

## **News from Caritas Westminster for priests and parishioners**

Dear fathers and colleagues

As you may have heard, John Coleby, our director for 10 years, left Caritas Westminster last month. We gave him a good send off, and Cardinal Vincent Nichols presented him with an apostolic blessing from the Pope.

Our new director will be Richard Harries.

Richard is a former senior civil servant who spent many years working on criminal justice, voluntary sector and local government policy issues. In 2013 he took up a new role working for a Westminster-based think tank before going on to become Director of Research for a National Lottery grantmaker. To join Caritas he is leaving his work as Director of the Institute for Community Studies, where amongst other things, he has been working on the impact of faith-based social action. He is currently on the Board of Catholic Social Action Network (CSAN).

Richard will take up his post at the beginning of September, and looks forward to introducing himself to all of you as soon as he can. Meriel Woodward, Assistant Director will be acting as Interim Director in the meantime.

She can be contacted by email [merielwoodward@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:merielwoodward@rcdow.org.uk)

Please scroll down or link to the following for other news:

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## Our Annual Review 2022

This has now been completed and can be read on line here:

[Caritas Westminster Annual Review 2022 by RCWestminster - Issuu](#)

## Illegal Migration Bill

Caritas Bakhita House has signed a statement which calls the Illegal Migration Bill cruel, inhumane and unworkable, and a “charter for traffickers”. Bishop Paul McAleenan has said “While we all wish to end dangerous Channel crossings, this new legislation treats migrants and refugees as a problem to be solved rather than brothers and sisters towards whom we have responsibilities.”

This Bill is currently in the “ping-pong” stage, and was sent back to the House of Lords yesterday after the Commons rejected most of the amendments they proposed. Caritas Westminster, along with other charities including CAFOD and the Jesuit Refugee Service is asking people to urgently write to their MPs.

Parishioners can read more on our website here:

<https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/caritas-bakhita-house-signs-statement-demanding-amendments-to-the-illegal-migration-bill-1526.php>

or [use the template letter on the CAFOD website](#)

**A former guest at Caritas Bakhita House has made a documentary** about her journey of recovery, having been trafficked and raped. This will be shown on Monday 17 July at 10:45pm on ITV1 and ITVX, under the title “Catching My Rapist”

## St Joseph’s Outreach Team – supporting young people with learning disabilities to grow in their faith.

It was wonderful that two of the children we have been supporting through our Outreach work were recently able to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

In June Kai was confirmed at St Dominic's Haverstock Hill and on 1st July Valerie, from Hounslow Parish, at the cathedral. Please keep in your prayers Adrian who will make his First Holy Communion and be confirmed in the Cathedral on 14th July.

The Outreach team exists to support those with learning disabilities and their families across the Diocese. Although much of our work is helping those with learning disabilities to prepare for the sacraments we also work with parishes and catechists through training and general support. We also help coordinate the number of Saturday Clubs that offer fun activities and respite for families and those with disabilities in various parishes.

The team offers wider support in terms of help with issues which occur in school, accessing healthcare and other issues to do with benefits and through our Family Groups which currently run in Watford, Ealing and Hendon.

## Appreciating our volunteers

We are not hosting a Diocese of Westminster volunteer awards ceremony this year, however we wanted to draw your attention to the *Faith & Belief Community Awards*, run by the Faith & Belief Forum, in case there is a volunteer in a social action project you would like to nominate for these awards.

The awards celebrate the vital work of London's faith and belief communities by bringing together local heroes and shining a light on their inspirational work. Each year the Faith & Belief Forum give out 40 awards of £500 to enhance the work of these inspirational projects.

If you make a nomination, you will be asked the following questions:

- 1. Please provide an overview of the background and main focus of the project you are nominating. What work does it do and why is this important? How long has the project been in operation? How many people does the project support per year?*
- 2. Please tell us about the impact of this project by providing evidence and examples of what the project has achieved.*
- 3. Why does this project deserve to be awarded? Please show evidence of the project being innovative, unique, sustainable, or having to overcome significant barriers to establish the project.*

**Nominations close on 23rd July.** To make a nomination, please visit [London Faith & Belief Community Awards](#).

## Safe in Faith, domestic abuse support training

Safe in Faith are repeating their training course for priests and religious in the Autumn.

In any congregation there are likely to be a number of people who are currently being subjected to domestic abuse, or who have been subjected to it in the past.

There are also likely to be perpetrators of domestic abuse.

This training will help you respond more safely to situations of domestic abuse.

This training is for clergy, religious sisters and spiritual directors. It is recommended that you participate in all four sessions of this training course, which take place on Tuesdays at 2:30:

19th September Workshop 1: Understanding Domestic Abuse

17th October Workshop 2: Understanding Domestic Abuse in the Context of Catholic Spirituality

7th November Workshop 3: Understanding Trauma and Trauma Informed Care

21st November Workshop 4: Signposting, Safeguarding and Self Care

Sign up for these sessions on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/workshop-1-understanding-domestic-abuse-tickets-671468318817>

## Cost of Living Corner!

Our monthly slot with tips for those supporting parishioners struggling with the rising cost of living.

We are working with some other organisations to provide expert online training sessions and support for people in parishes, schools, SVP Conferences and projects, who are assisting those who are struggling financially. At the moment you can sign up for:

**Loan Shark Awareness**: Thursday 14th September 2023, 6:00-7:30.

Loan sharks are more devious, and more widespread than many people imagine. This session is designed to help you spot the signs that somebody you know may be the victim of a loan shark and know how you can help them.

<https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/loan-shark-awareness-training-1514.php>

**Budget Coach training** – 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September, delivered by Community Money Advice. For volunteers and staff in parishes, schools and projects who want to help people who are struggling to manage their money

For more details and to register

<https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/building-up-firm-foundations-budget-coach-training-1512.php>

We would also like to draw your attention to “*Worrying about money?*” leaflets. These are free leaflets that you can download, or even order free printed copies of for your parish, to help your community with advice about where to access support locally.

Produced in collaboration with IFAN (Independent Food Aid Network) there are multiple boroughs and regions in the UK that have created leaflets, all listing local places of support.

Find out whether your borough or district has a leaflet here (and order them for free online): <https://www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/cash-first-leaflets>

If your borough or district doesn't, we can work together with IFAN to make it a reality. Get in touch with Caritas Westminster [caritaswestminster@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:caritaswestminster@rcdow.org.uk) if you are interested to pursue this.

## World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly 23 July

The Pope's message for this day can be found here:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/nonni/documents/20230531-messaggio-nonni-anziani.html>

Last week, Caritas Westminster and the Irish Chaplaincy, held a meeting discussing loneliness and isolation felt by older people, and heard from a speaker from [Time to Talk Befriending](#).

Church groups are in a wonderful position to reach out to older people who are housebound, hidden from sight, and without family and friends. The hospitality and community in the venue of the local parish, can nurture great friendships of mutual company and support.

If anyone from your parish (perhaps a member of an SVP group?) would like to join our Seniors network and hear about future events (also see below) where ideas for supporting older people can be shared, they should sign up for our newsletter and click the "Seniors Network" box. Sign up here <http://eepurl.com/caQmNb>.

## Upcoming Events

***Please include the following in your parish newsletters if appropriate or forward to relevant parishioners***

### **Caritas Deaf Service Summer timetable**

Our regular events over the summer are different to the rest of the year. This is our timetable for Masses over the next couple months:

Deaf Community Mass celebrated by Fr Willie Skehan – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August at 4:30p.m. Westminster Cathedral Hall.

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August, 12:30p.m. Mass in Westminster Cathedral will be interpreted for the Feast of the Assumption.

Deaf Community Mass celebrated by Canon Shaun Lennard – Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September at 4:30p.m. Westminster Cathedral Hall

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September, Signed Mass, 12 noon SS Mary and Joseph Poplar – Mass to celebrated 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination for Fr Keith Stoakes.

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September, interpreted Mass 12 noon Our Lady and St Joseph, Kingsland, (Mass is being organised by St Joseph's outreach team)

The regular bible study in September (Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> at 11am) will be online due to meeting rooms in Vaughan House being refurbished.

### **Routes out of Homelessness - Dignified Work Series – introducing *Beam***

Friday 21st July 2023, 10:00 - 12:00, online

For anyone involved in outreach projects for those experiencing homelessness – this is a chance to find out about Beam, a charity which supports people into jobs and homes that lift them out of homelessness for good. Find out more and sign up here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/routes-out-of-homelessness-stepping-stones-dignified-work-series-tickets-479859752437>

### **Rosa Monckton talk at Caritas St Josephs**

Tuesday 26 September, 5pm

Caritas St Joseph's, St Joseph's Grove, The Burroughs, Hendon NW4 4TY

Rosa is an active disability rights campaigner, a Patron of Acorn's Children Hospices, the Down Syndrome Educational Trust and Together for Short Lives. All are very welcome to attend this talk.

### **Senior Network meetings:**

Please encourage anyone who supports older people in your parish to attend the following events:

19th September - Seasons of Life – Living and Dying Well

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/640442018317](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/640442018317)

17th October (Hybrid) - Practical session on Will Writing & Power of Attorney (for people who support older people) [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/640460002107](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/640460002107)

31st October - Winter Welcome – intergenerational hospitality

[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/640451346217](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/640451346217)

21st November (Hybrid) - Practical session on Safeguarding for groups who support older people [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/640498657727](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/640498657727)