

Caritas Sunday - January 25 2026

Reviewed and approved by Father Ged Murphy, Episcopal Vicar for Caritas Salford

As part of our diocesan celebration of Caritas Sunday, we have prepared a set of summary homily notes to support clergy and parish communities in sharing the message of the day. These notes are offered simply as a resource: a way to help connect the scripture readings of the day with the mission of Caritas Salford and the lived realities of people across our diocese.

They can be used as written, adapted freely, or drawn upon for inspiration. Above all, they are intended to help clergy (and parishioners) speak with clarity and hope about the call to love our neighbour, especially where the light of Christ is needed most.

What follows is the suggested text for use on Caritas Sunday - Third Sunday in Ordinary Time.

In the readings today, we hear again the powerful promise that God brings light into places of darkness. Isaiah speaks of *“the people who walked in darkness”* seeing a great light and of gloom being scattered. The psalm echoes it: *“The Lord is my light and my salvation.”* And in the Gospel, Jesus begins His ministry in the very places Isaiah named, in Zebulun and Naphtali, among ordinary, struggling people.

To them He brings light, healing, hope and a new beginning.

It tells us something important:

if Isaiah were writing today...

if Jesus were walking the streets of the towns and cities of our diocese...

He would still begin His work in the places where people feel forgotten, frightened or overwhelmed. Because He always starts where the light is needed most.

Here in our own diocese, that darkness often looks like child poverty.

- A girl in Manchester who comes to school hungry.
- A boy in Bolton whose shoes are held together with tape.
- A girl in Burnley who has stopped speaking in class because she has lost hope.

These children are not statistics.

They are our neighbours.

Some are in the very schools our own parish families attend.

But just as in the Gospel, light is still breaking in.

And one of the ways that light shines today is through Caritas Salford - the social action charity of our diocese.

Caritas doesn't turn away from the gloom. It steps into it, seeking to mirror what Jesus did: bringing healing, compassion and hope.

In the Gospel, Jesus calls His first disciples with simple, direct words:

"Come after me."

Not *"admire me from a distance."* Not *"think nice thoughts about me."* But follow me - walk with me, see what I see, love as I love. And they respond immediately. They drop their nets – their security, their routines – and step into God's mission.

That same call still comes to us. Jesus calls us to follow Him especially where people feel the darkness closing in. And that is why Caritas Sunday matters. Because Caritas is simply our diocese answering Jesus' call:

helping families who never expected to need support...

accompanying refugees who fled for their lives...

standing with children who feel lost or ashamed...

walking with homeless people who feel invisible.

This is the Church reflecting the light that Christ first shone. Our recent Jubilee Year of Hope reminds us that hope is not a feeling. Hope is a decision. Hope is choosing to believe that Jesus still brings light into darkness – and choosing to be part of that light ourselves.

Let me share one small example.

A boy called 'A' had stopped speaking in class. His father had been deported. His mother was too depressed to cope. Ali shut down. But a Caritas worker spent time with him every week – drawing, talking, listening. And slowly, something changed. 'A' began to smile again, to speak again. Today he helps younger children with their reading.

That is what the light of Christ looks like in our diocese. That is what Caritas does every single day. But Caritas can only shine this light if we, the Body of Christ, help to hold the lamp.

Today's Gospel tells us that Jesus "cured every disease and illness among the people." He didn't leave people as He found them. He brought healing. And He asks us to continue that work – with our time, our compassion, our prayer, and our practical support.

If Isaiah tells us that God "shatters the yoke that burdens the poor," then Caritas is one of the places where that yoke is being broken today – where burdens are lifted, where gloom begins to scatter. But it can only happen with us.

So on this Caritas Sunday, I ask you to listen again to Jesus' words: *"Come after me."* Follow me into the places where hope is needed. Be my hands. Be my light.

If not us, then who?

How can we respond today?

By giving what we can to support the work of Caritas.

By praying for those we accompany and for all who serve them.

By advocating for those who have no voice.

By taking home the Caritas Love in Action newsletter today.

And by opening our hearts to see Christ in those who struggle.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."

Let us help that light continue to shine – here, in our diocese, today.

Amen.