

## Caritas Leeds Ambassadors Workshop

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>. December 2018- at St Bede and St Joseph Catholic College-Bradford**



A number of Caritas Leeds Ambassadors attended the above workshop with others expressing an interest but unable to attend, including school chaplains.

### **Format of the workshop:**

- Short liturgy and reflection
- Overview of Caritas Leeds
- Feedback from Caritas Leeds Ambassadors
- Follow up from the Caritas Leeds Day of Reflection held on 6<sup>th</sup>. October 2018
- Discussion on Homeless and People Living with Disabilities
- Update on initiatives led by Caritas Leeds Steering Group

### **Opening Liturgy**

Rev. Dr. Joe Cortis opened the meeting by reading the sermon which Pope Francis gave on the 18<sup>th</sup>. November to mark the second World Day of the Poor.

### **Overview of Caritas Leeds**

As there were a number of new people around the Coordinator offered the following briefly referring to the Caritas Leeds Terms of Reference approved by Bishop Marcus:

- Caritas Leeds was formally launched at the end of September 2017 driven by canonical requirement which states that *'wherever necessary, due to the number and variety of initiatives, the diocesan bishop is to establish in the Church entrusted to his care, an office to direct and coordinate the service of charity in his name'*
- Its vision is to create a forum where all charities, agencies, projects, services and groups that are involved in social action or social care in the diocese of Leeds, whose work is inspired by the gospel and operate in accordance with Catholic doctrine and social teaching, can meet together on a regular basis to:
  - *Provide a strong and coherent voice, at the service of the bishop, on important social issues and policies for the Diocese*
  - *Share and celebrate ideas and projects*
  - *Encourage the development of, and to support good care practice*
  - *Arrange joint training where this is appropriate/requested*
  - *Develop on-going formation for members in Catholic Social Teaching*
  - *Reflect on the foundations of the work the members undertake*
  - *Identify areas of need within the Diocese of Leeds and to discuss how best to work to satisfy those needs*

- *Encourage the use of spiritual, human and material resources of the parish, deanery and diocese in the service of the poor* (wider than just material/financial)
- The model chosen to realize these terms is that of an umbrella organisation
- A steering group exists chaired by a coordinator, appointed by the Bishop, representative from the Justice and Peace Commission, Catholic Care, St Monica Housing, SVP, Vicariate for Education, Council of Priests and Conference of Permanent Diaconate

It is important that the term Leeds in the title is understood as referring to the Diocese of Leeds as opposed to the Leeds Metropolitan area.

## **Feedback from Caritas Leeds Ambassadors:**

### **Bradford Deanery:**

- Four parishes involved in this year's winter shelter in addition to several parishes supporting the Pio Centre, run by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and foodbanks
- Work to support refugees and asylum seekers through various ecumenical initiatives such as BIASAN, Abigail drop-in, Anglican Anchor Project
- Need to improve communication
- Low Catholic representation at the event marking 10 years of Bradford being the City of Sanctuary and at the service at Bradford Cathedral remembering the 40 homeless people who died on the streets of West Yorkshire in 2018
- Church is in a maintenance rather than a mission mode
- Meetings of caritas ambassadors is difficult to achieve as people are busy and the widespread lack of awareness and understanding about the concept of a Diocesan Caritas
- Links with schools need to be much stronger and involvement of young people. Reference was also made to the Faith Award which is currently running in most of our Diocesan schools.
- CHAS which is now part of the SVP is often overlooked by the Catholic population. It now delivers all debt advice in the Bradford area
- Bradford refugees/asylum seekers meeting is being planned

### **Harrogate Deanery:**

- Difficulties with communication
- Arranging a meeting with the newly appointed Dean for the area
- One parish employs a youth minister who works in schools and the parish
- Support to the local food banks
- Active SVP and communicates well across parishes
- Clothes bank led by Wetherby parishes

### **Wakefield Deanery:**

- One representative present but had nothing to report back except that he was planning a meeting with the newly appointed Dean for the area

### **Huddersfield Deanery:**

- Strong SVP and UCM
- Support to asylum seekers through DASH
- Foodbank run by the Methodist is supported by a number of parishes
- SVP children's camp

**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:**

- Difficult to find out what is going on across the deanery
- Support the West Craven food bank
- 'Embrace' project in Silsden
- Men's breakfast club
- Support to foodbanks, Abigail Housing and Street Angels (St Stephen Skipton)
- Community Sponsorship Scheme at Settle
- Active SVP in a number of parishes
- Keighley Place of Sanctuary
- Good Shepherd Centre in Keighley

**Calderdale Deanery:**

- Nothing to report as none were present and no written feedback submitted

**Wharfedale Deanery:**

- 1 foodbank in Yeadon
- No links between parishes
- 'Friends groups' set up by Catholic Care
- SVP has around 20 members supporting 2-3 families

**Role of Caritas Leeds Ambassadors** (built up over a number of workshops)

Clarification was given regarding this role. **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.</i></p> <p><i>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?</i></p> <p><i>Discuss approaches used to spark</i></p>	<p><b>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</b></p> <p><b>Find someone who can set up social media accounts to promote and share what's going on.</b></p>

	<p><i>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>Find someone who can produce a regular newsletter or ask for a regular slot in the Parish bulletin, website?</p>
<p>Spreading the Gospel Values through charitable work /social action.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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)</p>
<p>Develop/ enhance links with the Catholic schools in your area</p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Opportunities for voluntary work are promoted</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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>
<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. 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.  Try to establish email or Facebook group to other Caritas Ambassadors.  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.**

Coordinator reported that a number of permanent deacons have been approached and encouraged to take a coordinating/leadership role to support deanery based Caritas Leeds Ambassadors i.e. Deacon Arblaster (Harrogate), Deacon Baggio (Bradford), Deacon Walsh (Calderdale) Deacon Cawley (Wharfedale), Deacon Phillips (Huddersfield) and Deacon Quigley (Leeds East)

## Feedback from Caritas Leeds Day Reflection-6<sup>th</sup>. October 2018

- Chair referred to the summary article, part of which was published in the Catholic Universe, and emailed prior to this gathering. At this event two priorities have been voted on as a Caritas Leeds Priorities for 2019.
- Both groups have met last week. The overall aim is to look at each of these priorities in terms of a strategic and practical approach.
- The **Development of a Criminal Justice Forum**, emerged from the group focusing on care of prisoners, ex-offenders and their families. So far this group is interested in developing raising awareness of the legal/criminal system to as wide an audience across the diocese because this will inform targeted action, develop relationships with the West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project, the McKenzie Friends (who support people appearing in the court without support), and also links with Knights of St Columba who run a hostel for ex-offenders. The third area of consideration is the concept of restorative justice.
- The **Development of Youth Leadership** which emerged from the group looking at the needs of families and young people. So far this group is considering understanding better the concept of youth leadership, consider setting up a forum for young people from each deanery to have a meeting with the bishop. There is scope also to support the implementation of the Faith Award and engage with universities chaplaincies.
- Both projects have the potential to have various groups to work together and the parishes.

### Discussion on Homelessness and People living with disabilities

These issues were also discussed at the Day of Reflection but not voted on as a priority. The original plan was to continue these discussions in groups but this was resisted. Hence a brief summary was provided from each of these workshops by Mrs A Farrell and Caritas Leeds Coordinator.

- **Homelessness**
- The group felt that Bradford seemed much more coordinated in its approach to helping people who were homeless working with other churches; statutory services and other faith groups. The communication about the issues and what was happening seemed more effected and efforts to help were more coordinated.
- The recommendation was that CARITAS ran a focused campaign across the diocese to raise awareness of the issues; provide some information and guidance to parishes about what they could do to help and to encourage and promote better coordination of effort in geographic localities by identifying key players and bringing them together. This would mean that in each part of the Diocese there would be an informed and effective response to homelessness which reflected the needs of the population and a person/ family who was homeless would get a similar offer of help – dependant on availability of services in the locality.
- Chair made reference to this issue as a long term priority for the Bishops' Conference for England and Wales. He also made reference to Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) which is a branch of the Bishop's Conference, adopting a common good approach to housing and land. **Abide in Me (2018)** is a new report with a set of serious recommendations to build churches' capacity to change the current, broken, system of housing and land use. Some issues are so huge, complicated and all-encompassing that it can feel impossible as a private citizen and person-in-the-pew Christian to know where to start even thinking about how to respond effectively. Formulating a response that is also in tune with your faith is even more difficult. When the issue in question is housing, planning and land use it is not surprising that the Catholic bishops and the leaders of Catholic charities in England and Wales have experienced a similar paralysis. **Abide in Me** is a much needed and courageous response to this challenge, one from which all the churches can benefit.
- **People living with Disabilities**
- Need for our Church to become more inclusive

- This issue is more than accessing buildings
- A strong feeling that those with poor mental health were not supported as people are often judgemental
- Can there be catechesis for people who are different?
- Action to make our parishes more welcoming
- How accessible are our services and liturgies?
- Could breakout spaces be provided for parishioners with different challenges e.g. living with dementia, children, and people living with mental health problems?

**Feedback from these two workshops are provided to offer areas of discussion and subsequent action in our deaneries/ parishes.**

### **Update on Caritas Leeds Initiatives:**

- **Diocesan website:** work on the revised website has started. Caritas Leeds will have its own pages which will include details of parish groups etc. the 12 deans have recently been contacted to liaise with their parish priests to check and update the data collected following the audit which took place last year. This section will include website links to diocesan based charities etc. and also external ones.
- **Roll out of Universal Credit scheme.** A brief summary has been produced and emailed to all priests and links of Catholic association. Copy is attached as requested. A be spoke resources for the Leeds area has been developed with Leeds Church Institute.
- **Brief Summary of the Diocesan Transport Policy.** This is currently being developed and will be circulated to parish priests, catholic association links and Caritas Leeds Ambassadors
- **On-line Prayer/Catholic Social Teaching Resource.** This has been developed and will be accessible through the Diocesan website. It is intended to be for individual or group use.
- **Dementia Friendly Diocese.** Caritas Leeds is leading on this together with Growing Old Gracefully (a Diocesan Charity). Helpful guidance has been produced about the Eucharist and Dementia.
- **Family Poverty Project.** Caritas Leeds is partnering with the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission. Materials have been produced which are currently being piloted in three parishes.
- **Diocesan Refugees and Asylum Seekers Group.** Caritas Leeds is an active member of this group.

**Members of the Steering Group are willing to attend your gatherings for support. To arrange this and for further information please contact Rev. Dr. Joseph D Cortis, Caritas Leeds Coordinator on:**

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