

Caritas Leeds Ambassadors Workshop

Thursday 7th. June 2018- at Holy Redeemer Parish-Huddersfield



A number of Caritas Leeds Ambassadors attended the above workshop with others expressing an interest but unable to attend, including School Lay Chaplains who are on retreat this week. A couple of new members attended together with representation from the Calderdale and Wharfedale Deaneries

Format of the workshop was:

- Short liturgy and reflection
- Feedback from Caritas Leeds Ambassadors
- Raising Awareness about Dementia
- Initiatives led by Caritas Leeds Steering Group
- Diocesan Corpus Christ Procession

Opening Liturgy

Rev. Dr. Joe Cortis opened the meeting with St Mark's Gospel Reading of the day and a reflection on Jesus being questioned on the status of the law. "Jesus answers with extreme simplicity", learning "to love as God loves". Closed with the prayer of Blessed Oscar Romero: **"we cannot do everything", "incomplete but a beginning" "we are workers not master builders"**.

Comments were shared.

Feedback from Caritas Leeds Ambassadors:

Bradford Deanery:

- the need to 'promote cultural change' in the Church re-leadership models to involve the laity much more but noted a lack of response. In particular support for Caritas Leeds needed reaffirming by the leadership especially the clergy to embed it.
- A meeting had been organized to bring the Churches together with a modest response (noting) that there is not a 'Bradford sense of Church'.
- A second meeting was being arranged involving key schools such as St Bede's and St Joseph's Catholic College. Schools can link parishes together.
- There needs to be a Bradford Day on responding to the needs of refugees as there is a lack of coordination (e.g. connecting to the good work of the Friars).
- It was noted that the 'needs of people' are becoming more intense as 'Universal Credit' is being introduced in the area.
- Furniture from the SVP centre is no longer free. The 'gap between people's needs and what they get is widening'.
- There were three suicide attempts within the environs of one parish from this deanery last year. There is a need for social action and here leadership is an issue.

- The group assessed what the members knew at the meeting though not all parishes present.
- A “day of Reflection “ for Bradford is suggested.

Harrogate Deanery:

- Harrogate district is involved in a ‘place of sanctuary’ scheme and parishes feed into this initiative individually.
- There is a lack of a Deanery structure.
- They support Catholic Care ‘befriending groups”.
- There had been a meeting on Dementia support .
- A “Faith in Action Day’ has been arranged by the SVP on 28th. June at St Aelred’s.
- The primary schools support SVP ‘mini vinis’.
- ‘St Joseph’s Table’ is an ecumenical food collection and distribution.
- The problem seems to be getting into parishes.
- Attention was drawn to the crucial issue of inclusion which the Church was slow to address especially the needs of those with disabilities (e.g. the deaf).
- The diocese has only responded defensively to public legal initiatives on equality and had not got a comprehensive disabilities policy and guidance of good practice.
- The need to share best practice for example at the distribution of communion was raised including the ability of Eucharistic ministers to deal with these issues.
- The response of the Church to the “disability Act” as incorporated in the Equality Act 2010 was still necessary and we could learn from the best practice of others Dioceses e.g. Portsmouth who have good policy.

Wakefield Deanery:

- One representative present but had nothing to report back

Huddersfield Deanery:

- Follow up with ex-offenders and meeting with Jane Daguerre of WYCCP seeking to recruit ‘link workers’, advertised in the parish and so far one potential volunteer in Huddersfield and one in Halifax.
- Inter-parish work was discussed and main agency for inter-parish work remains with the SVP structures.
- Parishes looking at the Syrian Refugee “community sponsorship” initiative.
- The question was raised of links to schools?

Leeds North Deanery: Nothing to report as none were present and no written feedback submitted

Leeds East Deanery: Nothing to report as none were present and no written feedback submitted

Keighley/Skipton Deanery: Nothing to report as none were present and no written feedback submitted

Calderdale Deanery:

- St Mary’s Halifax is looking at turning the old parish hall into as local ‘community hub’.
- Dementia friendly and bereavement support work is going on ecumenically.
- Catholic Care support work takes place in some parishes.
- The parish (Sacred Heart) organizes a luncheon club and promotes a Credit Union.

Wharfedale Deanery:

- There is potential for volunteers

Raising awareness about Dementia- facilitated by Rachel Walker from *Growing old-gracefully*

- An introductory presentation on the need to be Dementia Aware.
- To become a “dementia Friendly Diocese” an action plan is being drawn up especially to raise awareness of the issues surrounding dementia and our development of sensitive responses and support.
- A dementia friendly Church is an ‘inclusive church’.
- Rachel referred to the writing of Christine Brydon and cited the story of a parent unable to recognize her son but still able to affirm: ‘**I know you are someone I love very much**’.
- Email: growing.old.gracefully@dioceseofleeds.org.uk
- Website: www.growingoldgracefully.org.uk

Specific initiatives being considered/planned by Caritas Leeds Steering Group

- **Day of Reflection** (open to all involved in charitable/social action) under the theme of **Faith in Action: Joy and Challenge-** Saturday 6th. October at Notre Dame Catholic Six Form Leeds, offering opportunities of reflection and focused group discussions on needs, action to be taken to address such needs of different client groups and who to link with.
- Develop a bespoke **website for Caritas Leeds** or join with the revamped Diocesan website. In the meantime Caritas Leeds information can be accessed through the Justice and Peace website under Partners: www.leedsjp.org.uk
- Raise awareness about **the roll-out of the Universal Credit scheme**. Information has been circulated to all clergy across the Diocese and key people from Catholic Associations. The purpose of this is to have this information and where to get support for parishioners and people we engage with via visiting, associations’ activities etc. Caritas Leeds is working with Leeds Church Institute to produce a more comprehensive resource in readiness for the roll-out of universal credit in the Leeds area from October 2018. This resource will be formally launched on 1st. August 2018.
- Clear guidance on **transporting parishioners to Mass or parish based activities**. A draft Diocesan Transport Policy has been developed and being consulted on. Once approved a concise and short summary will be provided for use in parishes etc.
- Develop a **focused prayer /Catholic Social Teaching on-line resource**. Work on this is on-going with the aim of launching it in early October 2018
- Becoming a ‘**Dementia Friendly Diocese**’. Action plan has been developed and approved by the Bishop.
- Guidance in preparing to have **discussions with local government councillors and or MPs**. A good quality draft has been developed but currently working with Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) to develop it further.
- Caritas Leeds is represented on the Leadership Group of **Leeds Citizen**. Supporting the current three themes of: opportunities for young people, fair wage and mental health provision.
- **Diocesan Refugees/Asylum Seekers Group**. We continues to work with this group

Diocesan Corpus Christi Procession: 4.00 pm Grounds of Hinsley Hall. Sunday 24th. June 2018.

- Caritas Leeds is leading the third station during this procession with scripture reading, short reflection, prayers of intercession and a decade of the rosary

Role of Caritas Leeds Ambassadors (agreed at this meeting to re-circulate the version developed in March 2018)

It is our goal that our Caritas Leeds Ambassadors will be an integral network of people in our Diocese supporting charitable activities /social action.

You are **building a bridge** between each deanery/parish and Caritas Leeds to ensure that:

Aim/Goal of Being Caritas Leeds Ambassador	Things to consider	Practical Examples
News of amazing initiatives currently taking place across your deanery are shared and celebrated.	<p><i>Networking is crucial at both deanery level and across deaneries. Contact with active parishioners from different parishes need to be promoted. What is happening in parishes in your deanery?</i></p> <p><i>Can perhaps one ambassador take a coordinating role with the support of the Caritas Steering Group? Discuss approaches used to spark off new initiatives or getting other parishioners involved and interested?</i></p> <p><i>Link with parish based associations in your deanery e.g. Mothers' Union, Catenians, SVP, Knights of St Columba etc.</i></p>	<p>Use information from the audit you have been provided with to expand the number of Caritas Ambassadors in your area so that more people are involved</p> <p>Find someone who can set up social media accounts to promote and share what's going on.</p> <p>Find someone who can produce a regular newsletter or ask for a regular slot in the Parish bulletin, website?</p>
Spreading the Gospel Values through charitable work /social action.	Action speaks louder than words. Encourage groups within your parishes to reflect on what activities they are engaged with and link to specific gospel themes and Catholic Social Teaching.	Form a monthly prayer group focusing on praying for social justice/those in need. (Make it accessible to all - powerhouse of prayer includes those no longer physically able to do charitable works)
Develop/ enhance links with the Catholic schools in your area	How can the young people be engaged in what is going on? How can specific projects in your area be communicated to the local schools?	Find a link person in your local schools. Include what the school does for charity in the Parish bulletin or your own newsletters and vice versa.
Opportunities for voluntary work are promoted	By engaging other parishioners there is an opportunity to increase the number of volunteers and perhaps come up with new initiatives or link activities between parishes in your area.	Have a Caritas Leeds noticeboard at the back of church or in the church hall. Include an up-to-date list of opportunities to volunteer. Use website, newsletters and social media for this too.

<p>Help raise awareness and support current and future deanery/diocesan wide campaigns/ projects.</p>	<p>Ideas picked up by engaging with ambassadors from other deaneries to be shared with your deanery through may be newsletter, suggested items in parish bulletins, notice boards, website, use of social media.</p> <p>Communicate with Caritas Leeds Steering group any ideas of new initiatives /proposals for your deanery and or across the diocese.</p>	<p>Attend Caritas Leeds events where possible.</p> <p>Try to establish email or Facebook group to other Caritas Ambassadors.</p> <p>Commit to monthly update emails to the Caritas Leeds Coordinator.</p>
<p>Be prayerful</p>	<p>in any gatherings which you have.</p>	<p>Liaise with your clergy in regards to for example prayers of the faithful for a specific project or category of people e.g. homeless</p>

Your deanery Caritas Leeds ambassadors may want to prioritise the suggestions/approaches offered above that are most relevant to your particular situation.

Response from Caritas Leeds Steering Group:

- Thank you for the action taken in the various deaneries so far.
- Members of the Steering Group are happy to attend your meetings in a supportive role. Please liaise with the Caritas Leeds Coordinator if you would like this to happen
- You are the closest to where the need of your deanery is but help and resources are available to support you.
- So we encourage you to continue with your contacts with others from the parishes within your deanery and schools.
- Do communicate with Caritas Leeds Coordinator if there is anything specific you would like us to address in future workshop(s) or any support you require.
- Need to develop locally based leadership to implement the ethos of Caritas Leeds through its ambassadors network to foster collaborative working across parish groups/schools etc. Deacon Andrew Philips (Huddersfield Deanery) and Deacon David Arblaster (Harrogate deanery).
- The Reflection Day in October 2018 will facilitate identifying two priority groups to be focused on over the following 12 months

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