

WORLD DAY OF THE POOR 2025

NEWSLETTER

PORTSMOUTHDIOCESE.ORG.UK/CARITAS

“You are my hope” (Ps 71:5)

16th November is the ninth World Day of the Poor. In his message for this year, Pope Leo XIV urges us to recognise the poor not as objects of charity but as protagonists of hope.

Charity, says Pope Leo, is the greatest social commandment. He acknowledges that all of us need charity, that it *“is not just a promise; it is a present reality to be embraced with joy and responsibility.”*

In his recently published Exhortation *Dilexi Te* (For Love of the Poor) Pope Leo says *“Charity has the power to change reality, it is a genuine force for change in history”* #91. Such concrete actions support individuals, build communities and create the change needed so that *“the poor will come to realise that Jesus’ words are addressed to each of them: “I have loved you” (Rev 3:9)”* #121

Throughout this diocese there are many such actions, signs of hope, to be found, in food banks, clothes banks, cafes, breakfast and lunches, coffee mornings, visiting the sick, housebound, in prison and on on boats, parent and toddler groups, environmental actions, dementia support, fundraising and sponsored activities to name but a few. However, the role of the church does not end there. As well as charity we must also have justice, working towards ending the structural causes that create poverty. *“It is my hope, then, that this Jubilee Year will encourage the development of policies aimed at combatting forms of poverty both old and new, as well as implementing new initiatives to support and assist the poorest of the poor.”*



You can read Pope Leo XIV full message [here](#).

Image credit
Mazur / CBCEW



“This celebration of the World Day of the Poor is meant to remind our communities that the poor are at the heart of all our pastoral activity. This is true not only of the Church’s charitable work, but also of the message that she celebrates and proclaims. God took on their poverty in order to enrich us through their voices, their stories and their faces. Every form of poverty, without exception, calls us to experience the Gospel concretely and to offer signs of hope.”

Pope Leo XIV

Scripture references for further reflection

Isaiah 58:6-12

Matt 25:31-46

Luke 10:25-37

James 2:14-26

Download the Caritas Portsmouth prayer resource.

**Donate to Caritas
Portsmouth**



What does poverty look like here?

Earlier this year information packs were circulated to every region of the diocese looking at 7 key areas of need, including poverty and financial insecurity, homelessness and housing, loneliness, ageing population, domestic abuse, migrants and refugees and modern slavery. Each pack reflected the specific needs in the area. We encourage parishes to follow the See-Judge-Act planning pathway to discern their response. For a copy contact caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

SEE: Look at what is happening in your parish and local community. Who is there, who is struggling? Include what is already happening to address that need so that we avoid duplicating efforts and instead build partnerships that strengthen and extend the support available.

JUDGE: Reflect on what you have seen in the light of the Gospel and Catholic social teaching. What is God calling us to notice? How can we hear directly from those experiencing poverty?

ACT: Discern together what practical steps you can take to address need - whether starting something new, partnering with existing groups, or supporting diocesan initiatives.



Summer support at Andover Foodbank

Children, particularly those whose families live with financial instability, are at risk of social isolation and loneliness during school holidays. The long break can put extra pressure on tight family budgets with the loss of free school meals, costs of extra childcare or a dependency on grandparents/other family members, who themselves can struggle.

The Andover Foodbank provided summer support for families identified by schools and partner agencies in the school holiday.

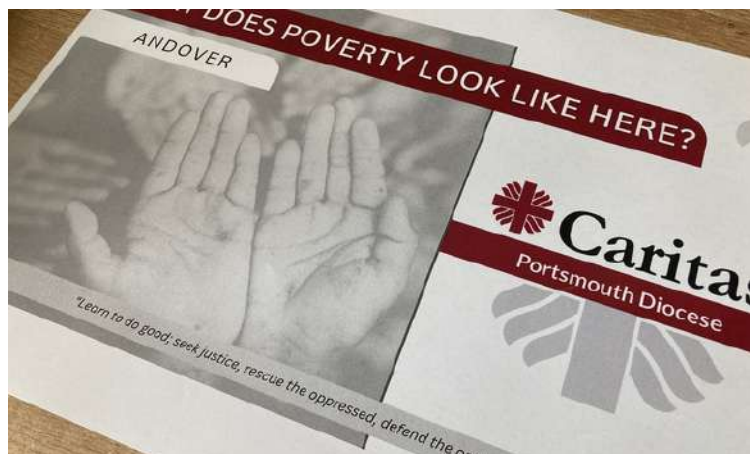
Families were able to collect food boxes and talk to the onsite Citizens Advice caseworker who could help with their finances. Support included additional treats including bottles of squash, multi-packs of crisps and ice pops.

Partnering with the local Methodist church, the Foodbank were able to provide pop up sessions in the town centre during the holidays to make it as easy as possible for parents to access support.

Winter warmth and support

As we head into the colder winter months, you may be considering what you can do to help. Guidance on starting a hot food or warmspace project is available by emailing caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk. We have signposting resources to local council cost of living pages as well as debt, energy saving and other key support contacts. You can access these [here](#).

“Hope, sustained by God’s love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, turns human hearts into fertile soil where charity for the life of the world can blossom.”



Share what you are doing!

We are building a picture of all the grassroots activity across the diocese that are supporting people in need and we want to hear about yours. Whether you run a coffee morning, warm space, refugee support or school uniform swap, let us know what you are doing for your community.

If you are planning to develop an existing project or start something new, get in touch at caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk. We have a social action guide to share and can support you turn love into action.



"It is my hope, then, that this Jubilee Year will encourage the development of policies aimed at combatting forms of poverty both old and new, as well as implementing new initiatives to support and assist the poorest of the poor. Labour, education, housing and health are the foundations of a security that will never be attained by the use of arms." Pope Leo XIV

You can help lift the two-child benefit cap

In his message for World Day of the Poor, Pope Leo quotes St Augustine *"You give bread to a hungry person; but it would be better if none were hungry, so that you would have no need to give it away. You clothe the naked, but would that all were clothed and that there be no need for supply this lack"*.

1 in 3 children in the UK currently live in poverty. In a recent roundtable discussion at parliament, we heard about the struggles with inappropriate accommodation, high rents, being moved to different locations in temporary housing interrupting education for weeks at a time, not enough food, choosing whether to buy food, heat, or pay bills, simply because income, even when parents are working is not enough to make ends meet.

Removing the two-child benefit cap would immediately lift 350,000 children out of poverty and reduce the severity of poverty for a further 700,000. It is also cost efficient. Poverty has a long-term impact on the health, well-being and educational achievements and therefore future work opportunities and thus costs. It is also a trap that can last for generations.

As we approach the autumn budget, now is a good time to help support the campaign to abolish the two-child benefit cap by contacting your MP. You can do so using [this link](#) from the CBCEW.

The Caritas Social Action Network published the Counting the Cost report of research exploring how families in Catholic parishes across England and Wales are being affected by the cost-of-living crisis, including specific issues such as the two-child limit. Read the full report at <https://www.csan.org.uk/news/report-launch-counting-the-cost/>.

Living our faith in school

Six schools involving 64 pupils and students took part in their [Faith in Action](#) and [JPII](#) awards last year, completing their work ranging from the Pin to Bronze, Silver and Gold awards and receiving their certificates by July 2025.

Corpus Christi Catholic Primary, in Boscombe, Bournemouth, achieved the Innovator Level status in the [Oscar Romero Award](#) programme, its highest certification for embedding Catholic Social Teaching principles within the curriculum, and involving pupils, parents, staff, governors, and other schools in the area. It is a fantastic achievement. In September, the school hosted their annual Social Justice Conference, welcoming 18 schools and inviting each to consider what their social action Jubilee pledge could be.

Congratulations to everyone involved!

Coming up: 25th November - International Day to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

"Violence of this kind should never be tolerated or justified. It is an offence against the dignity of the human person." Bishop John Sherrington

Yet 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse in their life time. In 2024 the UK Government declared violence against women and girls to be a national emergency.

[Download](#) a copy of the 16 days of activism produces by Caritas Social Action Network. There is also a new free training and information module available via CSSA, contact cartias@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk to sign up. Download [local support information](#) and [posters](#) for your parish.



Called to serve

"as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did to me" Matt 25:40

Every volunteer plays a vital role in building a more compassionate and just society. It is love in action.

It can also help strengthen your faith, build community, meet new friends, provide an opportunity to give something back, learn or teach new skills as well as making a positive difference to the life of someone who needs your support.

There are so many ways you can help to make a difference. So whether you are a whiz at admin, love to communicate or prefer practical action, reach out to local projects or contact caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk and get started.

For other volunteering queries, contact volunteering@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
We look forward to hearing from you.

Charity and volunteer networking event

This June we held our first charity and volunteering networking event. It was a fantastic opportunity for people to come together and chat to people from different charities and parish projects.

The next networking afternoon will be on **Saturday 7th February 2026** at the Discovery Centre, Portsmouth. Do save the date and if you want to come along and represent a project or share your expertise, you would be very welcome. Contact caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

The Mustard Seed Fund

Caritas Grant Programme

"What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."

Luke 13:18-19



The Mustard Seed Fund

This fund was launched on the International Day of Charity and is a grant programme to provide initial funding to help practical parish based social action projects get started. The seed funding can be used to cover initial costs, such as training, marketing materials, equipment and other essentials as well as early running costs.

We have been fortunate to receive funding for some initial projects from the Rita Walter Legacy Fund. The first project to benefit is the newly opened Breakfast@StEd's, serving breakfast to some of the homeless community in Southampton. The donation will help cover the costs for food hygiene training, plus equipment including thermos flasks, a slow cooker and aprons for the volunteers.

To donate and help more projects grow, visit:
<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/caritas-grant-programme>.

If you'd like to apply to the Fund for a grant or would like more information, email caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

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“The Church’s deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (kerygma-martyria), celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia) and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est #25

Updates from the Diocese charity network



St Vincent
de Paul Society
England and Wales
Turning Concern into Action

The St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) Society is an international Christian voluntary organisation that tackles poverty by providing practical assistance to those in need. It is inspired by St. Vincent de Paul and has a motto of "Turning Concern into Action". The society's core work involves members visiting and befriending vulnerable, isolated, and disadvantaged individuals in their homes, hospitals, and care homes, as well as providing direct aid like food, clothing, and financial assistance.

Key aspects of the SVP Society

Mission: To help the poor, disadvantaged, and lonely by providing practical and spiritual support.

Scope: It is an international organisation with a presence in many countries, including a large network of members and volunteers in England and Wales.

Activities:

- Befriending: Volunteers make regular visits to those who are isolated to offer friendship and support.
- Direct aid: The society provides practical help such as emergency food, clothing, and fuel.
- Financial and practical assistance: They offer support for pupils and help with other needs.

Membership: The organisation is made up of volunteers who are motivated to act on their concern for others.

If you want to get involved or need help setting up a new conference, please contact :

Jean-Marc Hall (President, Central Council,
Portsmouth Diocese) on
jeanmarchall@btconnect.com



STELLA MARIS

Bring a Smile to a Seafarer This Christmas –
Donate Chocolate Gifts

Can you help us bring a little Christmas cheer to seafarers this December?

Think about what you want for Christmas – chances are, it came to this country by sea. Behind every shipment, thousands of seafarers work tirelessly, often far from their families and friends. This Christmas, approximately 400,000 seafarers will be at sea or in port, facing long hours, tough conditions, and a life that is demanding, noisy, and sometimes dangerous.

Stella Maris meets and supports seafarers around the world. This year, we want to remind them that they are not forgotten. We are collecting hundreds of chocolate gifts to give to seafarers visiting Southampton ports in the days leading up to Christmas – a small gesture that can bring a big smile.

We need your help to make this happen.

Please take a look at the attached appeal and consider supporting our cause. Every chocolate gift reminds a seafarer that someone cares and that their hard work is appreciated. For many, your gift may be the only present they receive this Christmas.

If you can help, please contact our Port Chaplains:
Luke Phillips: luke.phillips@stellamarismail.org
Gregory Hogan: gregory.hogan@stellamarismail.org

Thank you for keeping these dedicated men and women in your thoughts and helping us bring a little festive cheer to their lives.



Hello everyone, my name is Andrea Hoyland and I am delighted to say that I have been appointed as the new Community Participation Coordinator (CPC) for the Portsmouth Diocese, taking over from the brilliant Jo Lewry. I am stepping into very well-trodden shoes, and difficult as they may be to fill, I am very fortunate that she has handed the baton over to me from such a committed and dedicated group of CAFOD volunteers.

My parish is St. Peter and the Winchester Martyrs and I have been an active volunteer for a number of years there, helping with Children's Liturgy, SVP and most recently heading up the Welcome and Hospitality Team. Like so many of the wonderful CAFOD volunteers I have already met, I want to live my faith in action and hope that in what I do, I can bring people closer to Jesus Christ in hope and joy.

Our Diocese, I am learning, is large with a big heart. In my first week, I had the great fortune to attend the Young Leadership Day at the Marist School, Ascot. Ably led by CAFOD's Education Team, over 40 year 12 students from Catholic schools and colleges in the Diocese came together for a day of friendship, community and action. They returned to their respective schools and colleges inspired to fundraise for the CAFOD Harvest Appeal and I look forward to sharing their endeavours in due course. Email: portsmouth@cafod.org.uk.

Our new World gifts catalogue is now out. Celebrate someone special with a gift that has the power to change lives visit <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/>



Across our communities, many vulnerable people, particularly those affected by modern slavery, human trafficking, and exploitation, face extreme hardship and isolation. Through the tireless work of Medaille Trust, supported by volunteers, we provide safe accommodation, a moving on project, practical support, reintegration and prevention work in Albania and advocacy to help survivors rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

Medaille Trust offers safe houses, outreach services, and tailored support plans. From helping survivors access education, healthcare, and legal advice to providing emotional and practical support, our teams work to ensure each individual feels safe, empowered, and heard. Many survivors have shared how even small acts of kindness and consistent care helped them regain trust, stability, and a sense of self-worth.

There are many ways you can make a difference. You could volunteer at one of our safe houses, fundraise to support our moving on project, or help raise awareness in your local community about modern slavery and exploitation. Every contribution, whether time, skills, or donations, helps survivors escape dangerous situations and start a new chapter of life.

This World Day of the Poor, we invite you to reflect on how your actions can support those most in need. You can take a look at our website or social media platforms, to stay updated on Medaille Trust initiatives, inspiring survivor stories, and opportunities to get involved.

Find out more and get involved at www.medaille-trust.org.uk

Shine the Light: National Justice and Peace Network and the Year Ahead

As the Jubilee year comes to an end the NJPN is committed to walking together in faith, action, and hope.

Last year NJPN embraced the theme of 'Opening Doors' inspired by the Jubilee image of welcome and renewal. In the year ahead we invite you to 'Shine the Light'. Doors opened in faith must not be allowed to close; they are thresholds through which hope can radiate and justice, peace, and integrity of creation (JPIC) can shine. To contact the NJPN [click here](#).

