

'It is an act of charity to assist someone suffering, but it is also an act of charity, even if we do not know that person, to work to change the social conditions that caused his or her suffering'. Fratelli Tutti #186



Caritas Plymouth focuses on supporting and enabling parishes and communities to take action to reach out to the poor and marginalised, building on the great work that is already happening and sharing good ideas. Over recent months we have worked with partners to distribute funding for food and essential items to those struggling as a result of Covid-19; we have organised events to raise awareness of modern slavery and we have offered training on how to support people struggling financially. We have celebrated the Season of Creation in partnership with CAFOD and our schools. We are linking in with groups interested in Justice and Peace to share Catholic Social Teaching including the Covid-19 catechesis and the new Encyclical '*Fratelli Tutti*'.

If you would like to learn more about any of the issues raised in this newsletter or to support our work—please get in touch. **It would also be great to see you at our Diocesan online event on 24 October from 10.30-12.30 to prepare for World Day of the Poor.** Please call or email us for more information—caritas@prcdtr.org.uk or call 07761 595567.



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“FRATELLI TUTTI” POPE FRANCIS' SOCIAL ENCYCLICAL

On 4 October Pope Francis released his latest Encyclical ‘ [*Fratelli Tutti*](#) - ‘Brother and Sisters All’. Fraternity and social friendship are the ways the Pontiff indicates to build a better, more just and peaceful world, with the contribution of all: people and institutions. With an emphatic confirmation of a ‘no’ to war and to globalised indifference.

The Pope describes ‘*Fratelli Tutti*’ as a “Social Encyclical” which borrows the title of the “Admonitions” of Saint Francis of Assisi, who used these words to “address his brothers and sisters and proposed to them a way of life marked by the flavour of the Gospel”. The Encyclical aims to promote a universal aspiration toward fraternity and social friendship. In the background of the Encyclical is the Covid-19 pandemic which, Francis reveals, “unexpectedly erupted” as he “was writing this letter”. But the global health emergency has helped demonstrate that “no one can face life in isolation” and that the time has truly come to “dream, then, as a single human family” in which we are “brothers and sisters all”.

There are eight chapters covering a range of contemporary challenges and offering a roadmap for how mankind can respond differently in a spirit of fraternity and love. The Encyclical offers tangible ways to advance for those who wish to build a more just and fraternal world in their ordinary relationships, in social life, politics and institutions. The Encyclical closes with a prayer to the Creator:

A Prayer to the Creator Lord

Father of our human family, you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit and
inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter, dialogue, justice and peace.
Move us to create healthier societies and a more dignified world, a world without hunger, poverty,
violence and war

May our hearts be open to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognize the goodness and beauty that you have sown in each of us,
and thus forge bonds of unity,
common projects, and shared dreams.
Amen.



COVID-19—HOW WE ARE RESPONDING

SVP colleagues and other parish groups have been busy supporting families who are struggling at this time. *Caritas Plymouth* is pleased to be able to support their work through provision of food vouchers. Here is some of the feedback received from families.

I would like to say a huge thank you for helping us through this pandemic time. I couldn't go to work as I had nobody to leave my children with. We had very limited income. And without the food supply that we had from you, it would be a very very not easy and sad time for us. But with your support we were not stressed over food. Children were happy to know that another food parcel has arrived and they were gladly helping me to take the food from the bags and put it to the fridge or cupboards. Thanks to you we always had enough food on our table.

*We can't thank you enough.
God bless you all*



St Vincent
de Paul Society

England and Wales

Turning Concern into Action

We have been receiving the vouchers which we then use to buy essential groceries in Morrisons, without this we would have at most £30 maximum to try and buy food for the week for 6 people, I had to choose between paying my bills or buying food. These vouchers have given me peace of mind knowing that providing food for my family is one less thing I have to worry about.

The Catholic Children's Society Plymouth have been actively supporting families during this time including through a £15,000 grant from the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation. The charity provides grants to families for essential items and works closely with social and health care services to reach those really struggling. Here are some quotes from those who have received support:



That's amazing! I'm so happy this was so great of them to do, it's honestly going to make such a difference for mine and babys life. Thank you so much

Thank you all so very much for helping this family! I have just spoken to mum who is overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity she is receiving to help her at this difficult time!

Our Schools and Parishes

Our schools and parishes have also been helping families thanks to funding from the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation and have distributed food or food vouchers to those struggling as a result of the Coronavirus.

'We have been able to help so many families as well as supporting refugee families and creating a school larder for families in need. The response from parents has been humbling as it has been viewed as so much more than a 'voucher'. In some cases this has been the difference in staying afloat or going under. My families have been so grateful in receiving this support as they feel valued and supported.'



HOMELESSNESS: A FOCUS ON ST PETROCS

Being homeless is challenging at the best of times, but those sleeping rough have faced even more adversity during the Covid-19 Crisis. As the towns and countryside became quieter in March and April, people who were forced to sleep rough became more isolated. Their access to public toilets, hand-washing facilities, food, the news and the human contact they rely on dwindled, and in many cases disappeared altogether. We found our work at this time to be both shocking and frustrating in equal measure. Sadly, we have found an increase in rough sleepers, sofa surfers, and new homeless cases, and there are more cases due to the COVID-19 crisis than we could have anticipated. There is an increase in clients with no recourse to public funds, and , individuals with complex needs that other agencies are reluctant or struggling to work with.

The work of St Petrocs relies on the support we receive from individuals, businesses, churches and schools. Thanks to our communities, all our services have remained open throughout the pandemic, and we assisted 146 people into accommodation during the period of lockdown. NHS Health for Homeless also proved to be an amazing ally, helping us to redesign our drop-in services to stay safe, and within the ever-changing guidelines. This support has kept our resolve and determination to deliver the friendly, accessible, and caring services we pride ourselves on.



The measures we put into place in our resource centres ensured our clients' essential needs were met. This included extending our opening hours to allow safe, socially distanced access to essentials such as food, showers, advice, medical care, laundry washing, phone charging, and more. We became the primary source of news for many clients and we were able to keep them up to date with Covid-19 guidelines. We helped to facilitate temporary accommodation for many of those sleeping rough in self-contained pods, hotels and caravan parks as well as in our own houses and permanent tenancies in private lettings.

As the seasons change and we move closer towards winter we are still awaiting government directions on the provision of winter shelters. We will be launching our Christmas Appeal in the coming months, launched by the Carol Service on 4th December which this year will be taking place virtually. There are always some surprises at the St Petrocs Carol Service, last year Kernow Pipes and Drums filled Truro Cathedral with their resounding music, and donkeys from the Flicka Foundation Donkey Sanctuary walked down the aisle to give a truly Christmassy feel to the service; we are planning to keep up this tradition despite the move online.

Staff, volunteers, and clients of St Petrocs would like to extend huge thank you to Caritas for continuing to support our clients throughout the pandemic. A grant to St Petrocs for the provision of food, granted by Caritas from the Albert Gubay Foundation has been a lifeline for those who have found themselves homeless and penniless. The Food Banks across the Plymouth Diocese are all very busy, and work tremendously hard with those in food poverty. Supporting them has never been as important as it is now. Thank you once again for your support, without the help of people such as yourselves, our work would not be able to continue.

If you want to know more about our work, please visit our website, or follow us on social media. Details on the Carol Service will be posted nearer the time, and details of Christmas appeal.

www.stpetrocs.org.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/StPetrocsCornwall/>

[@stpetrocs](https://www.instagram.com/stpetrocs)

REACHING OUT

Stretch forth your hand— Join us to prepare for World Day of the Poor

You are invited to join Bishop Mark O'Toole at our FREE Diocesan on-line event on Saturday 24 October 10.30-12.30 to prepare for World Day of the Poor.

We are organising an online event on 24 October to bring people together from across the Diocese of Plymouth for prayer and reflection, led by Bishop Mark. We will share stories of outreach happening across our Diocese and discuss how we can work together to alleviate marginalisation and suffering and help people in their spiritual need. We hope you can join us. Please register [here](#) to receive joining instructions or email caritas@prcdtr.org.uk

Reaching Out Case Study - Okehampton and Digital Outreach

Okehampton parish has used a range of approaches to reach out digitally both before and during the Coronavirus. The Parish Priest shares Mass online as well as creating community groups and support systems to be as inclusive as possible. Prior to lockdown, the parish had already been sharing Mass online with those who are housebound, sick or in care homes. The parish uses Skype, Zoom, Facetime and telephone to enable people to join Mass in the way that suits them the best. 170 people regularly join the service.

The Parish Priest has created an engaging website to increase visibility and awareness of the Church. He also writes a regular reflection for the local newspaper and invites anyone interested to join the Mass. The cost of technology has been low – the parish has used laptops and mobile phones. The parish has made it easy to access Masses and events so people can join from their phone, when out and about as well as from home. People are grouped together according to what medium they prefer to use – Skype, Facetime or Zoom. There are volunteer mentors to help those struggling to get online.



There has been positive feedback from parishioners. The opportunity to watch Mass from home has been very helpful for people with hearing impairments who can find it difficult to hear in Church. The approach has been very inclusive – there are volunteers who can be contacted for one to one support in using Skype or Zoom. There is also a telephone option.

From a parishioner's perspective:

There is a strong element of participation in the Mass and active engagement of parishioners. For example all the readers at Mass are on Zoom. There are times in the Mass when the priest talks to those who are not physically present including those who are joining by telephone. This helps everyone to feel included. There is a specific focus on children who are spoken to directly during the Mass and encouraged to say hello. There are those who cannot or don't want to engage with technology. Accessing Mass via phone helps to keep this group connected as do regular phone calls from parishioners who will also deliver newsletters. The approach has strengthened community connections. The Zoom is open for people to chat before and afterwards. Actually seeing people: 'makes you feel part of the parish—part of a community still'.

CARITAS IN ACTION

Here are some examples of what Caritas Plymouth has been doing over the last quarter:

Season of Creation

Working alongside our Diocesan Schools Commissioner and CAFOD, we invited schools to join us in preparing a Novena for the Season of Creation and you can see the wonderful videos that our schools created on the [Diocesan Facebook page](#)



Data Analyst internship

Thanks to a partnership with the University of Plymouth, we have a new member join the Caritas staff team. Matt Power has started a new three-month project helping to create digital, interactive maps of all our parishes and schools. The new interactive map will allow parishes to understand the breadth of social action that is being taken in their local area and across the Diocese. Matt is also hoping to create local area summaries to show areas of unmet need within our community. Through the analysis of census data as well as government surveys he will enable us to focus the work of Caritas throughout the Diocese to ensure we focus on those areas in greatest need.

Modern Slavery Event

On 25 September we held an online event to focus on modern slavery in Cornwall and Plymouth. The event was attended by around 40 people from a range of parishes and other groups working in this area. We were joined by Stella Maris and the Clewer Initiative to talk about their work to tackle modern slavery.

Our discussions focused in particular on rural slavery and a new app that you can download if you have concerns. It was great to work in partnership with Transformation Cornwall, Transforming Plymouth Together and Stella Maris (who started their Centenary Year on 4 October).

To see copies of the presentations and a link to the app and other websites, please [click here](#). If you would like us to run an event in your parish, please in touch with caritas@pcdtr.org.uk



get

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

In his message for the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees which took place on 27 September 2020, Pope Francis reminds us that displaced people offer us an opportunity to meet the Lord: 'The pandemic has reminded us how we are all in the same boat. Realising that we have the same concerns and fears has shown us once more that no one can be saved alone. His latest Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, also addresses the issue of migration and reminds us that we are obliged to respect the right of all individuals to find a place that meets their basic needs and those of their families. 'Our response to the arrival of migrating persons can be summarised by four words: welcome, protect, promote and integrate' (#129). Pope Francis also refers explicitly to Community Sponsorship as a way to respond to this crisis. We would encourage any interested parishes to get in touch with *Caritas Plymouth* if you are interested in doing more to support refugees and migrants.



Getting our Facts Straight

Current debates about refugees and asylum seekers and particularly the Channel crossings are often negative and create a climate of mistrust and fear. There is an urgent need for more safe and legal routes to the UK, so that people do not have to undertake dangerous journeys. This is essential for saving lives, but also integral to our understanding of one global family, in which we all take responsibility for the most vulnerable.

Of the world's eighty million displaced people, only a tiny fraction seek sanctuary in the UK. The vast majority are accommodated by the world's poorest countries and many of our European neighbours play a much bigger role than us. Extending opportunities for resettlement and family reunification causes championed by so many of our churches, is surely now a more urgent moral duty than at any time in our recent history'.

What can we do?

This crisis can sometimes seem remote from our daily lives. It can be hard to know what to do to support those people caught up in this situation. But there are actions we can all take.

Keep refugees and migrants in our **prayers**. CAFOD has a range of [prayer resources](#); **lobby** our MPs and politicians to ensure that there are safe and legal migration routes and that people are treated with dignity and respect; **remind** our friends and neighbours that 'behind every refugee is a face and a story' (Pope Francis) and **share** Pope Francis' [Message](#) for the 2020 WDMR; **support** organisations providing assistance to those travelling the migration route such as [Seeking Sanctuary](#), [Jesuit Refugee Services](#), [Safe Passage](#) and [Borderlands](#)



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND JUSTICE AND PEACE

Covid-19 Catechesis

In addition to his latest Encyclical, Pope Francis has shared a new cycle of catechesis to address the urgent issues highlighted by the pandemic, particularly social diseases, in the light of the Gospel, the theological virtues and the principles of the Church's social doctrine. "Reflect and work together, as followers of the healing Jesus, to build a better world full of hope for future generations".

The nine catechesis are available to read or on podcasts and cover as how solidarity, love, the common good and a focus on our Catholic social tradition can help the human family heal this world that suffers from serious illnesses.

'It is therefore time to improve our social love – I want to highlight this: our social love – with everyone's contribution, starting from our littleness. The common good requires everyone's participation. If everyone contributes his or her part, and if no one is left out, we can regenerate good relationships on the community, national and international level and even in harmony with the environment'.



Key Dates

Caritas will be sharing advocacy messages and information on key dates and you are invited to remember these issues in your prayers and to share our posts on Facebook:

18 October	Anti Slavery Day
24-30 October	Prisons Week
17 November	World Day of the Poor



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