

Caring For Sick & Retired Priests

The needs of infirm and aged retired priests are the same as any elderly person without next of kin close-by, able to provide care for them, or those just preferring to live alone. Their needs are human and real. Whilst independent and many retired priests enjoy a new phase of life serving in new capacities and in heroic ways, continuing to apply their devotion and wisdom, others are frail – but all of them need our concern and attention. The Diocese of Westminster has a total of 72 sick and retired priests under care management (with other elderly retired priests not requiring care) who receive regular visits and with whom we actively communicate.

Growing in Faith monies have been used to cover the cost of direct care, where insurance and personal funds don't meet the needs, or to fund emergencies. Funds raised through Growing in Faith have also been dedicated to a master scheme designed to increase available accommodation for retired priests: single flats, the potential for multi-flat buildings, conversions of homes and former parish facilities into liveable spaces. Six such residential plans are in the works at present, which will provide housing for up to 10



retired priests. Our goal is to renovate, fit and open the first flat or two in 2016. There are more to come as the number of elderly priests eligible for retirement swells over the next decade.

CARITAS BAKHITA HOUSE – UPDATE!



In our last newsletter we brought you the good news that funds raised through *Growing in Faith* had provided the seed funding needed to purchase and renovate Caritas Bakhita House, which opened in June 2015. Since then, Bakhita House has been fulfilling its mission to provide emergency care for female victims of human trafficking, particularly those who have no access to public funds and who no one else will care for.

Since June 2015 over fifteen trafficked women have stayed at Bakhita House, including one young woman who, having escaped her traffickers, was rescued living on the streets and she later found out she was pregnant. She chose life and arrived at Bakhita House, where we are happy to announce she gave birth to a healthy baby girl during her stay.

All of these trafficked women have suffered unimaginable atrocities, such as sexual exploitation, domestic servitude or forced sham marriages, all the while hidden from public view and unable to access help. Bakhita House provides all these women with emotional, physical, spiritual and legal support, helping them on their journey to rebuild their lives. Bakhita House also works closely with the Metropolitan police, and with the help and support of Bakhita House staff, ten of the fifteen women are helping the police with their investigations.

Thanks to your generosity, Bakhita House was made possible, and for 2016 will continue in its mission to follow Pope Francis's call to 'liberate victims, rehabilitate the excluded and unmask the traffickers'.

For more information or with general enquiries, please contact:

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With questions about your particular gift or pledge account, please contact the Growing In Faith operations team at 020 7798 9099 or mathewdsouza@rcdow.org.uk

If you'd like to donate to other causes of the Diocese of Westminster, visit <http://www.rcdow.org.uk/donations/index.asp>.

Your support is always welcomed and appreciated!

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WE WISH YOU A HOLY CHRISTMAS!