



It certainly has been a unique year for the Shrewsbury Youth Mission Team. We hope we can give you an insight here into some of the outreach and formation events we have been part over the last 6 months.

## WELCOME

January saw two new team members join SYMT, bringing us up to 5. We enjoyed taking some time to get to know each other, we now have an even wider range of experiences and talents to take into our ministry around the Diocese.



## Schools and Parish Engagement

At the beginning of the year SYMT were able to go into schools and parishes to deliver retreats, workshops, training days and bespoke events. We worked with all age groups and sizes from a Year 5 prayer leaders' day in Runcorn to a Sixth Form enrichment day in Macclesfield and lots in between. This is where our hearts lie as a team and we cannot wait until we are able to do this again.



## Altar Servers Day

A ministry highlight for 2020 for team must be the Altar Servers Day that was held in March at St John Henry Newman Parish, Latchford. We had over 80 young people join us for a day of reflection, activities, sharing and prayer, culminating in Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark. It truly was wonderful to see so many gathered to grow in faith and inspiring for us adults to see the commitment of the youth to their parishes. We hope that this event can happen again on day.

## Faith in Action

The Faith in Action Award really took off at the beginning of 2020. For the 2020/21 academic year we had 6 secondary schools, 31 primary schools and 4 parishes signed up. That is a total of 1,300 students! Pupils were enthusiastic about engaging in their service hours both in their schools and local communities. SYMT delivered training to Faith in Action Award leaders and went into schools to lead reflections points for the students. <https://cymfed.org.uk/>

## SYMT From Home!

Of course, lockdown was a challenge, but we have been working to connect with everyone at home. We have been regularly going live on our YouTube channel with **Clergy Café**, **Monday Morning Live** and **God Speaks**. We hope our online series will grow and provide more resources for young people.

We are continuing to grow our bank of online resources for schools and parishes to download and use themselves.

# STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER December 2020



## A letter from Bishop Mark Davies

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Few of us could have imagined the events which would unfold in 2020, with so many restrictions to ordinary life and even the closure of our churches for public worship. The global pandemic brought an interruption to many plans and initiatives in the Diocese while witnessing the generous commitment which saw our churches re-opened in the most challenging conditions.

In 2020, we also saw the vital importance of your contribution to Our Mission Together. The work of Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury became even more urgent for struggling families and individuals who suffered most from the damaging effects of the pandemic. It was your support and generosity which also helped provide care and weekly support for so many of our sick and retired clergy during the long months of crisis and self-isolation. Our Mission Together also supported younger men on their path towards the priesthood, seeing five men ordained this past summer. Candidates continued to come forward for the Discernment Year at Shrewsbury Cathedral even amid the many uncertainties of this time. Like the roots which grow beneath the winter snows, the work for youth, for catechesis and marriage have continued in many preparations and even some new initiatives during this most restricted of years. We pray that the work of preparation will be the promise of a renewed flourishing of these areas of mission beyond the pandemic.

For each of you who have shown generous support in prayer and sacrificial giving, the global pandemic will have brought its own strains and sorrows. Thank you for continuing to be part of Our Mission Together in Shrewsbury Diocese. So much could not have been accomplished without your generosity and continued commitment.

With remembrance in my prayer as Christmas approaches and looking forward to many new and continuing initiatives for our Diocese in the new year ahead.

*Mark*

Bishop of Shrewsbury



Follow us on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook @shrewsbury\_ymt or subscribe to YouTube channel - Shrewsbury Youth Mission Team.

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## Your Generosity!

No of Pledges received: 4,266 Total Amount Pledged: £10.911m Average Gift: £2,558

# Our Mission Together Support in a difficult year



The pandemic that struck the country this year left many in our parishes and communities facing immediate crises. A combination of official lockdown and closing off some of the vital facilities and services in towns and villages meant that many were alone, struggling to feed the family with nothing to eat and trying to juggle higher demands on their shrinking income.

We are pleased to be able to report that OMT funds enabled Caritas to respond quickly and effectively to help some of the most in need across the Diocese.

*Here are some examples... but without client pictures as you would expect.*

## Caritas Crisis Project

It was clear from clients that many in the most deprived communities faced a drop in income, higher costs, and an inability to feed the family or deal with essential utility costs or items.

OMT funds that help support Caritas were a lifeline and we were able to use to lever in an additional £140,000 to help most in need.

Half of this new dedicated Crisis Fund from the Albert Gubay Charity Foundation and the other half through the National Lottery.

We are currently assessing impact but can report the Albert Gubay donation helped 541 people in the early stages of the first lockdown. This ranged from food vouchers, essential items for the family or emergency accommodation for someone suffering abuse.

Thank you to the Albery Gubay Charitable Foundation and National Lottery who matched your OMT funds.



*Your generosity  
changes lives!*

*“The money has helped  
reduced rent arrears  
and a more affordable  
payment plan is in place.  
Legal action has been  
stopped. So relieved!”*

*“...thank you for the  
voucher, they have come  
and a perfect time. Her  
feet were soaked this  
morning...her mum is so  
grateful”*



A big welcome to **Ben Gilchrist**, who became our new CEO in the autumn. Ben brings wide experience and a strong commitment to the charity sector.

Thanks must go to the interim CEO Trish Spencer and all the Caritas staff whose commitment during a time of acute need for the most vulnerable was remarkable and helped hundreds of families facing crises.

## CARITAS HOPE PROJECT FOODBANK IN WYTHENSHAW

The work of Caritas in Wythenshawe continued despite Covid and lockdown.

- A significant achievement was the setting up of a new Foodbank during this period with risk assessments in place.
- At its peak, the Foodbank 1,200 meals per week to 140 adults/children (13 individuals, 28 families, (44 adults 66 children).
- The Foodbank support a broad range of people – over 70s self-isolating, people/families with mental or physical health problems, NHS Staff, refugees and people seeking asylum, families who had a fall in income, those with or suspected of having Covid-19 and young people living alone.
- The Hope Project received the High Sheriff Special Recognition Award for its work during the Covid-19 outbreak and also a letter from HM Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester praising the efforts of the volunteers.



Organising foodbank donations

## CARITAS WELL PROJECT

The Well Project has continued to adapt and be flexible to meet the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum. They have also reached out to help women seeking asylum and housed temporarily in a local hotel. There the women make up just 10% of the residents so are scared and feeling vulnerable.

Perhaps this letter to the project leader Mona Moussa shows the real and lasting impact of your generosity:

“Dear Mona,

*I just wanted to take this opportunity to personally thank each and every member of the team, for the incredible response in co-ordinating services for the asylum seeker population, recently relocated to the Britannia House Hotel in Didsbury.*

*Asylum seekers face hardship before, during and after arrival...and will have additional uncertainty during the Home Office relocation programme. Inevitably, their experiences will have had a direct impact on their physical and mental health needs.*

*For the professionals who are attempting to meet those needs, the situation presents significant challenges and complexities.*

*I would really appreciate you giving some thought to presenting your approach at the next City-Wide practice meeting, so we can share the learning and celebrate your success!*

Best wishes,

*Dr Manisha Kumar: Medical Director, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning”*

## SUPPORT AND CARE FOR RETIRED PRIESTS

As Covid lockdown loomed we prepared a plan how we would support our sick, elderly, and vulnerable priests during the national lockdown. Nuala and I created a traffic light approach to measure and manage the needs of our clergy.

We assessed our retired and sick priests in terms of dependence, vulnerability, health conditions and need to ensure that support was in place for all priests currently requiring support.

We contacted all agencies who were providing care to our priests and learned how they would continue to function in the current crisis. All assured me they had developed a response plan to ensure all care could continue to be delivered and agreed to notify us there be any change in our priest’s health or need.

We have continued to liaise with hospital discharge teams and local authorities to ensure our priests had timely and effective discharge. I was unable to visit due to a national ban and I was therefore relying on the advice of the hospital social workers who wanted the hospital empty, whilst I had to ensure that the care was in place when the priest returned home.

We liaised with physios and DN teams and other priests and families and continued to offer support remotely. I used the traffic light system for telephone calls, ensuring those I was most concerned about had regular contact. It was inspiring to see again the great support network of parishioners who supported with shopping and meals and let me know if there were any problems that I needed to address.

Whilst the last lockdown worked effectively in terms of support for our priests, I greatly missed Nuala and so did our priests. It was therefore been agreed that on this second lockdown we will both continue to work with each of us reducing our hours slightly.

We must thank all those who have helped ensure sick or retired priests receive the care and essential services they need and ensure they know people are looking out for them.

**Margaret Evans and Nuala Dutton: Welfare for Retired and Sick Clergy**

## Looking to the Future

At present, we have two discerners engaged in the discernment year at the Cathedral, with a new man joining in the January of 2021. Later in the Spring, we anticipate a fourth coming to Shrewsbury to explore whether he might be called to the priesthood. The pandemic has presented challenges for the discernment programme, but the men are committed to deepening their prayer, growth in their faith, and seeking the Lord’s Will for their lives. Please pray for Ash, Mark, Patrick, and Roberto who are the four men considering their vocation at this time

**Fr Edmond Montgomery: Diocese Vocations Promoter**

