

## PASTORAL LETTER

### Annual Appeal Sunday for Catholic Care, Weekend 30<sup>th</sup> /31<sup>st</sup> March 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

I write to you today regarding the Annual Appeal for *Catholic Care*, the Diocese of Leeds own charitable agency. Traditionally, this Appeal takes place today on this Fourth Sunday in Lent, a time when we give alms as part of our Lenten penance.

Catholic Social Teaching offers a way of thinking, being and seeing the world in the light of the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It provides a set of four core principles by which we are called to lead our lives and *Catholic Care* bases the work it undertakes on these principles.

The first of these is 'Human Dignity'. Our Catholic faith teaches us to see the image of God in every person. We believe therefore in the sacredness of human life and that every person, no matter what their circumstances, has inherent dignity and worth. *Catholic Care* cares for and supports many of those with a disability; it recognises that they must not be hidden away but assisted to live life to the full. *Catholic Care* makes this principle a reality in different forms of practical expression: through projects which reach out to an asylum seeker who has reached our shores in the most traumatic of circumstance; to a child in its care home who has been damaged by the experiences and suffering they have endured in the early years of their life.

The second core principle is the 'Common Good'. Our Catholic faith teaches us that we have responsibility for one another and that we are called to work for the common good of us all. We believe therefore that each person is not only sacred but social and that our lives flourish in our relationships with others. For this reason *Catholic Care* is continuing to reach out in the community throughout the Diocese of Leeds and increase its work supporting those who are isolated. It does this by:

- Reaching out to older people who often experience loneliness and isolation and brings them together socially in community groups;
- Supporting young carers (the average age of which is 12 years old) who carry a heavy burden of responsibility beyond their years in caring for a loved one;
- Providing material assistance and support to mothers and their babies through the *Gianna Project*;
- Establishing *Stay and Play Groups* for pre-school children and their parents or carers;

- Providing food to children and families who are most in need through the *Holiday Hunger* and *Christmas Cracker Projects*;
- Supporting women prisoners living with their babies in prison; and,
- Supporting retired priests, especially those who are feeling the impact of age and failing health.

The third core principle is 'Solidarity'. Our Catholic faith teaches us that we depend on and need to stand in unity with one another, particularly with those who are powerless or disadvantaged. We believe therefore that solidarity is not only a social principle but a moral virtue. In caring for so many vulnerable people, *Catholic Care* actively promotes the rights of those unable to speak for themselves, those with learning difficulties, poor mental health, children who need residential care and trafficked women, to name just a few areas of its work. Through our schools across the diocese, *Catholic Care* also supports children and families with their mental health and wellbeing, often assisting them through crisis situations and last year supported 2,205 children, parents and school staff.

The fourth core principle of Catholic Social Teaching, is 'Subsidiarity'. Our Catholic faith teaches us to respect personal dignity by recognizing that each person is always capable of contributing something beneficial to others. We believe therefore that all people have the right to participate in the decisions which affect their lives; it also means that those in positions of authority have the responsibility to listen to everyone's voice. As a charity, *Catholic Care* endeavours to listen with great care to the voices of the people who are at the heart of everything it does.

There are so many people who need the services of *Catholic Care*. Last year alone, the Charity cared for and supported a total of 2,805 vulnerable people. As our very own diocesan charitable agency, we should be proud of the many valuable services which *Catholic Care* provides. However, it relies on those who donate to it to deliver its charitable work and without your generous charitable giving much of this work could not take place. Your help today will enable *Catholic Care* to continue its mission and develop its services to help our brothers and sisters in Christ who are most in need.

I hope you will be as generous as you can in responding to this year's Annual Appeal. I thank you too for your continued support.



✠ Marcus  
Bishop of Leeds

*Given at Leeds on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and appointed to be read, and made available, in all Churches and Chapels of the Diocese on Laetare Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2019.*