



Caritas Plymouth

Exercising the ministry of charity

Reflection from Canon John Deeny

On the 8th December 2020, Pope Francis announced a year dedicated to St Joseph, in honour of one of his favourite saints and Patron of the Universal Church. You may know that the Pope has a special devotion to the sleeping St Joseph, in fact he has a statue of the sleeping St Joseph on his desk.



As the Holy Father has said: *'The Scriptures seldom speak of St. Joseph, but when they do, we often find him resting, as an angel reveals God's will to him in his dreams, Joseph's rest revealed God's will to him. In this moment of rest in the Lord, as we pause from our many daily obligations and activities, God is also speaking to us. But like St. Joseph, once we have heard God's voice, we must rise from our slumber; we must get up and act.'*

Now, into our third lockdown, we perhaps have had more time than usual to rest in the Lord. We do need time in peace and prayer with the Lord, to know him, love him and to discern his will for us, to reflect on the needs around us, and then to be stirred into action. Our activity and action are rooted in our knowledge and love of God and, more importantly, his love for us, and for all his people. That love of God, made visible in Jesus Christ, moves us to rise up and act, and help others experience that love, care and compassion.

The present pandemic has only brought to the fore the needs of so many people: poverty, isolation, bereavement, family pressures, homelessness. There is plenty we can do, even during lockdown, and the needs are certainly around us. Our parishes, schools and charities, are often close to those in need and, with the assistance and support of Caritas Plymouth, are in a good position to be a good neighbour to them and to reach out to others who might be in need of that support.

As we begin this New Year we pray that the poor and vulnerable, who are close to the Father's heart, receive blessing and support. And that through the powerful intercession of St Joseph and Blessed Virgin Mary, we may be stirred to act with love and compassion.

Prayer to Sleeping St Joseph

O Saint Joseph, you are a man greatly favoured by the Most High. The angel of the Lord appeared to you in dreams, while you slept, to warn you and guide you as you cared for the Holy Family. You were both silent and strong, a loyal and courageous protector.

Dear Saint Joseph, as you rest in the Lord, confident of His absolute power and goodness, look upon me. Please take my intention into your heart, dream of it, and present it to your Son. Help me then, good Saint Joseph, to hear the voice of God, to arise, and act with love. I praise and thank God with joy.

Saint Joseph, I love you. Amen.

Newsletter

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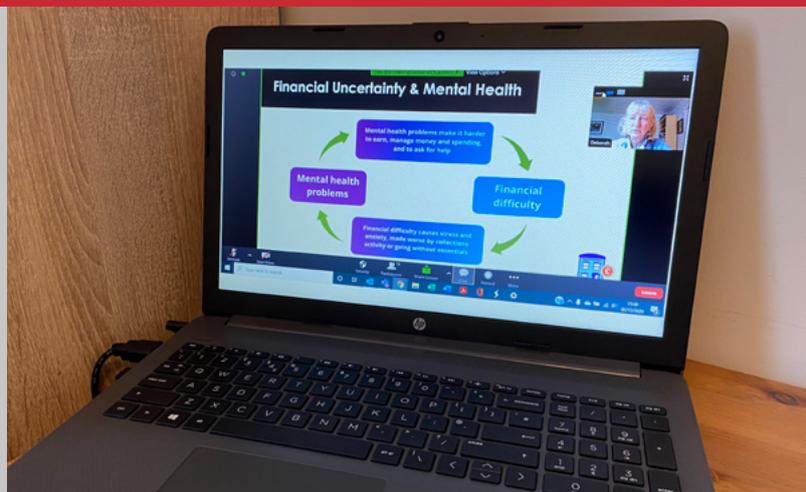




CARITAS IN ACTION: An Update On Our Work...

Financial Signposting Training

Over 25 people have now attended the Financial Signposting Training offered by Caritas Plymouth (the most recent was held in December 2020) and we will run a further session in the New Year. The training offers support to parishes who might want to signpost people struggling with low income or debt. If your parish would like this one hour training, please get in touch on: caritas@prcdtr.org.uk



World Day of the Poor

On 24 October we held an online event to reflect on World Day of the Poor. We were grateful to Bishop Mark for his support and participation. In his introduction, Bishop Mark reminded us: *'As Pope Francis said recently in his new Encyclical:'*

"We are all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all" (Fratelli Tutti, par 32). It is that sense of solidarity, of common fraternity, that I think is important to highlight during this time of global pandemic. At a time when the country is facing perhaps long months of restrictions and limited social interaction, it is more important than ever to work at staying connected, not just because it is a good thing to do, but because it is fundamentally who we are. We believe in a God who is Trinitarian and therefore intimately relational. Made in the image of the Trinity, we are relational beings, too. We discover who we are humanly, and we give expression to our humanity, through our relationships.'

Grants

We were pleased to offer £40,000 of food vouchers and crisis grants to people struggling due to Covid-19 and we hope to offer a further round of funding early this year. Many of our grants were awarded to families and we know from feedback, what a huge difference this made to many.

Caritas Plymouth is now administering the Clarence Ada and Winefred Halse fund which is a fund for the alleviation of poverty in Devon. We will be working in partnership with our parishes to offer grants to individuals and families.

We also allocated over £14,000 of grants provided by the Diocese to help families struggling with the cost of transport for their children to attend Catholic schools.

Welcome the Stranger



Monday 8th February 5 – 6.30pm

St Bakhita Feast Day

We are holding a joint online event with Caritas Clifton to reflect on the messages in Fratelli Tutti about migrants and modern forms of enslavement. We are thrilled to be joined by Bishop Mark and Bishop Declan. This free event will run from 5 - 6.30pm and include prayer and liturgy as well as an opportunity for discussion.

To join this event please register [HERE](#).

Mental Health & Covid-19

What can Catholics do to protect their mental health during the Coronavirus pandemic?

Caritas Plymouth has put together some resources which offer guidance about how Catholics can protect their mental health during this time; to access this resource click [HERE](#).

The Catholic Truth Society also has a helpful list of ideas for ways in which you can nourish your mental health and spiritual life which can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#).

Five Ways to Protect Your Wellbeing

There are five ways to protect your wellbeing:

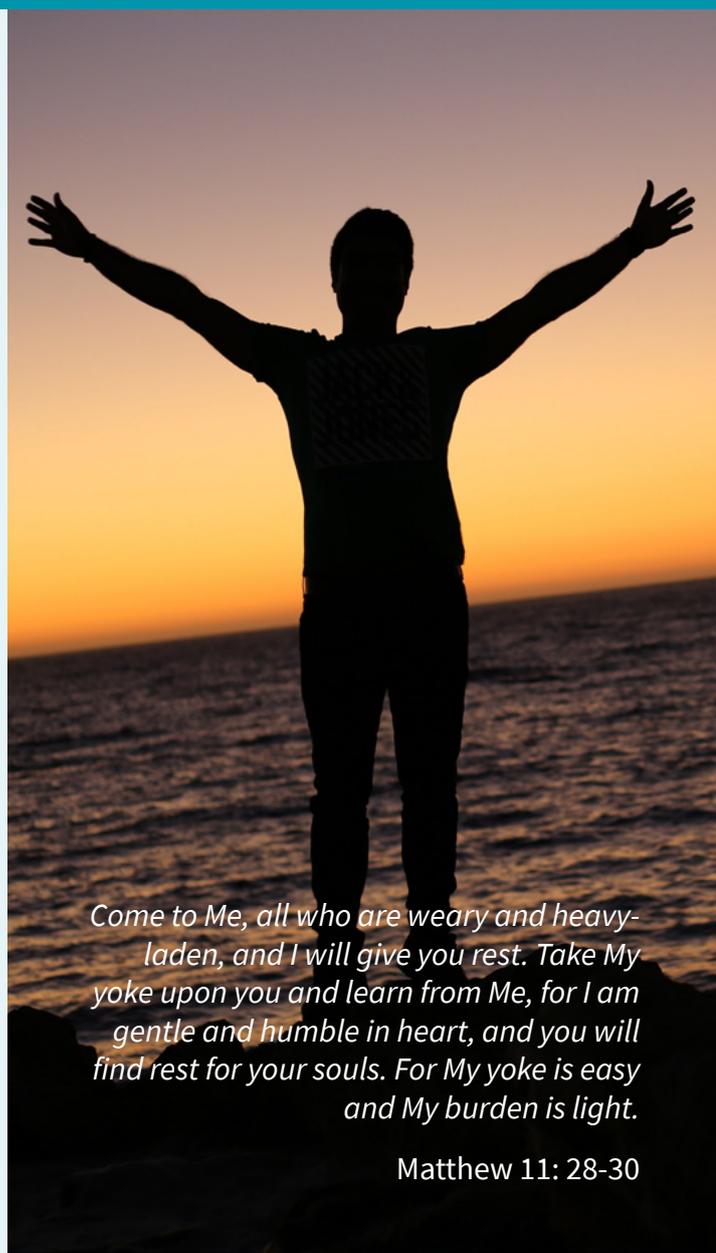
- Connect
- Be active
- Keep learning
- Give
- Take notice

To find out more visit [HERE](#). If you need urgent support you can contact the following organisations on the helpline numbers below:

Samaritans: Call 116 123

Saneline: Call 0845 767 8000 (everyday 6pm-11pm)

An extensive list of mental health support and helplines can be found on the Helplines page of the Catholic Mental Health Project website by clicking [HERE](#).



Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Matthew 11: 28-30

Catholic Social Teaching: Justice and Peace

Fratelli tutti

We invited a range of speakers; clergy and lay people, men and women, to share their thoughts on Fratelli Tutti and posted the videos on our Facebook page [link](#).

At the heart of the Encyclical is **humanity** and the lens through which Pope Francis views the global reality - **'the common good'** – a consistent theme throughout his pontificate. We are all **called to action**. How we act locally impacts on what happens globally. Issues of human dignity are seen as symptoms emerging from a lack of solidarity.

Pope Francis uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to make us reflect on how to be a good neighbour - not only in our own communities but also with the poorest of our sisters and brothers. In the current climate of anti-immigration, the encyclical sends a clear message to *'welcome, protect, promote and integrate'* (#129) *migrating persons. By looking at humanity through the lens of the common good, our cultural differences can be seen as a gift from God'* (#133).

We need to judge our lives and work through the lens of **love**. This doesn't just mean our personal relationships but also how we act in civic and political life. Love should be at the heart of political life but all too often is



missing. Politics too must make room for a tender love for others – the smallest, the weakest, the poorest. To bring about change *'we have to dialogue'* (#198) Dialogue is not a clash of opposing views, parallel monologues and who has the most 'followers', it is about approaching, speaking and listening to others in order to find common ground.

Most of all we are **challenged not to be a bystander** but to make plans and bring help where it is needed. Subsidiarity means starting locally and starting small. Making local, personal and concrete steps to relieve the suffering of those around us is the mission of the church – you and I making plans to help the vulnerable in our communities. Nobody will do this for us, it is up to us.

Upcoming Dates and Prayers for Your Diary 2021

JUSTICE AND PEACE

Racial Justice

Sunday 31st January

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.

Day for Victims of Trafficking (St Josephine Bakhita)

Monday 8th February

Why not come along to our free online event? [CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#).

UN International Day for the Elimination of Discrimination

Sunday 21st March

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21st March. On that day in 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.



Supporting People During the Covid-19 Pandemic

An SVP group in Launceston Cornwall were signposted last year by Caritas Plymouth to non-perishable food supplies available from St Matthias in Plymouth for distributing food packages to needy individuals and families in the local area.

During November the original supplies were running low and Churches Together applied for a range of emergency supplies and now have an Emergency Group Agreement with FareShare. The group now collect defined supplies from Plymouth from FareShare; they hope to establish a Cornwall Hub in due course.

In addition, the group learned of a DEFRA fund being available for grant applications administered by Cornwall Council. The Methodists applied and were granted funds to continue their work. The SVP also applied and have been granted £2,484! This money is for:

- The purchase of fresh fruit, veg etc to go with the non-perishable supplies
- The purchase of shelving to be installed in a dedicated room in Central Hall
- The hire of a van once a fortnight to collect the supplies

This will cover food provision for three months, but with the other grant to the Methodists, this work can now continue for at least six months!

'It has all been such a blessing to us collectively, we can continue our Christian work with some degree of organisation.'
SVP Launceston.



New SVP Group in South Devon

It is great to see new SVP groups forming even in these challenging times. A new group has started at Buckfast Abbey Parish and their first activity was to arrange a food collection before Christmas to support parcels being prepared and delivered by a local secondary school to some of their families.

St Petrocs Update

St Petrocs Navigate the Third National Lockdown

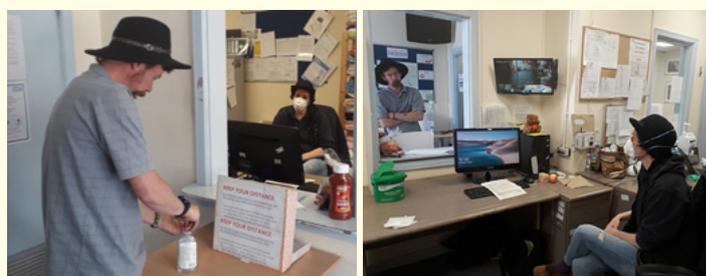
During this third national lockdown St Petrocs continues to remain fully open and operational and will continue to do so as they support people who are experiencing homelessness in Cornwall.

'Our attention must turn to the continued wellbeing of our residents, ensuring that not only their immediate needs are being met, but that progress on their own housing, training, employment and future success in life is maintained. We have to make sure that residents' mental health is looked after too, as lockdown can have a significant impact on peoples' mental wellbeing.' Francios Voges, Director of Residential Services.

Being homeless is challenging at the best of times but rough sleepers have faced even more adversity since the start of the lockdown. Their non-residential services are

busy getting as many people off the streets as possible. They have adapted their services and resource centres, including extended opening hours to allow safe, socially distanced access to essentials such as food, showers, advice, medical care, laundry washing and more. To find out more about their work visit:

www.stpetrocs.org.uk



CAFOD: Water of Life and Hope this Lent

10,000 steps a day
Done your way
Every day
For 40 days



It is a scandal that in today's world one in three people around the world do not have access to safe drinking water! In a time when so many have so much, millions lack even the basics like access to safe drinking water.

This year's CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day and appeal focuses on water, with a story looking at a young man, Abdella, and his daily struggle to collect water in an extremely remote and mountainous part of Ethiopia. It is one of the hottest places on earth. He spends nearly all his time collecting water just to keep his family alive. He walks for ten hours a day and is shattered. He has no time to lead the life he wants, he must keep walking.

Abdella dreams of starting a small business. He dreams of starting his own family. He knows that if there was water near his home, his family wouldn't have to worry any more about getting enough to stay alive and he could begin to rebuild his life.

With your support, CAFOD reaches out and makes a powerful difference to many people like Abdella and helps them reach their dreams and to live life to the full. By supporting CAFOD's Family Fast Day on Friday 26th February, you will give hope to so many people.

Join Abdella in solidarity by taking up CAFOD's Walk for Water Challenge and take 10,000 steps a day throughout Lent to raise awareness and funds to help. They can be walked, run, wheeled or danced if you prefer; or you could join the Big Walk for Water on Saturday 20th February at 2pm, walking alongside Abdella as part of CAFOD's virtual event. Please encourage others to join you, your friends, parishioners or family to get involved in the fight against global poverty. See cafod.org.uk/lent for more information and to sign up.

St Mark's Gospel Day-by-Day

Throughout 2021 the Bishops of England and Wales invite you to join them in reading a few verses of St Matthew's Gospel each day.

The Holy Father recommends reading part of the Gospel every day so that we can listen to Jesus at all times. If you are able to share that reading with your family all the better, perhaps taking turns with the verses for the day.

Visit **The God Who Speaks** by Bishop Peter Brignall.





Reflection from Deacon Nick Johnson

‘Remembering God in front of people...’

We may be hesitant to declare our Christian credentials in front of friends and family but Jesus did expect this in return for him speaking for us when we meet his Father (Matt. 10:32). A pretty compelling request - to speak or act as Jesus in the world!

We know that prior to the reformation, if anyone gave you care or treatment who was not of your own family, the chances are it would have been a monk or a nun. God was prominent and central to the lives of all people from the King to the pauper.

Even as recently as the 1960s, Barbara Castle who was the then Secretary of State for Health described the NHS as being founded on the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:35). I am confident it is so but it is hard to imagine any current Minister for the government overtly referring to scripture to validate the point. The help the Samaritan offered was unconditional and more than was needed, to be sure of recovery. Our Christian forbears were lauded in Rome when there was a plague and people were running for the hills, they stayed and cared for the sick and, I guess, often died with them.

In the interim, we have become more secure and confident in our reliance on science, forgetting that God Almighty made the science and the scientists. All of our searching should not separate us from God but be recognised as part of our concerted search to find Him by whatever means we have. For all of us, this will come to fruition when we meet our merciful saviour at our death.

The Covid pandemic, which might be thought of as a ‘plague’, has suppressed our shared community worship and distanced us from each other in a way that not even world war did. How we miss human contact! I have noticed this when people are in distress especially. I have felt utterly powerless and often useless! Then, I brought to mind our Blessed Lady standing at the foot of the cross, watching her son die, utterly powerless and only able to stand there as a witness to what was happening, unable to change anything.

This is us sharing that place with her, compliant, powerless, useless but still committed to God our saviour, praying that we will get through this, doing what we can to help each other and whatever happens, His will be done, so we are assured of heaven.

A Prayer by Bishop Untener

*We cannot do everything,
And there is a sense of liberation in realising that.
This enables us to do something,
And to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
A step along the way,
An opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end results,
But that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders,
Ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.*



Catholic Children's Society (Plymouth) Update

In March 2020 everything changed for the **Catholic Children's Society Plymouth (CCSP)** as all the fundraising events were cancelled when the country went into lockdown. As a charity who relies entirely on the generosity of its loyal supporters they had to look for alternative sources of income to enable them to continue to help vulnerable children and their families. In a joint funding bid with Caritas they were fortunate to receive £15,000 of funding from the Gubay Foundation Trust which enabled them to provide 67 grants through their Essential Grants Programme to families made up of 238 people. They also received £6,000 from both the National Lottery Fund and the Devon Coronavirus Fund, which allowed them to support a further 58 grants. They are continually applying for more funding support as the number of grant applications they receive increases, as more and more families are feeling the effects of Covid-19.

In addition, they ran three successful Crowdfunding campaigns which have raised almost £3,000 so far, plus Gift Aid of approximately £300. Donors were able to support both their Annual Appeal and the Christmas appeal using Crowdfunder and a number of alternative methods, including donations via text and BACS, as well as the usual method of sending in donations by post. Even with additional alternative ways to donate, their biggest fundraiser of every year, the Annual Appeal, has seen a significant drop in the total raised as they currently have around £10,000 compared to around £16,000 - £20,000 they usually receive (although monies are still being sent in).

Sleep on the Floor for a Night

CCSP need to continually look for alternative fundraising ideas and the local Catholic schools in the Diocese stepped in just before Christmas and promoted their sponsored 'Sleep on the Floor for a Night' (see photo). As part of their Good Shepherd programme, they asked children to put themselves in the shoes of other children less fortunate than themselves by sleeping on the floor for one night in the Christmas holidays. Unfortunately there are children living in our Diocese who do not have a comfortable bed to sleep in every night. So far they have raised over £1,100 and they are hoping that this figure will end up being much higher.



Thank You

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the CCSP. If you know a vulnerable child and their family who are in need of support, maybe they are sleeping on the floor every night or maybe they don't have a fridge, freezer or cooker to produce healthy home-cooked meals, please contact the CCSP via email: ccs@prcdtr.org.uk or call 01364 645420.

If you have an idea of how to raise funds in your parish, either now or when it is safe to do so, please contact: vicki.dunstone@prcdtr.org.uk or call 01364 645420. The CCSP is compiling a database of Parish Volunteers so that when we return to the usual fundraising initiatives of coffee mornings, raffles, Diocesan wide quizzes etc, we can start fundraising immediately. If you would be interested in becoming a Parish Volunteer please get in touch with Vicki as she is producing a pack to help you with this vital role to enable CCSP help vulnerable children living in our Diocese.