companies and groups across the UK come together to share the stories of those who grow our food and drinks, and grow the cotton in our clothes; people who are often exploited and underpaid.

Many of our parishes already use fair trade goods—but if not perhaps 2022 could be the time to make the switch. Becoming part of the Fairtrade movement gives us the power to drive long-term change, not only with your shopping choices but with your support in spreading the message. [Click here](#) to read more about what you can do to take action.

Events and Dates for your Diary

18 January Homelessness Event

An online event hosted by Caritas Plymouth to reflect on how we can address the challenge of homelessness in our local communities. [Homelessness - Online Event 18 January 2022 6-7pm - Diocese of Plymouth % % \(plymouth-diocese.org.uk\)](#)

18–25 January Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

23 January World Leprosy Day England

27 January Holocaust Memorial Day

8 February - Day for Victims of Trafficking (St Josephine Bakhita)

Come along and find out more about migrants, refugees and modern slavery at our online event <https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/welcome-the-stranger/>

13 February Racial Justice Sunday .

Racial justice depends on many things, including learning from our history. We share a commitment to properly recognise the profound importance and value of the UK's migrant and ethnic minority communities, never allowing their human dignity to be violated.

20 February World Day of Social Justice

27 February Church Action on Poverty Sunday

21st March UN International Day for the Elimination of Discrimination. On 21 March 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid pass laws. Proclaiming the day in 1966, the United Nations General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

For more information or to support our work please contact Fran or Deborah. We would love to hear from you!

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