**Diocese of Middlesbrough**

**World Day of the Poor 2019, Sunday November 17**

**Resource Pack**

**Pope Francis asks the Church to set aside one day each year when communities can “reflect on how poverty is at the very heart of the Gospel.”**

This resource pack is intended to give you the materials and ideas to help you and your parish or group prepare for this important event so that it is celebrated in every parish and every community in our diocese.

The enclosed give suggestions for individual and parish action, as well as some handy summaries of key points of Catholic Social Teaching (our “hidden treasure”). They might be usefully inserted into newsletters in the weeks running up to the World Day of the Poor. If you would like us to email you these resources so that you can “cut and paste” ideas or quotations into your newsletter, please contact us.

*Please do let people know of our big event on Saturday November 16.* We will be celebrating all the good work being carried out by the Church and by individual Catholics throughout our diocese, as well as hearing stories and experiences of those affected by poverty in all its various forms. Our hope is that every parish will be represented to celebrate the many ways in which we put the social dimension of the Gospel into action.

**What:** Diocesan World Day of the Poor Event

**Where:** St Mary’s Cathedral in Middlesbrough

**When:** Saturday November 16, 11am onwards, to conclude with a Liturgy starting at 2pm

Keynote Speaker: Sister Lynda Dearlove MBE – founder of “Women at the Well”

**We are holding this major diocesan event to highlight and celebrate Catholic Social Action as we approach the 3rd World Day of The Poor.**

It will be a day of prayer, music and drama. You will be able to share stories and there’s an opportunity for those involved in all kinds of social outreach to showcase and share their work with the poor.

Members of your parish and Catholic social agencies throughout the diocese are warmly invited to attend. We particularly invite service users to take an active part.

Please let us know if you require a stall to showcase your work with the poor and to share ideas with others or if you wish to contribute in any way. (contact us on: [sharrondriver@rcdmidd.org.uk](mailto:sharrondriver@rcdmidd.org.uk))

See flyer with the program for the day.

**The Pope’s World Day Of The Poor Message**

**The theme for this year’s World Day of the Poor is: “The hope of the poor shall not perish forever” (Ps 9:19)**

In his letter, Pope Francis writes that these words, “express a profound truth that faith impresses above all on the hearts of the poor, restoring lost hope in the face of injustice, sufferings and the uncertainties of life.”

“How can we fail to note that the Beatitudes with which Jesus began his preaching of the kingdom of God open with the words: ‘Blessed are you who are poor’ (Lk 6:20)? The meaning of this paradoxical message is that the kingdom of God belongs to the poor because they are in a position to receive it.

“How many poor people do we encounter each day! It seems that the passage of time and the advances of civilization increase their numbers rather than diminishing them.

“Centuries go by and the Beatitude appears even more paradoxical: the poor are always poorer, and today they are poorer than ever.

“The situation of the poor obliges us not to keep our distance from the body of the Lord, who suffers in them. Instead, we are called to touch his flesh and to be personally committed in offering a service that is an authentic form of evangelisation.

“Commitment to the promotion of the poor, including their social promotion, is not foreign to the proclamation of the Gospel. On the contrary, it manifests the realism of Christian faith and its historical validity.”

“God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. The poor save us because they enable us to encounter the face of Jesus Christ.”

He concludes by saying, “If the disciples of the Lord Jesus wish to be genuine evangelisers, they must sow tangible seeds of hope.”

He then asks all Christian communities, and all those who feel impelled to offer hope, love and consolation to the poor, “To help ensure that this World Day of the Poor will encourage more and more people to cooperate effectively so that no one will feel deprived of closeness and solidarity.”

You can read the full text here: <https://zenit>.org/articles/popes-message-for-3rd-world-day-of-the-poor-full-text/

**Pray, Connect and Share:**

**Actions to help the poor inspired by the Corporal Works of Mercy**

One way we can respond to the Pope’s call is to look at the seven Corporal Works of Mercy and reflect on how we are reaching out to the poor around us and those in other parts of the world.

Here are some examples of the many works of mercy already in our parishes and in our diocese. Some of these actions and many others besides will be relevant in your area.

We may want to consider our individual and community actions within each work of mercy, sharing what is done and why and inviting more volunteers to help.

Perhaps we can identify what is still needed and encourage other people to become involved as missionary disciples.

We may also think about structural injustice and how we can influence the underlying causes.

* **Feed the hungry** and **give drink to the thirsty**: Support local food banks and school holiday programs such as Feast of Fun that help families struggling to cope, collecting food and providing meals for the homeless, refugees and migrants.
* Helping those starving and poverty stricken abroad and countries devastated by war and conflict through organisations such as CAFOD.
* **Clothe the naked**: Collecting clothes, toiletries and household goods for refugees and migrants. Giving warm clothes to seafarers and homeless. Supporting organisations such as the Mary Thompson Fund, Justice First, Apostleship of the Sea and recycling initiatives.
* **Shelter the homeless**: Help the increasing numbers of homeless in our towns and cities, including young people, by supporting local organisations that provide food, hot meals, clothing and shelter.
* Welcome and support all in our parishes and towns – the homeless, destitute, addicts, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees forced from their homes.
* **Visit the sick:** Helping the sick in our parish, those who are housebound, elderly, isolated and lonely, those with mental health issues and dementia and disabilities through the work of the SVP, Lourdes groups, dementia friendly initiatives such as Ageing Better, the Catholic Fellowship, local hospices, being Ministers of the Eucharist for the housebound and in our hospitals.
* **Visit the imprisoned:** Visiting and supporting prisoners and those returning to the community. Supporting persecuted Christians through Aid to the Church in Need and Friends of the Holy Land and writing support letters and taking part in card campaigns for those imprisoned for their faith or for carrying out human rights work. Helping victims of human trafficking and forced prostitution and violence through the Medaille Trust.
* **Bury the dead:** Give help to countries devastated by war and conflict. Pray for peace, support and pray for the dying, pray for the dead and support the bereaved through the SVP and bereavement groups.

**Care For Our Common Home**

**Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* above all makes the connection between loving our planet and loving our neighbour.**

It challenges our “throwaway culture” and he calls upon our world community to value and care for our precious planet and its limited resources.

He calls on us all to refigure our mindset and change our lifestyle in the light of global warming and the damage it is causing, especially to the most vulnerable people on the planet.

Find out more about our diocesan environmental policy here

[https://middlesbrough-diocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Environment-Policy.pdf](file:////Users/McGeary/Library/Containers/com.apple.mail/Data/Library/Mail%20Downloads/1B4C255B-D31C-4AB8-B399-D5EFD618B74B/%2522)

Learn more about CAFOD’s current climate change campaign here

[https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate/Climate-Change](file:////Users/McGeary/Library/Containers/com.apple.mail/Data/Library/Mail%20Downloads/1B4C255B-D31C-4AB8-B399-D5EFD618B74B/%2522)

**How Parishes Might Prepare**

**Catholic Social Teaching provides some guidance on how to approach situations in the world in which we live. It gives principles to guide how we make decisions about the way we live our life and how we treat others both locally and globally.**

At the heart of Catholic Social Teaching is the basic concept that all people throughout the world are made in God’s image and likeness. If we believe that this is true then we are inspired to care for one another, whether or not we know the other person.

**Catholic Social Teaching Glossary**

* **The dignity and equality of each human person**

Every human being is seen as equal. They’re lovingly and beautifully made in God’s image and likeness. The other principles flow from this.

* **The call to participation and community**

Human beings exist in relation to one another. We’re called to live with others, aware of others, communicating, sharing, enjoying moments of joy and being there together in times of sadness. All of us are called to participate, to join in, to work alongside others for the common good of all.

* **A preferential option for the poor**

Caring for those living in poverty, both in our local neighbourhoods and throughout the world, is a fundamental duty of us all. However, the preferential option for the poor goes further than this. In the Gospels, time and again, Jesus shows a preferential option for the poor – putting them first, giving them special importance, thinking of their needs and enabling them to have their rightful place in the world.

It is not enough simply to think of those living in poverty and try to help them. The voice of people living in poverty needs to be heard. We must enable them to be a full part of the decision making process. We must enable those living in poverty to play a full, active role in society.

* **The dignity and rights of workers**

The right to work, to have a job, to earn money and so support your family are all connected to the dignity of each individual. Catholic Social Teaching affirms that human beings are not merely commodities or tools in a process to make things. Human beings are greater than anything. They deserve a fair wage and proper working conditions.

* **Solidarity among peoples and the promotion of peace**

We seek the good of one another, aware of our dependence on one another. St John Paul II said, “[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far, but is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good” (The social concern of the Church). Peace flows from this. We are called to live honestly with one another, working together in love for the good of all. This is what will lead to true peace.

* **Subsidiarity**

Holds that human affairs are best handled at the lowest possible level, closest to the affected persons, where they are better understood. The needs of people are best met at their most local level and nothing should be done at a higher level that can be done well or better at a lower level. What individuals are able to do society should not take over and what small societies can do, larger societies should not take over.

“It is very important to move ahead with projects based on subsidiarity. The people who benefit from them ought to be directly involved in their planning” – Pope Benedict

* **Care for the earth**

God created the earth. Often, the way we treat creation leads to the harm both of it, and of those living on it. Our destruction of the earth for quick gain has repercussions for animals, for ourselves now, and for generations to come. We need to treat the earth with respect.

This is just a taster about Catholic Social Teaching, which is integral to a life of faith. There’s a more detailed quick guide at Quick Guide [millionminutes.org/cst/](http://millionminutes.org/cst/) or you can find further ideas and resources available at [catholicsocialteaching.org.uk](http://catholicsocialteaching.org.uk).

**Some ideas for what your parish can do…**

* Sharing a parish meal, inviting those living in poverty in our communities to join you.
* Advocating on behalf of people who are hungry or living in poverty. Ask parishioners to send emails to your local MP and council leaders asking them to take positive steps to prevent global hunger and malnutrition.
* Raising money for the poorest and most vulnerable people worldwide. Plan your own parish fundraising event to support the needs of the poor in your area through food banks, CAUSE and other projects, or around the world through the work of organisations such as CAFOD.
* Praying for global solidarity. Pray for all the members of the body of Christ, especially those who suffer most. Share your prayer on social media.

**Quotes from Pope Francis**

“Dear young people, please, do not be bystanders in life. Get involved! Jesus was not a bystander. He got involved. Don’t stand aloof, but immerse yourselves in the reality of life, as Jesus did. Above all, in one way or another, fight for the common good, serve the poor, be protagonists of the revolution of charity and service, capable of resisting the pathologies of consumerism and superficial individualism.” – *Christus Vivit*

“Today, thank God, many young people in parishes, schools, movements and university groups often go out to spend time with the elderly and the infirm, or to visit poor neighbourhoods, or to meet people’s needs through ‘nights of charity’. Very often, they come to realise that there they receive much more than what they give. We grow in wisdom and maturity when we take the time to touch the suffering of others. The poor have a hidden wisdom and, with a few simple words, they can help us discover unexpected values.” – *Christus Vivit*

“Any Church community, if it thinks it can comfortably go its own way without creative concern and effective cooperation in helping the poor to live with dignity and reaching out to everyone, will also risk breaking down, however much it may talk about social issues or criticise governments. It will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk.” – The Joy of the Gospel

“None of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice: Spiritual conversion, the intensity of the love of God and neighbour, zeal for justice and peace, the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty, are required of everyone.”– The Joy of the Gospel

“It is essential to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognise the suffering Christ, even if this appears to bring us no tangible and immediate benefits. I think of the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others.” – The Joy of the Gospel

“I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ.” – The Joy of the Gospel