

## Webinar notes

Thanks for time, valuable time, re-imagining Caritas, love in action in a post-coronavirus society

JQB – MD of PR agency social

Listening to panel members and opportunity for participants to ask questions.

FAQ post session and share these afterwards.

Sr Judith

*What lessons can be learned and links between the virus and care of our common home?*

**'To be gospel activists on the street, to be leaders in society at every level' for the transformation of the person and society.**

I pray we don't go back – where we were before is not where we need to be – should not revert to past behaviours, learning to put the other before our own needs. Many people in our streets, parishes, who have been affected or died – this is a real wake up call. Love watching dads giving time to families and giving time to family, cramped accommodation and bedsits, wonderful to watch people looking up to the sky, constellations, stars – children are learning more.

Do we need to travel so much – so many families have lost out – but do we need to drive so much, do we need to fly so much? Appreciating nature much more and hear people talking much more, noticing the beauty of God's creation.

We have to de-anaesthetise our awareness; let's learn and go forward. Must be different – can't be as it was.

*What is role of the Church making sure we don't go back?*

Structures must change and change quickly. We've learned there are other ways of going to church; it is not just a matter of what we do. The structure must change so that young people and young adults who find it difficult to find a place but are there to be part of the decision-making process. Church has a lot to learn about utilising talents of young people. We have to change.

*Mark Wiggin overview*

Important to have webinar at this time that those of us who are part of the Church whether in a leadership or service role, we have the opportunity to take stock, reflect on things, have a conversation and look at the types of leadership that we have. Keen to bring together a panel of people who each have different leadership roles within the Church.

As leaders wanted to bring people together to share ideas with our community and see what learning we could get from this.

**As a Catholic charity in the Diocese of Salford we really believe in changing peoples lives, we are concerned about poverty, vulnerability, We want to redress the balance between rich and poor, look at the common good, protect the world and common home – all these things bring us together in one way or another . I see this webinar as an opportunity to look at the service we are**

**giving now as part of the Church but also to start planning for the service within the mission of the Church going forward.**

Philip McCarthy

*Should Caritas, like CAFOD, be more unified with and have a more defined role within the Catholic Church?*

Current pandemic is of entirely different scale. Purpose is to 'animate and co-ordinate' the Church's charitable works at home in England and Wales. Fundamentally that every Catholic and parish sees the works of justice and mercy as equal a part of their individual vocation and mission of their parish, as equal a part of liturgy and sacraments.

Secondly, we try to co-ordinate, many Catholic charities – 48 within the growing network – it is not so much unity in terms of structures it is collaboration and communion with one another. Role of CSAN is through co-ordination. Reached out with SVP to co-ordinate by rolling out a toolkit to support parishes. (Also toolkit for older people).

Finally, Pope Francis has set up Covid-19 panel to work on the Church's global response, deepening communion and collaboration.

Sir Peter Fahy

Very active at the moment volunteering in local Covid-19 support group, collecting and delivering materials.

Strikes me that there is a huge gap between enormous need and huge number of people who want to do good. 750k people have signed up to NHS responders app, big charities are struggling to respond, often around existing faith groups and are really good at fulfilling the local needs, knowing

Asset-based community development local people

Danger that charities have over-professionalised. In the Acts of the Apostles, they did not first run off and set up a charity but were alive in their community. Pope Francis is really challenging about service.

Also quite interested in the debate about care homes and real difficulties – does lead me to question that in the past we created orphanages to support young people cf. care homes and needs us to question the way that we care for older people. In other parts of the world, older people are cared for in the community. Should be energising parishes – not sure I like the word volunteering – struck more and more that public service professionals almost suffer volunteers rather than see them as part of the solution. Need to recognise that local people who have been through difficult times are often the best people to help other people going through a difficult time.

Aim to try to solve problems not just react to them. We have a lot of vulnerable families and this is why the virus has created so much havoc, however, hopeful about how people have come together to help those in need.

Mike Kane MP

Most politicians are pining for the good old days of Brexit.

Different about current circumstances that everybody is in this together: rich, poor; black white.

'Build back better' - having faith gives resilience in these situations. Identified through parish that 50% do not have access to the internet and so cannot access Mass. Miracle of loaves and fishes – getting people to sit down in groups was the first challenge. 'We will build back better if we do it in community and that is why Catholic charities and Caritas are so important to this.

Rahner – 'power is a gift from God'. Catholic Church is still the most powerful civil institution in the world. The Church has to be an instrument of building back better but what if the Church can build that network – things are going to be difficult – aviation shadow – 12k redundancies, duty of Catholics is "to light a candle in that doom".

+JA

Quoting Good Friday quote – as a leader how will you bring new urgency?

There are great opportunities – there are great response for people in our parishes who are networking their opportunities, but we have to address the wider of issues of how we look after ourselves. Tendency has been to look inwards – great call within our faith has been to look outwards encouraged by Pope Francis – ref. to famine, modern slavery, disintegration of aspects in our own society built tendency to wait for government to do something. Report about children being unhappiest in Europe. Must be more generous in what are we going to do about social problems. If pandemic allows us the time to think about the common objectives that we have our common home, that people are our brothers and sisters and that people have common dignity – to go back to normal would be to neglect demands that we are beginning to see so much more clear – we need to find a new normal that includes more of a sense of common wellbeing that we owe to all our brothers and sisters.

Is there anything being planned by bishops about the new norm?

We have been made aware by countless radio and media interviews about the immense suffering of people. There is a great spiritual angle – people have been critical about closing churches but this was good reason to protect people from contaminating others protecting health and wellbeing. Wherever we are we are Church. How wonderful it is that we can meet in public buildings and share the sacraments and liturgy but the fact that we cannot do that at this moment puts us in solidarity with many people around the world who have no churches. We are denied that sense of gathering in public puts us in solidarity. More importantly this idea that we develop the idea that we are church wherever we are at work, home, being Catholic is more than just being in buildings – St Paul calls us ambassadors for Christ – Pope Francis calls us to be missionary disciples...to do things in a Christ-like manner.

MW

Questions

Should Caritas get involved in bids from government, local or national – Adrian.

80% of original funding of Caritas came from government because we delivered from the state, today that is mostly from voluntary income or grants and trusts. Should we take government money yes but only where that doesn't take us from our mission. We want to be part of the wider community and civil society – where it suits our mission to deliver on behalf of the state.

Role of Caritas is to support those needs which government doesn't attend to.

MK

How does labour plan to learn lessons of Covid – Amir

Covid-19 has almost overnight because of this pandemic government and local authorities have tackled homelessness through using hotels and other accommodation. Reduced criminal begging, police can tackle major drug dealing,

This has shone a light that government that it can be done. Universal credit increase but two child cap needs to be looked at.

Parties exploring universal income not convinced but n

What influence can you have on behalf of Catholic voice into the new way?

Director of loose-knit coalition of Labour supporters packed delegates. Very interested in number of Catholics who may not be practising but may be practising social/ acts of mercy. Church has evangelic opportunity to marry up the volunteers with churches and give them an opportunity to have an outlet for faith. Need to rely on the skills of our parishioners and they bring this to bear on the crisis going forward.

PF

Is there still a role for the volunteer in delivering the kind of service that Caritas?

It is more than just being a volunteer, but rather we all have that responsibility. WE can't just parcel off old people to be looked after by other organisations. We know that relationships and early family life are at the heart of issue like homelessness, etc. Much more than volunteering, and politics needs to embrace, not just about not having the money to deal with these issues, but actually that we need to mobilise the effort and good will that this crisis has developed. **At the heart of every Caritas project should be specialist services that we need to provide and some particular expertise that needs to be developed but the ultimate test should be how may people is this bringing in to play their part and to live their faith and how is this project trying to solve the underlying issue. There are some projects meeting need but it is almost as though it sustains this need rather than trying to address it.**

PMc

How can we capture the best of humanity? How can we evangelise through Caritas?

I think the way young people have responded to the crisis has been immensely moving this has been extraordinary and encouraging. Engaging in secular liturgies are extremely moving. Absolutely right that for many young people that sight of Church engaging in social action is most important to them. Going out on soup run was vastly important and saw the Church – love in action – and it was transformative. An opportunity for moment of grace.

SrJ

Panel are made up of 5 white men?

Huge number of women are involved in working within Caritas – majority of those involved are women. Maybe question is more about those in influential positions. This is a huge issue for the Church and all organisations. This is multi-faceted.

Women have particular gifts but do women get the opportunity to be heard when they really need to be heard and is it done in the right way? Caricature of women as too bossy – is Caritas reflective

of total inclusion or is it too male orientated or are the key influences from the grass roots really being heard – not just listening but also acted upon?

MW – same question

Not just grass roots but also need to be from top down and people need to from top down with representative numbers of women and other groups who are either directly or indirectly discriminated. Organisation was originally very good women's led organisation – not been redressing the balance the other way but it is an important question and need to keep working at it and shouldn't take our foot of the gas.

How can we education parents to look outwards to support new world?

SrJ

Developed whole new programme Caritas Ambassadors / Caritas in Action as an resource e.g. schools looking at waste, turning off laptops / light, looking at the cost of this for what is the cost of this for the school, paper waste all these, Caritas Salford is leading the way, really challenging governors, leadership teams and teachers in schools to look at ways of doing things. Children being invited to change behaviour and measure impact.

Children are learning how to grow crops in all sorts of ways. Children are learning to critique the market in maths on two for one options. Difficult because we understand the pressure on parents. Salford Diocese is leading the way.

+JA

Question Mike – since many of overstretched parish priests are in vulnerable age is it timely for laity to be administering the parishes.

We are moving in the direction of asking what priests were ordained to be. Our parishes need to be administered by parishioners. In Salford we have had an abundance of priests, numbers are reducing the essentials of priestly ministry are defined and that we make up the community by the way that we distribute the pastoral ministry. This was happening for a long-time during the penal period when priests were moving around the country and priest came to celebrate the sacraments and this is still the way the church is organised in many areas of the global south. We have a journey to 2030 and how we value priests time.

Nadine – as an Anglican who has worked with Caritas and CSAN, what is the ecumenical approach post Covid-19

+JA

We have good ecumenical and inter-faith relations prompted to take a step forward when there was the Arena bombing. This fostered good relationships. We are talking about connecting things up, emphasising what Pope Francis sees

Global issue, concerned with health, refugees, the environment; if we can recognise these connections we can work well together. We are united in so many of the basic beliefs about the sanctity of life, the dignity of human life, these are things that we should develop as much as we can.

PF – language of mercy and justice we are used to hearing has become the language of politicians

Ref. Way of Cross on Good Friday written by people from Italian criminal justice system. A lot of the issues about CJ system and prison population comes back to many people who have had difficult starts in life, putting people in prison is not only incredibly damaging for the person, doesn't necessarily reduce crime and costs a lot of money therefore hopefully this particular crisis will help us think a lot about the issues in society and in a different way.

Picked up a big consignment of PPE from Stafford prison and donating their wages. Really good question and comes back to issue about leaving nobody behind in the past a lot of people that society has condemned that if we had that start in life we may have ended up in exactly the same place. Concept of leaving nobody behind.

MW – question about Caritas caring for people financially for poor and homeless approach to professionally well-paid people who are under pressure to success more and more.

There is a lot of pressure on people at the moment about job security, future employment and children's attainment at school. The question is a good reminder that we are there and absolutely should be there for everybody. We shouldn't be judging charity success about who were delivering to but creating opportunities for absolutely everyone in society. As a charity with limited resources we do have an imperative to serve the poor and those in need and put those resources to best effect where we can. But there are hidden poverties in society, anxieties, stress, mental health and other issues. Nobody is exempt from these whether you are wealthy or poor. We need to really look into the hearts of everybody when it comes to charity to create space for everybody in there and not just have this idea that certain people who can afford to be volunteer for us can do so and we should only be exclusively for the poor. Covid-19 in a strange way has brought us together as a community has broken down these barriers of class, wealth, affluence, colour and race. Nobody left behind is not just the poor but it is everybody.

MK – The need is dire regarding unemployment, debt for the family. Are there ways such as credit unions to help free them from debt.

Constituency surgery on Fridays and gets number of enquiries – one of the things that underlies this debt is the underlying cause of most of the social issues that I face in my surgery. Too many of our people are relying on payday loans, through apps or illegally on the streets. Can we alleviate peoples debt on an individual basis. How do we allow people to flourish...people are physically constrained by debt day in and day out. Just having more time with my wife at the weekends, I finally got the chance to watch entertaining angels story of Dorothy Day. Greatest social advocate in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a woman.

PMc – question from Bob – 'how well international charities are prepared to respond to Covid-19 in the global south'.

Knows that colleagues in CAFOD are working very hard on this to help people in the developing world, not my area of expertise. Work closely with CAFOD and in day-to-day business but clear distinction. There is a question for the future about whether that sharp distinction which has arise in England and Wales should continue.

Q – Neil - Pope Francis has invited every RC Parish to offer a home to a refugee family. Caritas Salford, Portsmouth, and Westminster plus CSAN are leading on Sponsoring Refugees - how to build on this radical practical action and spread it across the UK?

PMc – this is something that we have been working on for a long time, over the past three years, following Pope Francis' call. We have recently employed Sean Ryan who previously worked for

Caritas Salford who is now going around the country to inspire communities to encourage Catholic parishes.

PF – Community Sponsorship model could be used for so many types of issues about how you try to support so many issues including those who leave the penal or mental health systems. It's a great model for how you can build on relationships with those who want to do good but crucially their knowledge of their own area and the fact that they can provide that twenty-four hour wrap around support which traditionally the public services have struggled to do.

Question from EO'N

'As well as the principles and philosophies of the change that we will all face, what does the panel think are the most important practical imperatives for any transformation of Caritas Salford? Eamonn O'Neal'.

Sr JR –

We are in a time, I don't like the expression of lockdown, a time of reflection although in more isolated, and we have had time to think. There has been a lot of thinking of talking but now is a time to act/ We have seen the need to explore people now who are ready and willing, need to empower and enable the people who are ready and able and willing, that phenomenal number of volunteers, the great tsunami of goodness being release into society but structures need to be there for it. We need in Salford to find ways of challenging parishes to welcome young people and young adults to what they are ready to do to step up and do they have shown us they can do it. They can network far fast than any of us. We need to really look at schools being a vehicle for change but they come across barriers or blocks. They want to do more to engage people in social action, love in action but it becomes very difficult for them because of so many barriers. We need not to wait 2 or 3 years – we need to act now. How can our young people response to what pope Francis says – 'I want you to make a noise, I want you to be a nuisance and cause chaos in the parishes'. Are we going to listen to that or are we going to say just want you to come to Mass and do this but go away and don't let young people rock the boat. Let them rock the boat to show what they can do. In any time of crisis in our history who have we really called upon? It is the young elements as well as old but those young people are ready to give everything. Didn't we see that in the last terrible way? Who were the ones going behind enemy lines, alone and unknown? Who were the ones that were running very dangerous messages from one post to another? It was the young! And they did it with no recognition and they knew nobody would know, no medals or titles, they just were ready to serve. Pope Francis is calling us to allow them to do it so let's do it. Let our reflection not be talking shops...bit our plans need to be about now. Now is the time to harness good will and generosity and recognise sacrifices that many are making. I hope that we don't move out of this time, which we will soon, and just plod on.

PF

Caritas should be concentrating on how do we mobilise local effort exactly as parishes and schools and wide community that want to do good. Its also crucial that we are meeting with other faith groups, with Muslims and Sikhs who are ding great work locally. We need to do great work locally but at the same time think what we're also missing exactly as Mike said we're part of this huge Catholic family and a lot of the issues we are going to be dealing with are going to be global issues and I think that the Church and Caritas could be a lot more effective at how we link to all the other Catholics around the world who are part of our family.

MK

We're not doing a job performance but Caritas are going to have to respond to change in four ways. Finding new members, developing new training that will be required in light of the new circumstances, getting new leaders, yes, women, young, leaders of colour, finally finding new sources of money which will be an impossible task but has to be done. I would say I contribute to mission in Shrewsbury Diocese and we had a refugee problem in my constituency and Mark was an angel who came along and before we knew it we had set up the Well Project to support refugees who had no recourse to public funds. And that project is still going today and I think respond to change is going to be vital as the new normal that we're going to face.

PMc

St Catherine of Sienna, a lay woman, became doctor of the Church, always will to upset the status quo. 'Nothing great is ever achieved without much enduring'. At the moment we're enduring very much but there are great opportunities and I'm sure that in Caritas Salford with their collaborators will achieve many great things.

+JA

I value the work of Caritas so much but I do believe that we must never lose the connection between our social action and our spirituality and prayer. We have our little diocesan prayer which is so relevant – stay with us Lord on our journey – I do believe that we will achieve so much more if we remember that the Lord is with us and that we're doing his work. That bring it to fruition in a way that goes beyond our ability to measure.

MW

One of the things I've been trying to do and continue to do is to free up community and particularly as faith communities to get involve in the charitable works of the Church. That not just about Caritas, it's about all the other Catholic charities and organisations helping to free people up is important but we've got to do that safely and responsibly.

One of the things that the pandemic has demonstrated to me is that the importance and need to create hubs in communities, place where people can feel safe and where people can go to. It would like to see our parishes becoming hubs of community. Somehow schools and parishes need to link up and then we need to link up to the wider community of the faith communities and wider civil society. Mobilisation is important.

One of the things that I've learnt throughout working and professional life sometimes there is not the urgency that we need to change things and it's a great word – urgency – because we can fall back in ways very easily for that.

Webinar has also been a fantastic opportunity to consult people and particularly those people putting questions – those have real value.

Sum it up by saying the real issue is to make sure that we can somehow mobilise and become part of the wider community and bring our faith into that as well. As noted by Bishop John, we've recently appointed a Catholic Social Teaching Co-ordinator, someone to get our values right among the organisation and so become examples within our community. It is a big question and one we're now pondering on.

(Concluding thanks...)

## Questions

"Just want to say a huge thanks for this webinar - excellent and thought provoking. Stay with us Lord on our journey"

*We received a number of really positive comments from participants and especially from those of you who were able to send feedback through our online survey after the presentation. This is really helpful to us and we hope to develop this further in the future.*

In this time of responding to change and reimagining the future...there is a national shortage of foster carers and 78,000 young people in care nationally - in this time of working together what can the Catholic community and parishes do contribute to responding to this great need?

I think we recognise we must find a new normal and a genuinely successful caring society...what is the single most important thing each of us can do to influence those around us? How do we convince others a simpler more inclusive society is the way forward?

How do you see Caritas supporting women in the church and community and coming together for the common good within a woman in the Church's theological remit?

Please can you ask how well international charities are prepared for responding to the spread of Covid-19 through the global south ? – ref International Rescue Committee David Miliband warning of a billion infections and 3 million deaths [yesterday on Sky]

Kevin from Portsmouth: In a church with a lot of emphasis on pious practices and devotions is there one bit of advice that can encourage it to be more socially active, I'm personally finding it a big challenge.

Some Dioceses has supported Church-led social action and others have ruled it out. Are there lessons here for the Bishops Conf for the future? What does this say about the place of social action in the Church and the way senior leaders examine their approaches to risk and to mission?

At the moment 'be kind' is one of the popular mottos of the pandemic. How powerful that message would be with just simple crucifix. The Catholic Church desperately needs a rebrand. Our image is conservative, aged and somewhat out of touch.

We need to ensure the safety for both helped & helpers in the pandemic. But responses to need for social action from dioceses in England and Wales has differed quite considerably....

The situation in China is reportedly reverting quickly to a pre-Coronavirus situation, as for example, pollution levels are rising exponentially. How do we influence government that our rediscovered community and social values should remain and we also do not revert to type?

Can we think about ways that church property (churches, land, schools, accommodation) can be more widely used to serve the community?

Bishop John, isn't it time for the Diocese of Salford to take the opportunity of COVID and publicise Pope Francis's wisdom and his social thoughts and advice through interfaith activities?

CST principle of Subsidiarity has to be seen to empower parishes & lay led organisations is vital - resources need to be shared What grants are Caritas offering to lay organisations especially for faith based work often excluded by other funds ?

"The need is dire regarding unemployment, debt and the pressures on families. Are there opportunities for us to help those most in need and who live outside the areas where we currently have strongholds? Are there ways to help families to access Credit Unions and help free them from debt? Fr Ged"

- Answer during webinar

Pope Francis has invited every RC Parish to offer a home to a refugee family. Caritas Salford, Portsmouth and Westminster plus CSAN are leading on Sponsoring Refugees - how to build on this radical practical action and spread it across the UK?

- Answer during webinar

As an Anglican who has worked extensively with Caritas and CSAN, especially with refugees and displaced people, I wonder what thoughts people have about post COVID-19 ecumenical projects, especially around the displaced and Laudato Si. a greater emphasis of Together for the common good?

- Answer during webinar

The Government has introduced ""temporary"" legislation to allow doctors to prescribe the two abortion pills to be self-administered by women at home. How can we ensure that after the Crisis, things can return to safeguard lives? or is there a danger of this becoming the ""new Normal""

Appreciate the discussion of equality for women. Might we have the same discussion for people of colour?

How will we, in the 'new normal', be seen to be putting 'people and planet' 1st - the current situation show how inextricably connected they are - and not just talking about it?

People often want to volunteer but sometimes need direction and options. Do you see any feasibility in utilising tech - similar to the good Sam App that has been used by the NHS, to mobilise people in parishes to volunteer for caritas and other Catholic charities on an ad-hoc basis?

Since many of our overstretched parish priests are in the vulnerable age category of this virus, is it timely for the laity to progress their 'forward in faith' role by running the parishes, with priests just administering the sacraments but doing little else?

- Answer during webinar

"How would the panel suggest we engage our young people - currently not in school - and involve them in social action?"

Do Caritas now need to develop further partnership working with other faith based organisations, other charities, funders and others to continue to deliver much needed services for vulnerable people and families?

As a SEND teacher all that the government deemed important was suddenly cancelled (exams, standard test etc) How can we make this experience a real time for change? How can we support our CYP when they return to schools?

How do we use the growth in community action and engagement (outside the church) into the wider vision and mission of the Church. CSAN is vital in this are they resourced enough as an important arm of the church in this task going forward?

I believe abortion in the UK is the biggest crisis we face. What will Caritas do to remove this culture of death?

"Pope Francis spoke during his Morning mass this week of the need for a universal basic salary. In the light of catholic social teaching do you feel this would be worth supporting?

In a post virus environment, is there greater need and impetus for Caritas to link more closely and effectively with the Diocese's schools/parishes/communities to sustain our services?

"I have the impression that Caritas tends to care more about (financially) poor and homeless people. What is Caritas's approach to professional and well-paid people; many of whom are under pressure to achieve/succeed more and more?"

- Answer during webinar

The language of Mercy and Justice that we are used to hearing, as Christians, has become the unself-conscious everyday language of politicians and the media. Has this tiny virus succeeded where the Church has failed?

The panel is made up of 5 white men and only 1 religious sister, does this represent a wider lack of diversity in the leadership of Caritas? How can Caritas ensure a broader voice is heard from amongst their communities to build back better?

- Answer during webinar

Schools make great moves in encouraging children especially seen in the response to Laudato Si. However many parents look inwards. How can we educate parents to support the school work and look outwards to support our new world?

COVID-19 showed that wellbeing of us depend on the wellbeing of the most vulnerable people. This has been highlighted as the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable in Catholic Teachings. How does Labour plan to learn from COVID-19 lessons and advocate for a post-COVID welfare change?

- Answer during webinar

As well as the principles and philosophies of the change that we will all face, what does the panel think are the most important practical imperatives for any transformation of Caritas Salford?

"A mother on County Lines: "If Local Authority social workers can't do their job and the Police can't do their job, how can I do my job as a Mum."

What can Caritas and Salford Diocese do in our diocesan schools to help GMP Challenger Prepare, Prevent, and Protect."

Why has CBCEW given such cautious advice about how local churches can respond?

Is there still a role for the volunteer in delivering the kind of service that Caritas develops?

Should Caritas get involved in bids for funding from govt, local and national.

Have we a list of participants? do you see our faces?

Together for the Common Good believe the pandemic represents a 'kairos' moment of opportunity to reset society and rebuild communities. What can Caritas do to promote and support an upscaling of the work of TFCG to equip Catholic leaders to go out and light the spark within their own communities?

Has coronavirus led us to identify vulnerable people differently and if so what are the implications for Caritas services?

Does Caritas have a preventative role and post coronavirus Can caritas extend the volunteering approach within the community?

What are Caritas' intentions with regard to Cornerstone Day Centre, please?