Caritas Plymouth

Exercising the ministry of charity

Reflection by Sarah Barreto, Diocesan Schools Commissioner

Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future

In *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* Pope Francis offers a deeply personal and passionate reflection on the Covid crises in his own life, and insightful observations on the present Covid crisis as he sees what is going on around the world. His conclusion is that Covid, as well as bringing untold suffering, has brought blessing in the present and can shape our future for the better. But he says for this to happen, '*We have to see clearly, choose well and act right.*'*

As we made our journey from Easter to Pentecost, a group of people gathered together to explore the insights of Pope Francis in the hope that our reflections might enable us to begin '*to see, clearly, choose well, act right*' as we looked to rebuild our lives post Covid. '*In the days after Easter, the Church invites us to follow her on her journey as she emerges from the empty tomb in the light of the resurrection and from the upper room prompted by the Holy Spirit. It is a hope-filled story as we see the Church continue to grow, as she responds to the Holy Spirit and builds up the different fledgling communities. We know, too, of course, that the life in the early Church was not without a crisis or two! Indeed, it was these crises as much as anything else that helped to shape its present and future.*' **

Many people remember the prayer at St Peter's in the early days of the pandemic; many hoped that a miracle would occur, and the pandemic be stopped. It was not and it is likely that Pope Francis did not expect that it would. But, sometimes, miracles are slower in unfolding. Had people said what they hoped for in March 2020, it would have been an end to the disease. In the year since, people have been challenged and blessed and they have considered hard questions. They have seen dedicated service from some and greed and corrupt behaviour in others. They have seen or heard of people dying with hospital staff taking the place of families and families unable to grieve to help start the healing process of bereavement.

Through all of this Pope Francis has contemplated, looking and listening to what is happening around the world, reflecting and discerning what is at work and exploring what action is needed to create a better future for humanity and the planet we call home.

* *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* by Austen Ivereigh (Author), Pope Francis (Author) Simon & Schuster (1 Dec. 2020) ** *Reflections on Let us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* Catholic Bishops' Conference Spirituality Committee April 2021 www.ssg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Let-us-Dream-_-EasterResource-KMG.pdf

Funding for Food Parcels and Vouchers

Thanks to a generous donation from the Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation, Caritas Plymouth has distributed £40,000 of funding this year to parishes, schools and other organisations which are providing food vouchers, parcels or essential grants to families who are struggling to make ends meet. We estimate that we will have reached over 3,200 people with food vouchers.

NEWSLETTER

9th Edition July 2021

In this issue:

Reflection by Sarah Barreto

Funding for Food Parcels and Vouchers

Caritas Strategic Review

Parish Social Action

Elderly & Isolated: Reaching Out

Children and Family Life

Care for Our Common Home

Laudato Si' Action Platform

Environmental Work Across the Diocese

Refugees, Migrants and Modern Slavery

Updates from Our Partners

World Day of the Poor

Upcoming Events and Dates for Your Diary

Caritas Strategic Review

'Love one another as I have loved you.' John 13:34-35

It is just over two years since Caritas Plymouth was established as an agency of the Diocese of Plymouth. You can find out about our work in our latest report: https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Caritas-Plymouth-Review-Strategy-2021.pdf Here are some of the highlights:

- We have created and supported new connections and networks to reach out to the most vulnerable.
- We have been successful in attracting external funding to support the Mission of Caritas Plymouth. Since June 2020 we have been awarded £137,000 for a range of projects.
- One parish in the Diocese has welcomed a family as part of the Community Sponsorship Syrian Refugee Resettlement scheme, and two parish groups are in the preparation stages of the scheme to welcome a refugee family.
- Over 500 people have attended our training and events since the launch of the strategy in May 2019. Of those who answered the feedback form following our event to celebrate the Feast of St Bakhita in February 2021, 100% said they would take action as a result.
- Caritas has supported the development of the diocesan environment policy and action framework. Working closely with CAFOD we organised shared activities for Laudato Si' Week and the Season of Creation in 2020. We produced six environmental case studies to showcase the work in our schools and parishes.

Parish Social Action

Last year we undertook a survey of our parishes to find out what is happening and got some amazing answers. Of those who responded:

54%

Have an activity supporting older people

38%

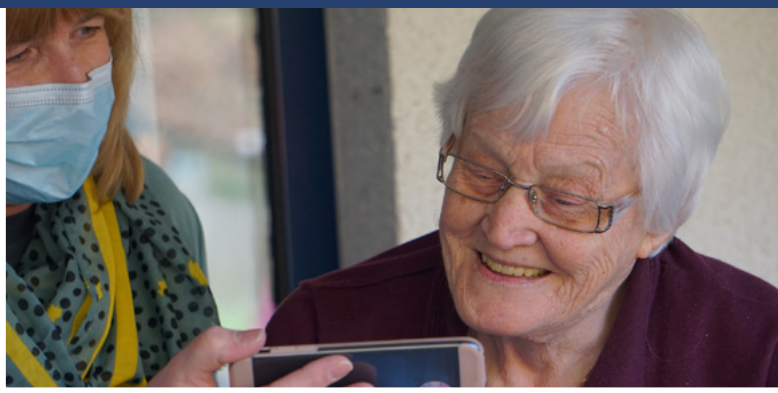
Actively support refugees and migrants

57%

Have an online prayer group

Some wonderful work going on across our parishes!

Elderly & Isolated: Reaching Out - Coming Out of Lockdown



'The dreams of the elderly have built our society.' Pope Francis.

What next for the elderly and isolated?

A focus group met online to reflect on the challenges affecting the elderly and isolated and the opportunities to reach out to people. There is a risk that the support provided during lockdown will ebb away. Some people may have become comfortable with lockdown with everything provided in their homes – shopping, prescription delivery, transport, befriending etc. Others may be very anxious about getting out. The world will be very different for some people post-lockdown – many will have lost friends or family members. Participants shared the following reflections which we hope will inspire sharing of other good ideas.

What are the opportunities?

- Parishes have a unique role to play in bereavement support e.g. offering requiem masses or other services to enable people to grieve for those who have died during lockdown.
- Those who want to return to Mass but feel anxious may need extra support and be made to feel welcome and safe when they return. Support through phone calls and reassurance about the church environment will be important. Encouraging anxious people to attend Mass on weekdays and offering a proactive welcome could be positive.
- Many people have missed the opportunity to socialise with others in a 'normal' way. Outside events (picnics or other activities) or other events during the summer could give people an opportunity to reconnect. Coffee after Mass will be beneficial for many who have missed the opportunity to chat after Mass.
- Telephone befriending can be a good way forward in rural parishes where people are very spread out geographically.

Why not try something different?

- How about creating a system to enable older people to consider befriending others and offering telephone support – older people have a lot to offer.
- Hold a thank you event (it can be online) to get all the people who have been offering telephone support together and start to create a volunteer community.
- Encourage links between schools and older people including Care Homes, to foster mutually beneficial relationships.
- Link in with other organisations (e.g. other local charities, Churches Together, the local art gallery or cultural institution) to extend the range of support that can be provided to individuals. We cannot do it all.

Children and Family Life

Care Home FaNs Friends & Neighbours

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 ten schools participating in the project from Plymouth, Torbay, Devon and Dorset. The aim of the project is to link together young people aged 5-14 with older people living in care homes across England. By giving younger and older people the opportunity to connect together and share in new experiences, learning, stories and laughter, we hope to strengthen community connection and deepen understanding of each other and how we all live together.

Care for Our Common Home:
Preparing for Season of Creation 1st September - 4th October

'Praise to you, my Lord, through sister Mother Earth, who sustains us and governs us and who produces varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.' St Francis of Assisi (Canticle of the Sun)

2021 is a particularly important year as the UK is hosting the UN climate summit which is due to take place in Glasgow in November 2021. Celebrating the Season of Creation which runs from 1 September to the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4 October in our parishes and schools is a great way to encourage Governments to rebuild from the pandemic in a way which offers a global green and just transition.

We would like to assist all parishes and catholic communities to celebrate this season by pointing to some resources which you can find here: www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/the-diocese/how-we-work/environment/season-of-creation/

The God Who Speaks Through Creation

Saturday 17th July 10-11.30am via Zoom

Caritas Plymouth invites you to join Bishop Mark O'Toole for an online discussion and reflection on climate change, our Diocesan Environment Policy and the call to be Stewards of Creation. Our Guest Speaker is Sister Margaret Atkins OSA, a Canoness of St Augustine in the community at Boarbank Hall, Cumbria. She is a lecturer and author in theology with special interest in the ethics of the environment.

Register by clicking below or for more details email caritas@prcdtr.org.uk or call 01364 653421

Register here

Laudato Si' Action Platform

The ***Laudato Si' Action Platform*** will be launched in stages throughout 2021 and 2022. More information about the timeline is available https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/about/. At its completion, the platform will comprise three elements: ***Laudato Si'*** Plans to map your journey, practical guidance on ways to take action and resources to develop trusted communities of practice. Pope Francis said that the ***Laudato si' Action Platform*** is '*a seven-year journey that will see our communities committed in different ways to becoming totally sustainable, in the spirit of integral ecology.*' He invites everyone to '*embark on this journey together,*' and particularly calls on the involvement of '*families - parishes and dioceses - schools and universities - hospitals - businesses and farms - organisations, groups and movements - religious institutes.*' Work together, he stresses, as '*only in this way will we be able to create the future we want: a more inclusive, fraternal, peaceful and sustainable world.*'

Environmental Work Across the Diocese

As missionary disciples we are invited to be part of the redeeming mission of Christ, and to approach our task with joy and gratitude remembering, '*Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise*.' (Laudato Si' #12). We recognise that the care of our common home is not only a summons to profound 'interior conversion' but also a call to a 'community conversion'. Here is some of the environmental work already happening across the Diocese of plans for the future.

What are we already doing?

There is a huge amount of positive action, particularly in our schools. Activities include transforming derelict spaces into gardens and wildlife habitats, using rainwater harvesting to reduce water consumption, growing vegetables, reducing plastic use and campaigning in the local community.

The Diocese environmental lead (Caritas Plymouth) plays an active role in the Environmental Leads group set up by the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales, enabling the Church to share ideas and learn from each other.

Our first Diocesan Environmental Policy was agreed by Trustees in January 2021. A new section has been developed on our website to share the policy, Catholic Social teaching and other useful materials on environmental issues.

We have a Diocesan environmental Committee including the Vicar General, a Trustee, the Schools Commissioner and the Chief Operating Officer, whose role is to guide our developing agenda. We are working in close partnership with our Multi Academy Trust and other schools.

We use the Inter-Diocesan Fuel Management company which is a leader in sustainable energy. 100% of our electricity is backed by renewable generation. We actively consider reducing our carbon footprint and environmental impact in new building investment decisions, such as replacing heating systems etc.

Each year we celebrate Laudato Si' Week and Season of Creation in partnership with schools and parishes, working closely with CAFOD. We share a range of information and theology resources to encourage reflection and prayer.

Refugees, Migrants and Modern Slavery

'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 already welcomed a family as part of the Community Sponsorship Syrian Refugee Resettlement scheme and two other parish groups are in the preparation stages of the scheme to welcome a refugee family.

We would like more parishes and groups to consider this very rewarding scheme and will be holding an event in Plymouth in September (date to be confirmed) to inform people about the scheme and how they might get involved.

If you are interested please email caritas@prcdtr.org.uk or visit: https://communitysponsorship.org.uk/

Stella Maris

By *Ann Donnelly, Regional Port Chaplain, Ports of Plymouth and Teignmouth.*

The second Sunday in July is when we celebrate Sea Sunday, where we come together across the globe to celebrate the role seafarers and fishermen play in our daily lives. They have been the unsung heroes during the pandemic and we thank them for the hardships they face and the sacrifices they have been forced to endure due to the Covid lockdowns. Throughout the past 20 months they have continued to bring much needed goods to our country and countries around the world. You can celebrate the work of seafarers at any time in your parishes, for more information visit: www.stellamaris.org.uk/sea-sunday/

Seafarers had to work extended contracts with some working longer than 12 months. During this time they were anxious for their families back home and unfortunately even when a family member became sick or died they were unable to return home. This has caused great psychological distress.

Stella Maris has kept a presence on the ports despite not being able to visit people on board. We have found ways to pray together, often at the end of the gangway. We let them know that whatever port they visit around the world there will always be a Stella Maris Chaplain or Shipvisitor there to support them.

Saint Vincent de Paul Society

The SVP is a valuable source of volunteers who are dedicated to carrying out the social mission of our church and has been active in England Wales since 1844. Last year over 400,000 visits were made to families and individuals in need in England and Wales. Their core work of face-to-face meetings has been greatly reduced due to the pandemic, however volunteers have been maintaining contact through other means. The following are just three examples of their wonderful work:

- **Holy Trinity Conference Plymouth** has carried out food collections and deliveries, provided school bus fares for children and supported driving lessons arranged and paid with a one off donation of £100 from Caritas.
- **Exeter Conference** supports Esther House in Exeter with £180 per month to reduce homelessness and promote independence.
- **Yelverton Conference** has supported Syrian refugees obtain furniture, a barbecue and a statue of Our Lady to whom they could pray. They have also assisted local families with various problems and helped parishioners with wellbeing calls, visits, shopping and social support for people with learning disabilities. A member keeps in touch with a Catholic prisoner from this area who is in prison in Scotland.

St Petrocs Cornwall

Hot Weather and Homelessness

With news that a heatwave is due to hit parts of the UK in July and the weather forecast showing sun and high temperatures are on the way in the South West, we are thinking about how best to keep those experiencing homelessness safe and well in the hot weather.

During heatwaves people sleeping rough are at further risk of sunstroke, sunburn, dehydration and heat exhaustion from exposure to high temperatures. Homelessness in extreme hot weather can be life threatening. Deaths that can occur may be from underlying illnesses made worse by the heat or from heat specific conditions such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke. Mental ill health may also worsen during hot weather. Here are a few things to remember and what can be done to help:

Water

Handing out small bottles of frozen water can be one idea to help cool people down and then to drink. Providing a bottle and signposting people to a refill station or water fountain can help someone stay hydrated.

Suncream

If you can purchase an extra bottle to hand out this can be very beneficial. We have listed suncream on our Amazon Wishlist that can be donated via purchase and we can distribute to those who need it.

Sunhats or umbrellas

Sunhats or an umbrella can be a great quick way to provide shade when there is nowhere to shelter from direct sunshine.

Refer them to StreetLink

Street Link enables members of the public to connect people sleeping rough with local support services. It can enable services to reach rough sleepers more quickly; call StreetLink on 0300 500 0914 or visit: www.streetlink.org.uk

Stop and say hello

Just checking in with someone to say 'hello' and see if they are ok. This way you may be able to ask them if they may need any of the help above.

St Petrocs Advice Line

If you wish to speak to a member of our team for advice or guidance, please call 01872 264153.

Emergency Services

If you think the person you are concerned about is in immediate danger, seriously unwell and needs urgent medical attention, call 999 immediately.

Purchase sun care via the St Petrocs Amazon Wishlist: https://amzn.eu/avp9dpj

Transformation Cornwall: Strengthening Faith-Based Social Action

Transformation Cornwall provides ecumenical infrastructure and capacity building support to Cornish groups, churches, faith and non-faith based organisations to enable them to respond to issues of poverty, deprivation and marginalisation in their area. They have a fortnightly update with direct details of the Cornish Foodbanks needing help.

A list of funding grants is available https://transformation-cornwall.org.uk/resources/transformation-cornwall-grants-list and signposting details of services in Cornwall and beyond https://togethernetwork.org.uk/uploads/shared/Transformation-Cornwall-Telephone-List.pdf who offer advice and support with issues such as debt, housing, employment, disabilities, mental health, and young people. For more information visit: https://transformation-cornwall.org.uk/

World Day of the Poor Event

'*The poor you will always have with you*.' Mark 14.7

This is the theme of Pope Francis' Message for the World Day of the Poor on Sunday 14th November 2021: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/poveri/documents/20210613-messaggio-v-giornatamondiale-poveri-2021.html

Caritas Plymouth will be holding their third event looking at the causes of poverty and its impact in the run up to the World Day of the Poor. The event will include sharing thoughts and ideas about how we in our parishes reach out to the poor and looking at Pope Francis' challenge to take a different approach to poverty.

- Speakers will include Bishop Mark O'Toole
- Saturday 9th October 2021
- 10.30am – 3.30pm at St Rita's Centre, Honiton
- Free event and includes a buffet lunch
- Limited spaces so booking is essential
- Please contact caritas@prcdtr.org.uk

Upcoming Events and Dates for your Diary

Environment Theology Online Event

Saturday 17th July

Online event 10-11.30am* reflecting on what Catholic social teaching tells us about the environment: https://forms.office.com/r/6zMtmFn2fJ

National Justice & Peace Conference

Friday 23rd-25th July in Derbyshire

Annual Conference of the Justice and Peace Network. The theme of this year's conference is ***Action for Life on Earth***. You can find out more at: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference

World Day for Grandparents & Elderly

Sunday 25th July

Expressing the closeness of the Lord and the Church to every older person: . Visit: www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

Friday 30th July

Highlighting the importance of listening to and learning from survivors of human trafficking.

Season of Creation

1st September - 4th October

Where Christians unite to reflect, pray and take action for Our Common Home.

Community Sponsorship Talk

September (date tbc)

An event in Plymouth for parishes to explore community sponsorship.

World Day of the Poor Caritas Event

Saturday 9th October at St Rita's in Honiton

An event to prepare for World Day of the Poor with an opportunity for prayer, reflection and lunch! Please keep this date free.

Prisons Week

Tuesday 12th October

An online event taking place in partnership with Caritas Clifton and Arundel and Brighton.

**this is a slightly earlier time than previously advertised.*

caritas diocese of plymouth

caritas@prcdtr.org.uk
www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/caritas
Caritas Plymouth • Diocese of Plymouth
St Boniface House • Ashburton • Devon • TQ13 7JL
01364 645421