

THE PASSAGE – A LENTEN JOURNEY

Please visit: www.passage.org.uk

Forty Years of The Passage a Lenten Journey
Day 1: Ash Wednesday 2021. Passage 1980/81.

The Passage today: Within these initials services the provision of food and drink were most prominent. Although we currently cannot have large numbers in the centre due to the pandemic, a year ago we would have provided up to 170 cooked lunches. Our chefs, Claudette and Nour, have together, with many dedicated volunteers, worked tirelessly to provide food to those using the centre for the last 21 years; over half of our years feeding the hungry.

As we enter Lent a period of prayer, fasting and almsgiving we start with a day of fasting and abstinence. It is appropriate today to think of the provision of food for our homeless brothers and sisters.

Heavenly Father we pray for all those who are poor and hungry. May we through prayer, fasting and almsgiving relive their hunger. Amen.

Forty Years of The Passage a Lenten Journey
Day 2: Thursday after Ash Wednesday. Passage 1981/82.

There were many key developments that took place in 1981/82 to ensure that more people could be provided with a wider level of care.

Some of the main issues faced by clients at the time were alcoholism, untreated epilepsy, mental illness, incontinence, tuberculosis foot problems and other ailments. The Passage clients still present with these issues today.

Foot problems are very common since stepping rough very often means walking around all night in harsh weather conditions, being moved on by the police and walking miles during the day due to the lack of money for fares.

The Passage today is blessed with a full medical team from the NHS including a podiatrist for a full day each week. Although she can treat foot problems, she cannot prescribe new shoes and socks.

For your Lenten sacrifice today can you contribute towards the cost of a new, clean pair of socks for a homeless person.

We pray for all those medical professionals engaged in caring for homeless people at home through organisations like The Passage and overseas where sometimes there is no Health Service for those without money. Bless their work O Lord. Amen.

Forty Years of The Passage a Lenten Journey
Day 3: Friday after Ash Wednesday. Passage 1982/83.

This 'year' causes a slight change. Our reports and accounts had been written up to 30 September until now. The Passage had been funded by donations and grants from private bodies. We had come to the attention of the Greater London Council and Ken Livingstone. In order to more easily fit in with GLC funding we moved our reports to 31st March drawing up a set of accounts for the six months to 31st March 1983 but without a narrative report.

As we continue our journey, will you think today of all the little things homeless people might need that the state might not provide? The return journey to visit a friend or relative, the phone call home to a foreign land, an interesting book or film to show during lockdown. Maybe not everything given is a strict necessity but how would we feel if our own lives were cut down to the bare essentials?

Heavenly Father we pray for a blessing on all those people who provide resources that make the work of The Passage possible. Amen.

Forty Years of The Passage a Lenten Journey
Day 4: Saturday after Ash Wednesday. Passage 1983/84.

The annual report for 1983/84 had taken on a new look with short pages on each area of the charity's work. This section was written by a Daughter of Charity, Sr. Angela, about the clothing store, which has always been an integral and essential service at The Passage.

... In March we finally moved into the luxury of new premises with a service hatch, changing area and separate storage space. We are already settled in and planning how we might expand. We may not be Harrods, but we reckon we take as much pride in serving our customers."

The provision of clothing has continued to be a vital part of our work. Many generous donors give us good quality outer garments which are very helpful.

Could your Lenten sacrifice today be to provide someone with the dignity of new underwear - something we all take for granted?

Heavenly Father we pray for all of those in need today. Help us to cast aside petty differences and trivial concerns in our own lives that we may come together to work for the alleviation of homelessness. Amen.