

Catholics for
AIDS Prevention
& Support

*2018 Newsletter
World AIDS Day
December 1st*



CAPS

CAPS

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CAPS

Catholics for AIDS Prevention & Support

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Objectives

We are a network of Christians in Britain and Ireland promoting HIV prevention and support.

We aim to be a voice in the church for people living with HIV/AIDS and a catholic voice in the world of HIV/AIDS.

To promote education and prevention, treatment, care and relevant pastoral ministry for all those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly but not exclusively in the UK and Ireland.

To promote the practical, financial, emotional, spiritual, sacramental and pastoral needs of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and to develop appropriate responses.

To promote continuing reflection on all aspects of ethical, theological, and other challenges raised by HIV/AIDS, not least issues of social justice, through publication, seminars, and other relevant means.

Vincent Manning

Chairperson's message

Discipleship and courage in action

If a boxer is said to be 'punching above his or her weight' it means that this boxer, by rights should not really even be in the ring, and once in the ring is not expected to survive the whole 12 rounds. That CAPS consistently 'punches above our weight' has been said of us by others, and we take it as a compliment. And, founded in 2003, we might say that we have just completed round 15! I am happy to boast on behalf of CAPS members that we have been punching above our weight again this year. I realise that this analogy is rather combative, and we are not in the business of fighting, even though HIV activism is sometimes talked about as a 'fight against HIV'. Rather, we are in the business of loving, so perhaps it is more fitting to say that our members and volunteers are still loving after all these years.

The lyrics to Mickey Newbury's song 'I still love you after all these years' made me ask: who it is that we love? Our peer support members and volunteers love each other in practical ways. They listen when a person needs to be heard and understood; they offer

comfort when tears flow; and they visit those who are sick in body or mind, and stay with them. And whilst people who love are always willing to share the suffering of others, they also share laughter and find time to dance and play. That joy persists in marginalised communities where 'struggle' and 'fight' appear the most appropriate words for the reality of people's lives, is a sign of Christ present. Why do the poor always have the best parties? Perhaps they have realised that 'the kingdom of God is among us' and that gives cause to thank God for all that life brings.

In Newbury's song the constancy of love received over time is celebrated: 'Patiently you've waited for so long. And you stood beside me... And through all of my confusion, You could hear the perfect song... And if at times I failed to understand, And appeared so distant and so cold, Well darlin' please forgive me...' It is within our fragile community that God's constant love for us is uncovered. It is Christ whom we discover loving us in CAPS' 'fellowship of the weak' and it is Christ whom we seek out and love in return. 'After all these years what more could I say. But the thought of you still takes my breath away. You are still the light that guides me... And I still love you after all these years'.



Sample Bidding Prayers for the Sunday before World AIDS Day (Dec 1st)

Prayer resources

Saturday December 1st marks the 31st annual World AIDS Day. Let us remember all those living with HIV and AIDS. We pray for all those infected or affected by HIV all over the world. We pray for the doctors, nurses, scientists and carers who work for healing in this devastating pandemic. We ask God to bless the work of CAFOD and Caritas International, who serve the poor in the name of the Church. We pray for all those involved in the 'Positive Catholics' HIV ministry here in the UK. May God fill all of us with compassion and solidarity.

As we mark World AIDS Day on December 1st, let us pray for all people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS throughout the world. Let us pray that God's justice and mercy will extend to all who suffer in this pandemic. Let us pray for doctors and nurses, and for all Christians who put God's love into action. We remember too, the ministry of Catholics for AIDS Prevention and Support, here in the UK, praying especially for the members of the Positive Catholics HIV peer support communities in Britain.

Vicki Morris

Children and Families living with HIV & Faith

On the occasion of the Royal Wedding, CHIVA – the children living with HIV charity – was nominated for donations in lieu of gifts by Prince Harry and Ms. Meghan Markle. Prior to their wedding CAPS delegates attended a very special CHIVA conference to show support for the work they do.

The second day of this year's CHIVA conference was the first one of its kind, and builds on previous work in the HIV sector of whole family 'systemic' work - A family conference. Normally a one-day professionals' conference, this second day was for young people living with HIV and their parents to share a space and collaborate.

The event was closed to professionals, outside those from the CHIVA committees, and co-hosts Metro Charity. CAPS was invited to attend because of the importance of faith to many families and young people participating. During the breaks we were able to talk to visitors to our stand about the opportunities to explore faith

and HIV, and gain peer support, through groups, retreats and the online resource 'Positive Faith'.

Much like any conferences, there was a mixture of lecture and workshop, open discussion and panels of experts. What was added to this formula was a crèche - enabling and encouraging parents of younger children to attend - and the inclusion, centre stage of those with lived experience.



Top: Prince Harry & Meghan Markle visit Nottingham for World AIDS Day 2017 (copyright www.royal.uk)
Bottom left: Abigail & Vicki at CHIVA Conference
Bottom Right: Vida at CHIVA Conference.



Learning from the presentations:

1 The work at CHIVA includes providing 'Freedom to be' support camps to help young people living with HIV to understand and talk confidently about HIV, to create peer support networks and socialise together in a safe space. 'Art is Key', is for young adults living with HIV, a project using music, drama, performance poetry to explore moving into adulthood.

2 Mother to child transmission of HIV has been reduced from 40% to less than 1% because of anti-retroviral viral treatment during pregnancy & delivery and for the baby (for the first four weeks); and by an approach whereby multi-disciplinary teams prioritise the mother's capacity to understand and manage her own health.

3 Transition into adult services for young people living with HIV is compounded by the complexity of developmental tasks for this age group. Issues around medication regimes, adherence and side effects were some of the main concerns from the young person's point of view "It is very important to understand that taking medication can be emotional for many young people" - "it's not just taking a pill". It is critical to convey empathy and appreciate the challenges of HIV medication adherence.

Learning from the workshops:

4 Young people caring within the home

For a child or young person, responsibilities within a home are fine, and norms will vary between cultures. But a young carer emerges when chores and family responsibilities affect their opportunities and mental health.

5 Family Communication around HIV at home

This workshop was very powerful, not least because the day before, the CHIVA Young Person Committee presented letters they had written to their parents that encapsulated the pain of the silence around HIV in their homes, and their yearning to communicate. They wanted their parents to come to terms with their HIV status before things could change. The facilitator, Nina, helped the two generations in the room, through simple exercises, to realise how hard, awkward, painful and emotional it is to talk about sex and relationships, let alone HIV. But the conversation ended up flowing and the listening ended up being impressive. Young people spoke about the impact of not talking about HIV in the home and the risks of letting it build up inside, and the number of different ways their parents overreacted to things, encouraging them to ask questions, and listen; and parents wanted it to be understood how hard their journeys have been, but also that they were grateful to be able to talk and listen openly like this. One parent said "I found the communication workshop very informative and important to me hearing what the children thought. I saw it as a way to move forward."

AIDS 2018 International Conference

Abigail

July 2018 was a very fascinating time for me. I attended the International AIDS conference as a CAPS delegate in Amsterdam. I did not know what to expect but I was very grateful and excited. I felt honoured and happy to represent CAPS because of what we stand for: A voice in the church for people living with HIV/AIDS and a catholic voice in the world of HIV/AIDS.

My first impressions at the conference centre were “whaaaw or OMG”. It looked well organized, well co-ordinated. Exhibitions and presentations from all over the world were housed in the ‘Global Village’ site, which was open to the general public. Sessions and training of a more academic point of view were on the other side. The venue was the huge RAI complex, about 30 minutes from where I was staying, with members of Amsterdam’s Sant Egidio Community.

Lots of activities were going on at the same time! I downloaded the

conference app so that I could plan what to attend each day. The first session I attended was entitled “Stand by our men” This was on how male-focused programs are strengthening HIV testing and contributing to improved treatment and prevention for men.

Mid-week, CAPS delegates showed ‘Positive Faith’ (PF) in the Global Village. We all participated in the presentation, which introduced our website ‘tool kit’ of PF short films and training materials. We hope that people will use them to enable conversations on HIV/AIDS within faith communities.

I learned that HIV/AIDS is still a global issue and everybody involved is working towards Awareness, Prevention and Care. What will stay with me is how education on HIV/AIDS can be taught to different communities in different ways. E.g. films, drama, theatre, face to face groups and so on.

The next thing for me to do is to continue to promote our PF tool kit, so that it is used in more faith communities.





Lazarus

It all started with my first trip aboard the Eurostar. Abigail and I got a very warm welcome from our hosts, members of St Egidio community that looks after marginalized people. I was really touched by their welcome and level of faith. They surprised me with their complete trust in strangers. They had planned a week away and so off they went. My only task was to look after their pets. This left a lasting impact on me. I hope I will be able to make someone share the same feelings I had through this act of trust and faith.

We hit the ground running! Our first meeting was at the WCC 'Faith Building Bridges Conference'. We had our turn to introduce our 'Positive Faith' tool kit. Many people were interested in our unique initiative. Next, over to the Catholic HIV/AIDS



Network Conference. There we heard presentations from around the world. We also presented 'Positive Faith' and opened dialogue on how other church groups could use the toolkit to educate members of their congregations about HIV in the light of faith.

At the main AIDS Conference, we attended sessions in the Main Hall. During "Stand by our man", we heard how African men often present very late for treatment, mainly due to macho attitudes and stigma. These men are amongst the hardest to reach communities in HIV prevention and treatment. In the 'Global Village' area we presented our Positive faith web-based faith tool kit again. I feel the presentation was quite successful. There was full participation from all team members.

Also at the Global Village film sessions were informative. They offered a



different take from the more 'formal' presentations in the main auditoriums. Two left a lasting impression: "Lucy Special" – about a young South African man in his struggle with TB and HIV infection. It ends when his fiancée encourages him, and helps to get medication for him. "Walk in our Moccasins" reminded me of the importance of spirituality. It tells a story about 'native Americans', living a marginalized existence, and the challenges of living with HIV. There is a good outcome when all 'go back to their roots' and find grounding in their communities, re-learning their native language and tracing their ancestry, right back to their maker. It really gave me a different take on faith in a non-Christian setting.

Horcelie

Before going to Amsterdam I was open

to hear anything and everything regarding governments' support to HIV/AIDS globally. It is sometimes better to hear these information first hand. Often I read about facts and how certain countries are leading to a world without AIDS. I wanted to know more about what strategies these countries have to ending AIDS or ensuring people living with HIV stay on treatment.

As a born-again Christian and a volunteer at CAPS, I wanted to hear what other faith based organisations understand the importance of spirituality and HIV. It was important

Far-left: Abigail at AIDS 2018 International Conference; Centre-left: SA Hosts Session in memory of Ms Prudence Mabele; top-right: Positive Action Dancers, AIDS2018



for me to have gained this knowledge and information with CAPS on Christians living with HIV. One can easily lose their faith in God and their personal relationship with God can go astray when being diagnosed. It is only through faith that we can see God change our lives and bring us closer to him. Our physical health impacts our spiritual being. Medication and treatment is very important despite what faith group one belongs to. CAPS encourages Christians living with HIV to stay on treatment and take this seriously; and understands that there are differences between cure and healing in Christian understanding. I wanted to hear what other faith groups' perspective is on this matter.

As we arrived in Amsterdam, we first attended the Faith conference(s). Christian/Catholic leaders gave an introduction to Faith groups objectives



for the conference. I became more and more eager when arriving at the faith conference. This is because I was taking information and advice from faith leaders from different parts of the world. One thing that stood out to me was the presentation of Fr. John Toal (Vietnam) who showed a video of children living with HIV and how they take their medication. It was amazing to see how they have created a routine to encourage each other to take their medication. We saw children as young as 5 years old and some younger queuing in a line waiting to be given their medication. Each had a different medication to take and different doses. One of the eldest children has the medication in front of her and she distribute them to the children in line. The children looked happy. Something that seems too difficult to do even at an older age (taking medication) has been made



simpler to do. This strategy works as we are seeing children staying on treatment and decreasing the chance of passing on HIV (U=U). To be reminded that you are healthy despite being HIV positive at such a young age is incredible! This was my highlight of the conference because it encouraged me to continue campaigning to end mother to child transmission in the Congo and new infections.

I was surprised by the lack of representation from African Countries. There was no one representing Congo. Nigeria has the second biggest epidemic in Africa, but there was only one or two organisations that I saw. Hopefully at the next conference there will be more African Countries represented. For my part, I will continue to push forward a conversation on HIV in the Congo. By gathering



Congolese people together they will gain a better understanding of HIV and why it is important to talk about global health. Health effects the economy of the Country and I hope to bring this message forward. For Christians living with HIV, I will continue to pray for their relationship with Christ Jesus and that they use their story as a testimony.

Top-left: CAPS AIDS 2018 Delegates Abigail, Vida and Horcelie with Fr, Marc Desmet, SJ at Catholic HIV Conference; Centre-left: Global Village AIDS Conference, Small Booth Workshop; centre-right: Faith - Building Bridges, AIDS2018; top-right: AIDS 2018 Poster.

Tyrone

When the opportunity arose to attend AIDS 2018 I wanted to go, in part to meet others living with HIV, and especially other Christians. I don't spend much time talking about what it is like to live with HIV, and I was interested to hear from others what their concerns are, what they hoped for and how they managed. I guess I was looking for inspiration.

I expected AIDS 2018 to be a much smaller event. It was on a scale at least twice as large as I had anticipated, and in many ways felt like a very 'corporate' event. It felt 'elitist' to me, and there was a sense that some people who were there were more important than others. The 'Global village' was full of interesting happenings and groups from around the world, and the public were welcome here at no cost; but it seemed to me that the 'really serious stuff' went on in the main Conference, and to get in there you needed money and connections.

As well as AIDS 2018, we attended the Interfaith and the Catholic HIV AIDS Network Conferences. What struck me forcefully was the realisation that amongst all the agencies, churches and faith groups represented at all

three conferences, our delegation was the only truly grass-roots Christian organisation that was there. Or so it seemed. CAPS did not send bishops or priests or Chief Executives to speak for us; CAPS asked me, and the other members of our group, to attend and be a Catholic voice in this great world of HIV, and that felt very empowering. I was very proud to be there representing CAPS, whilst very aware of my own position, still on the margins.

I had been pondering the whole question of being more open with others about the reality of my life for several months. At AIDS 2018 I heard and saw what so many people living with HIV are doing around the world; courageous people; unapologetically living with HIV and doing their best to make this world a better place for others. So, I found the inspiration I was seeking, and I return more confident and secure in my identity as a Christian man living with HIV.

Vida

I had high expectations about the AIDS 2018 conference, for the past 2 years I have campaigned and advocated around HIV/AIDS and to be in an environment where the focus and core

was around reducing stigma and highlighting achievement made by local, national and global charities and organisations was empowering. I wanted to attend the conference as I was very interested in understanding the impact the faith community and church played globally when it came to HIV. The conversation around HIV and faith in the UK is very vague and I was curious to see if there was more of a faith presence and effectiveness in other countries. The main highlight for me was meeting a young girl who is living with HIV from Ghana, hearing about all the work she does and how

young and active she is was inspiring and encouraging for the community in West Africa. AIDS 2018 was a great showcase in the diversity of people and the common union everyone had in making sure there was a fight against stigma and new infections. I have been greatly impacted and as a result will be doing my Masters in Nursing, to allow me to grow more in the understanding and skills of health promotion, so I will in the future be about not just to campaign but also focus around health promotion and faith.



John Thornhill

Wrestling with Angels

Twenty five years after it was first performed, Tony Kushner's epic eight-hour "fantasia on national themes" has enjoyed a spectacular revival. "Angels in America" is a visceral portrait of the AIDS crisis unfolding in the lives of individuals and communities in 1980s New York; intersecting with a hostile neoconservative reaction and heavy notes of Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic.

Part One of the play, entitled "The Millennium Approaches" opens with a world seemingly falling into crisis: a resurgent right in Reagan's America, a hole in the ozone layer and the opening years of the AIDS pandemic. And in this moment of crisis a terrifying messenger from Heaven reveals herself to a man called Prior Walter who is dying of AIDS. She announces to a reluctant Prior that he is Heaven's chosen prophet.

Part Two, entitled "Perestroika" takes the story through an unexpected exodus, as surprising and disquieting as the opening-up of the Communist Block. The millennium does indeed approach; but this is not "the end of the world as we know it"; nor are we

left "feeling fine". This epiphany leads to deliverance; but like so many "Heavenly" interventions, it raises more questions than it answers.

The story reaches a crisis when Prior Walter, worn out by his illness and irksome prophetic commission wrestles with his Angelic Visitor. Just like Jacob in the Book of Genesis, he demands a blessing: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me!" He commands. In spite of sickness, abandonment and loss, Prior Walter wants "more life."

The story concludes as a new decade begins. Prior "survives" and he and his friends are gathered in Central Park at the foot of the statue of the Angel Bethesda: an imposing eight-foot figure of a female Angel designed by Emma Stebbins, significantly the first woman to receive a major public art commission in New York.

"This angel" Prior says "She's my favourite angel. I like them best when they are statuary. They commemorate death but they suggest a world without dying. They are made of the heaviest things on earth, stone and iron, they weigh tons but they're winged, they are engines and instruments of flight."

Angels are a collection of contradictions.



They are emissaries from Heaven and bringers of Grace, yet so often associated with troubling tidings and troublesome tasks; hidden from and wrestled with. No wonder the first words of Angels in Jewish and Christian traditions are so very often "do not be afraid!"

And so we learn about the Angel Bethesda. In Jewish mythology, in the days of the Second Temple, the Angel Bethesda visited the Temple Square in Jerusalem; and where her foot touched the ground a healing spring appeared. This is the same pool which Jesus visited in the Gospel of John: "Now there is in Jerusalem near the

Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralysed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" (John 5: 2-6)

*Top: Angels in America
Part One by Uark Theatre*

The name of the Pool of the Angel Bethesda is derived from the Hebrew “Beth hesda” which means “House of Mercy” or “House of Grace.” However, in Hebrew the word can also mean “shame” or “disgrace”. This double meaning is very significant, because the Pool of the Angel Bethesda was seen as a place of “disgrace” because of the ancient association of sickness with shame and blame. But the Pool of the Angel Bethesda was also seen as a place of “Grace” because many people came there in search of healing; and in various ways, wholeness they received.

“Angels in America” is a play about struggles and “thresholds”: those boundary moments we resist with all of our life, when the world of our living seems to open up onto the world of our dying. Sickness, trauma, brokenness and crises take us to threshold places. In these thin, disorientating spaces we are confronted with deep, soulful archetypes: inhabited by ancestors, anxieties, Angels and Apocalypse.

“Angels in America” also lays before us the impossible contradictions inherent in the stories we tell one another about sickness and death: there is shame and there is Grace, there is denial, there is dying; and there is also

a hunger for life and there is life. In another story from the Gospel of John, the Apostles encounter a man who was born blind and they ask Jesus “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (John 9:2) Jesus answer is shocking and incredible: “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened that the works of God would be displayed in him” (John 9:3).

Similarly, the “disgraced” man who sat beside the Pool of the Angel Bethesda for thirty-eight years is also the spectacular recipient of “Grace” and his “shame” becomes the conduit for a radical reorientation of values. The religious establishment of Jesus’ day are challenged, their moral surety confronted, their religious world-view over-turned. How can there be blessing in shame? How can there be life in death? No wonder they reject the man who has been healed and no wonder they reject the confusing “prophet” from Nazareth.

HIV and AIDS has taken us into difficult threshold places also. Believers are confused by the silence of God and the inhumanity of many churches. Humanity is challenged by the stigmatisation of the sick, shattered relationships, and futures robbed.



But this threshold place has also delivered some troubling redemptions: an overwhelming outpouring of compassion and generosity, love which transcends the boundaries of kith and kin; and in the lives of many individuals touched by HIV and AIDS a rediscovery of the intrinsic value in their life and, audacious hope. And in the face of sickness and sometimes death, a unyielding passion for more life.

Perhaps in difficult threshold moments, when our certainties about life are overwhelmed by disappointment and confusion, when we are beset by the anarchy of our religious imagination; when our convenient religious fictions

are no longer fit for purpose; perhaps the only response we can make is to “wrestle” that spectacular mystery which is personified by the Angels. Just like Jacob in the Book of Genesis, and just like Walter in “Angels in America”, perhaps we too should demand our blessing: “I will not let thee go except thou bless me!” And in that wrestling maybe then we too can be surprised by the abundance of Grace.

*Top: Angels in America
Part Two by Uark Theatre*

Vincent Manning

HIV diagnosis : A Gethsemane experience

I want to share some thoughts on how we might understand the experience of an HIV diagnosis as a kind of Passion experience. For those who may not know, when we speak of ‘The Passion’ in Christian terms, we are referring to the experience that Jesus had which begins after the last supper, when He and the disciples made their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus prayed, and was arrested. He was brought before the authorities and put on trial. As we know, He was condemned to death. He carried his own cross to Golgotha, outside the city walls, the place of execution, and was crucified. This is what we mean by The Passion of Christ.

Before describing some of the ways in which the experience of HIV diagnosis parallels the Passion of Christ, I want to make a brief point about why I think it is important to do so, and how the generally accepted Public Health Message (PH) that HIV is a ‘manageable illness’, and no longer the terrible disease that it once was, unintentionally creates a situation within which HIV diagnosis, as a kind of ‘passion experience’ is accentuated. In particular

I will argue that mainstream PH messages about HIV can increase the suffering that comes with an HIV diagnosis.

The dominant PH message around HIV is that HIV is now ‘manageable’, and that any person diagnosed with HIV can expect to live a more or less healthy life, if they take the medication. The reasons for this message are twofold: It attempts to normalise HIV as a health condition like any other so that stigma is reduced and those living with HIV will not be treated unfairly by others; and secondly it is intended to combat the ignorance and the fears that used to (and still do) attach to HIV, including the attitudes that ‘others’ HIV; meaning: HIV is not something that affects ‘people like me’. This fear, ‘othering’ and ignorance allows people to avoid HIV testing. In short, it is something we fear to confront, and assuming it cannot affect us is reassuring. Consequently, some people living with HIV remain unaware of their status. The PH message is intended to reduce our fears and normalise HIV testing, and therefore the number of late stage diagnosis will decrease, and fewer new infections will happen because a person is unaware of their status.

So, there are very good reasons for this PH message on HIV, and as a PH campaign it can be said to have been quite successful, because lots of people,

if asked, will agree that ‘things are much better now’ and after all ‘HIV is just a virus’. However it may be too simplistic. In terms of HIV education, is it overly reassuring? Might it lead to a kind of complacency? And more importantly from a spiritual and pastoral point of view, I would argue that in regard to individual experience, it tends to dismiss the feelings of the person living with HIV, and it minimises the physical, psychological, social and spiritual challenges that they may face.

Let us consider the experience of an HIV diagnosis through the lens of ‘passionist spirituality’. The Passion of Christ refers to the extreme suffering Jesus endured in the last hours of his life. It begins in a Garden called Gethsemane and ends at a place of exclusion and shame called Golgotha, where he was Crucified and died. Passionist spirituality recognises that the Passion of Christ is not just this historical event, recorded in Scripture, but continues in the world today through the bodies of women and men at sites of suffering. I will consider how an HIV diagnosis can be thought of as a kind of ‘Gethsemane experience’. I will point to 3 similarities between being diagnosed with HIV today, and the experience of Jesus and the disciples at Gethsemane.

The first point is that HIV diagnosis remains a life changing event, which

is always shocking. In his book ‘Love Undetectable’ Andrew Sullivan sums up this contrast time before and after HIV diagnosis: “I walked into my doctor’s office and my life was changed for good. The news of my HIV infection was the last thing I expected, and the first thing I feared.” In CAPS ‘Positive Faith’ films, Cate talks about how her diagnosis hit her like a ‘ton of bricks’; and from interviews that I have conducted, Paul recalls it was “..like a bomb that hit the ground and didn’t go off straight away” but “altered everything.” Even when a person might anticipate that the HIV test result will come back positive, it is always a life-shock¹.

An HIV diagnosis interrupts life and incurs losses of health, probably relationships, and hopes for the future. Whatever narratives of past, present and future that made sense of a person’s life, are thrown into turmoil. I know of no-one who has not experienced a state of intense emotional distress following diagnosis. Suddenly they find themselves in this place of fearful confusion, forced to confront a new hard reality that cannot be denied. A reality so feared, it was too difficult to imagine: Literally, inconceivable until unavoidably real. This mirrors the experience of Jesus in

¹Cate had a partner who she knew was HIV positive. Paul was haemophiliac and was aware of HIV in the press and news reports at the time before his own diagnosis.

Gethsemane. Jesus had predicted his Passion and death, nevertheless the realisation of the suffering to come hit him too, like a ton of bricks. In his humanity he wrestled with the full implications of it all. Luke tells us that his agony was such that the sweat dripped from him like drops of blood to the ground². Henri Nouwen says that in those moments “Jesus couldn’t face it. Too much pain to hold, too much suffering to embrace, too much agony to live through.” Jesus was surely feeling overwhelmed. Nowhere else in the Gospels do we see Him described in such a state of absolute distress. His fraught prayer to God his father that ‘the hour might pass and this cup be taken away’³ reflects the desperation felt when the phrase ‘HIV positive’ can no longer be avoided.

Secondly. There is a difference between pain and the life-changing suffering that Simone Weil has called ‘Affliction’. To qualify as affliction, three aspects of suffering powerfully combine: The physical with the psychological-spiritual and the social. Physical pain alone “leaves no trace in the soul” says Weil. The experience of HIV qualifies as affliction, as these dimensions of suffering are combined, and because “affliction compels us to recognise as real what we do not think possible” she writes. Affliction takes a person beyond lesser suffering and can never be forgotten. Affliction is what Christ

endured in his Passion experience from Gethsemane to crucifixion.

The initial suffering of HIV diagnosis changes a person in aspects of identity, relationality and meaning and is never forgotten in the way that temporary pain is. It stays with the person, literally re-membered in the mind and body. It is re-membered in social contexts for the rest of the person’s life, not least because the virus in the body never goes away. The complexity of disclosure, ensures that HIV is always re-membered and present, whether spoken or in silence, in the wider social contexts to which the person belongs. The potential for and re-membered consequences of painful experience, remain actually present whenever a person living with HIV is with others, be that in bed with a lover, in a bar full of strangers, at the family table, the workplace, or the church. HIV is re-membered in the person, never not-known by them, even when hidden from others. It is ever present. And, so, the suffering of Gethsemane is always potentially re-membered too, the distress and pain of it easily triggered and relived.

Finally, the Gethsemane experience for Jesus’ friends was also shocking and bewildering. Jesus had warned his disciples that ‘they will all be scandalised’. He had told them that he would face crucifixion, but they had not believed him.

It takes some leap of modern imagination to bring back to mind just how shaming crucifixion was. The cross or crucifix hangs in churches and other public settings. Rowan Williams suggests that it might be better appreciated as a sign of humiliation, disgrace and suffering if instead of a cross an electric chair or a guillotine was the image that greeted those who entered a church. The cross has become a familiar symbol of religiosity and respectability, so that one might forget how shocking and disgusting the symbol of crucifixion once was. As Fleming Rutledge has put it “..we can scarcely imagine it as an object of shame and scandal unless it is burned on someone’s lawn.”

In Roman and Jewish society the very idea of crucifixion was utterly obscene, usually reserved for slaves and the most serious and despised of all criminals. It was the most shameful death a person could suffer. Beyond the agony of hanging for hours or days, or the physical pain of nails driven through the body, shame was what it most terrifyingly conveyed. Crucifixion was not just a painful bodily death it was the final act in a shameful life. The crucified person’s suffering was intensified by this absolute humiliation and indignity even in death. More than death alone, it was the prospect of such public shame that struck terror into any who witnessed it.

Notwithstanding the PH messages that ‘HIV is just a virus’, which seeks to normalise HIV as a health condition just like any other, from experience, I would argue that the stigma attached to HIV mirrors the stigma of the Cross. The plus sign of ‘HIV+’ on medical notes next to the name of any person diagnosed is written as a cross. For each of them, this HIV-cross impacts with overwhelming force in their gethsemane of diagnosis, and it too signifies shame. As the scandal of the Cross of Jesus was for the disciples, this cross of HIV diagnosis is both unwelcome and unexpected. Anyone living with HIV will be forever more associated with this cross, and at the time of diagnosis they too are scandalised under the curse of it.

At gethsemane the dawning realisation of the scandal of the Cross caused the disciples to run away and abandon Jesus. For the person who is diagnosed today, there is no running away from the cross and scandal of HIV. The question is how might they be helped to carry this cross? Will they also be abandoned as Jesus was? Or might we accompany them, as though they are Christ himself who comes to us and asks us to stay awake?

² Lk.22:44

³ Mk.14:35-36; Mt.26:39-44

Pastoral and Peer Support Section

In this section we offer just a few examples of pastoral support from the past year. There is not space to re-tell every story, but these give an indication of some of the ways in which our members have supported others through the peer support group networks; and through CAPS 'centrally' as a Catholic point of reference. Some details are 'composites' and names have been changed for reasons of confidentiality. These few examples show how we attend to individuals living with HIV, and support the medical profession in their roles of care and support.

Patient whose pastor told her 'Don't take your medication'

We received a call for help from a HIV nurse at a clinic in the Midlands. She had a challenge because she did not know quite how to help her patient 'Sara' who was refusing to take her medication. Sara was adamant, that following the instructions of her Pastor, she need not take the ARVs because her faith would ensure that God would cure her. We were able to communicate with the nurse, and direct her to our Positive Faith videos 'Living with HIV' series, and particularly to the two films that address the matters of faith healing and the importance of taking the medication, specifically. In this way the nurse was able to sit with Sara, and hopefully, she will have realised that taking her medication is a way to receive God's gift of healing and strengthening in her life. Although the nurse may not have been able to counteract the false authority of Sara's Pastor on her own, we trust that listening to other people with faith explain why the medicine is God's gift to us will have helped her take an important step towards her physical recovery from HIV infection. This is one of the exact applications – namely supporting clinical staff in their roles of nursing and medical care - that we had in mind for our Positive Faith resource. Thanks be to God!

How can I help those who I support on issues to do with condoms?

CAPS office received the following inquiry from East Asia:
'I am a Catholic priest supporting several PLWH. I am uncertain how to help them address the question of condom use. Do you have any resources that would support someone like me in my role, as I accompany PLWH who need to think about these issues in their own lives? As we know, the Church officially still disapproves of

condoms, etc. It would be good to have Catholic resources that help us navigate this dilemma'

In response we were able to offer guidance that would help this priest to think through a pastoral response. We directed him to 'Positive Faith', and in correspondence we discussed the issues as they impact on PLWH. We sent several articles from theologians and others that unpack the issue from a moral-theological-doctrinal position. This is the last response from the priest:

'Dear friends, Pax et bonum! Thank you very much for your amazing help. Here's to hoping that we understand that Bishops are not medical doctors. Let's listen to medical doctors when it comes to health matters such as HIV/AIDS. Keep up the good work. God bless you more!'

From CAPS South West London fellowship peer support group

A female in her forties joined the group. 'Miriam' had complex issues both in health and in her social life. Our friends Dave and Rachael joined the group for a quiz night. Not only did they conduct a quiz, Dave did a mini surgery to help members with outstanding issues. (Dave is a social worker by profession). One person got help on how to appeal their benefits assessment and 'Miriam' received advice on how to begin to address the complicated issues pertaining to housing and her leave to remain in this country. Lastly Dave and Racheal donated clothes to the group members. 11 members attended the meeting that day.

Feedback from the annual Douai Retreat

'The Douai Retreat was a well needed get away from everyday life. We had a chance to reflect and share with each other about the journey living with HIV. It also gave us an opportunity to share our healing experiences. It was such a beneficial experience.'

'I came with two problems that I wanted to address. I didn't sort them out, but I came away with an inner peace that I haven't felt in years. So, thank you.'

'Thank you for looking after me and helping me to find my feet on my first retreat... thank you for the chat we had. It gave me some ideas that I can work on'

'Thank you so much for a wonderful weekend. I really enjoyed it and came away feeling at peace with my situation. God bless you all and all that you do.'

An email reply to a person newly diagnosed

‘It is very normal to feel upset ‘Jonny’. You have had a big shock. This was not what you were expecting. I want to encourage you to remember that this time will pass, and you will adjust. Your life can get back on track, and you can live well and healthily. You might also find our short videos made by our members to offer support online at <http://www.positivefaith.net/living-with-hiv.html> One of the videos is called ‘Prayer- God of Love’. We have been taught to pray when we are feeling distressed. I want to encourage you to pray at this time. God is with you. Jesus will never abandon you. In time Jonny, this too will pass. However you will need some support. You will be very welcome when you join us at our upcoming Positive Catholics meeting. We begin with about 20 minutes of quiet prayer together; followed by a time of sharing; then we have a hot meal together The members are always accepting and welcoming. We are gay and straight from all backgrounds. I will be there so at least we have made contact and you will know someone already. It is very important that you find some support. And use your smarts - So try to eat properly. When we are hungry we feel less well. The sooner you go for support the sooner you will find the strength to carry on and the pain will become less. You have made a good start - so please continue now. In time you will make new friends within the Positive Catholics group and get to know others, and things will get better.

I know that THT are running a newly diagnosed group as well. These don’t run all the time but there is one running now, which is fortunate and a good opportunity not to be missed. I know it takes some courage to attend a group for the first time, but it can make all the difference.’

Jonny attended his first Positive Catholics meeting just before Christmas in 2017. He has joined again once, since then. We hope he will return. We are patient, because we understand that the journey is often difficult.

Correspondence following an inquiry from a Parish Priest

‘I have recently come across your literature and have been looking at your website. I am interested in finding out more about your organisation and whether you have other links in/around this city. I am parish priest of the largest parish within the area. We have a wide range of ethnic representation within the city and there is also a very heavy drug culture. In recent years I have thought about faith based

outreach/support for those living with HIV, but since my move here I find my thoughts on the subject becoming more frequent. I have made your leaflet and poster available at the back of my churches and was wondering what, if any, guidance you can give me for anyone who may approach the pastoral team in the future; especially how we may support anyone within our parish who has been diagnosed with HIV.’

CAPS reply: Dear Fr. ‘Bob’

Thank you so much for your inquiry. We are always pleased when our leaflets left in churches and other places do get noticed and read. Thank you for displaying information in your church(es) and hopefully you will have found a suitable place for the ‘All Are Welcome’ card that is on the back of our newsletters. Although total numbers of people diagnosed with HIV in your area are relatively low, compared with the UK as a whole, many of those living with HIV will be in cities like yours. In any case each person deserves our care and concern, and those living in areas with lower HIV prevalence are also often the most isolated and neglected. I will try to respond as best as I can and hope that we will be able to work with you, in some way or other, going forward.

Thanks from an HIV Clinic practitioner

‘Thank you so very much for your emails and time you have taken to suggest the useful resources. I will suggest the annual weekend retreat to some of our patients for next year –and I greatly appreciate your financial assistance offer with transport/retreat for those who need it. I will make a resource folder now – Religion+ HIV – for our clinic, with the resources you have provided, as they are much needed. I wonder whether you might be available to come to our clinic sometime in the near future, to talk with the nursing /medical staff within our clinic to share experiences about HIV/ non adherence to ARVs and how to help people. Any suggestions are greatly welcome on how to tackle this sensitive subject. We advocate that Prayer and Medications are more powerful when used together.’

**For resources, please visit www.positivefaith.net
Positive Faith is an open access internet
resource developed by CAPS.**



Vincent Manning

In Gratitude for the lives of...

Several friends and supporters of CAPS have died this year. Remembering those who have helped us all to understand what a Christian response should be is important. These are people who have embodied a Christ-like response to HIV in their different ways.

Rev. Kevin Kelly

27th June 1933 – 25th Sept. 2018

by Cate Jacobs

As I sit to write this I am looking at a photo montage of my 50th birthday celebration. It was quite a night, not least because some few months before I'd had been really ill with pneumonia! I had to rest all day to even be able to go to my own party – it was a beautiful evening with all my family and my dearest friends, and among them the most unlikely guest who gently made his way round everyone, saying hello

and gathering stories, sipping occasionally from a glass of beer. You would've been forgiven for thinking he was my dad but in fact it was Father Kevin Kelly.

I first met Kevin at WAD 2008, I don't remember the conversation, but I remember thinking what an unassumingly astonishing man he was. Here was a priest openly and passionately

supporting the work and world of HIV! Over the years we became good friends – I was a regular visitor at his flat where the kettle was always as warm as the welcome and invariably there was cake in the cupboard too. He was a great listener and I soon learnt that nothing phased him. He would hear your story with compassion and acceptance and always had some wisdom to share. His perspective and perception of the world was truly Christlike, and I learnt much from him. He made a difference in the world, in my world and I will miss him enormously.

The evening before his funeral I went to his vigil mass – I was overwhelmed to see everyone in a packed church wearing a red ribbon! It felt like an acclamation of such an important part of his life's work and for me as an HIV+ve woman, as his friend...well there aren't really words. Even here, at the moment of his leaving, he was still raising awareness!

As I went forward for communion, I touched the edge of his coffin and gave thanks to God for men like him, for priests like him. And as I received the bread and the wine I felt the familiar pull of love in my heart that calls me deeper into faith.

I couldn't go to his funeral the day after because I was having a conversation

with the Bishop about ordination – the irony wasn't lost on me – metaphorically he was stepping out of his shoes as I am stepping into them and without his influence and encouragement I would never have stepped there at all.

He was a great man gently and I am left wondering who was it that truly walked among us?

Father Bill Kirkpatrick

16 June 1927 - 4 January 2018

by Martin Pendergast

Fr. Bill Kirkpatrick, a non-stipendiary Anglican priest, died on 4 January 2018 after living with dementia for ten years, an end, which he had dreaded, to an extraordinary life.

Canadian-born, his early years were considerably vulnerable, barely knowing who he was. A month old, he was placed in a private orphanage, taking its name as his surname. He left school aged 15 and worked in an elderly-care home, coming to England six years later. He found work in Selfridges Department Store and Foyle's Bookshop. Airstewarding followed until he trained as a psychiatric nurse.

His own vulnerabilities and later psychiatric training enabled him to have

great empathy for those with all sorts of practical, emotional and spiritual needs. Bill's life was marked by sporadic, stressful breakdowns. It was after one of these in 1965 that he was baptised, confirmed, and later accepted for ordination training, being priested in 1970, becoming a worker-priest nurse at East London's St. Clement's Hospital. His spirituality was influenced by the writings of Charles de Foucauld, Thomas Merton, Franciscan poverty and fraternity. He had close links with the Anglican Sisters of the Love of God at Fairacres, Oxford who were inspired by the Carmelite contemplative tradition.

It was as a Roman Catholic Carmelite that I first met Fr. Bill in 1973, pondering with him whether a worker-priest ministry might be possible in a Catholic context. Living in a tiny bed-sit above St. Anne's Church, Soho, here was a prophetic, contemplative-in-the-City Anglican priest, working at the recently-founded Centrepoint with young homeless people.

Four years were spent with the Society of St. Francis but Bill was first to admit that he was too much a city-bound loner to fit into religious community life. Returning to London in 1978 as a non-stipendiary Assistant Priest at St. Cuthbert's, Philbeach Gardens, he found

a new vocation wandering parish streets, starting Reaching Out. Bill described this as "a small cell of contemplative action within the Earls Court area ... allowing for a ministry of sharing from within the sacredness of each other's vulnerabilities and strengths where there is no 'them' and 'us'."

Building on Centrepoint and Earls Court's street experiences, he began Streetwise Youth along with his later partner of twenty years, Richie McMullen, working with male sex-workers, many only 16-18 and younger; Bill had been particularly shocked by the murder of a fifteen-year-old boy who 'worked' the area. It was during these years that AIDS and HIV was recognised, and Bill was one of the first to see that the co-factors were not promiscuity, irresponsible behaviour, or belonging to 'risk-groups', but stigma, oppression, poverty and lack of sexual health education.

Bill was one of the first to coin "AFRAIDS" - irrational fear of AIDS - as he saw "the Church institution very fearful of the HIV virus that it carries in its brothers and sisters. This fear leads to a judgemental and rejecting attitude as it continues to be unwilling to be alongside those who mirror its own weaknesses and its own vulnerability. It also highlights the fact

that the Church seems to be living in fear of different sexual orientations, preventing it from recognising and acceding relationships which are co-creative of the pair, excluding them from the mystery of loving each other physically, mentally, socially and spiritually."

In those early 1980's, people from mainly Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches joined to challenge the ecclesiastical structural sin of AIDS-phobia. Bill was one of the first priests to throw himself into visiting the sick and burying the dead, when no one else would. Bill, with Fr. David Randall, Bro. Colin Wilfrid SSF, Revd. Malcolm Johnson, Revd. Richard Kirker, Sr. Eva Heymann SHCJ, Charles O'Byrne, myself and others, tried to show Churches how it was possible to live positively with HIV & AIDS. Bill was later to offer us an invaluable resource in his 1993 book, AIDS: Sharing the Pain.

His was a spirituality of 'being there', marked by a profoundly contemplative stance, present to "the Mystery". I hardly ever heard him talk of God, the Almighty or the divine - it was always simply falling down before "the Mystery", and one became acutely aware of this when he prayed publicly, or celebrated the Eucharist.

'Being there' "... puts me into deeper awareness of my innermost self, my contemplative self alongside my active self, my most vulnerable and valuable self, where I have been and still am being faced with the ultimate questions about life and perhaps more importantly about dying and death."

Quotations from: A Contemplative in the City, Fr. Bill Kirkpatrick 1994 issue, Vol.1 No.2
<http://www.thomasmertonsociety.org/Journal/01/1-2Kirkpatrick.pdf>

Rev. Raphael Appleby, OSB.

18th July 1931 – 24th June 2018

Dom Raphael Appleby died after a long illness. He was a monk of Downside Abbey. In the 1990s, he enabled people living with HIV to have space and time for reflection and prayer together on retreat weekends at Downside. Since 'Positive Catholics' began in 2004, Raphael often supported individuals and celebrated the sacraments with our members who continued to meet at Downside's Bainesbury House. He was a great encourager and supporter of CAPS. He gently accompanied many of our members and embodied the virtue of Benedictine humility in his manner

with others. He is remembered by us as a wise guide, and a good example of what it means to be a servant-priest for those who are neglected and marginalised. May he rest in peace.

Brian Armstrong

26 April 1944 – 26 Jan. 2018

Brian offered a constant welcome to 'regulars' and newcomers at the Masses for LGBT Catholics held at Farm Street Jesuit Parish in Mayfair. As a young man he had moved from his native Yorkshire to London, in search of a place where his gay sexuality might be more acceptable. His Christian faith was always important. He never lost touch with his deep northern Baptist roots. His faith was nourished by early involvement in the Lesbian & Gay Christian Movement. He also attended Bloomsbury Baptist Church where he is remembered with great affection. He found the acceptance and love he sought in his relationship with Philip – their partnership was blessed some years ago. Brian started attending Masses for LGBT Catholics when they were held at St. Anne's Anglican Church, Soho, and then at the Church of the Assumption, Warwick Street, from 2003-2007. It was during this time that he was elected to the LGBT Catholics

Westminster Pastoral Council. Amongst other ministry, if you had a cake after Mass, it was very likely that Brian had baked it.

Brian never forgot the many friends he lost due to HIV, and he worked constantly to support PLWH today. In the title sequence of CAPS 'Positive Faith' videos Brian can be seen attending our 2014 Conference at St. Martin's in the Fields. His red shirt bears the slogan 'HIV is Still Here and So Are We'. His support and advocacy for the Mildmay HIV charity was legendary – the Lord Mayor of London gave him Mildmay's long standing volunteer award in 2016. Brian was also one of the main facilitators for the Mass to mark World AIDS Day held by the Catholic LGBT community each year. He was a proud and truly kind man, with a generous heart and a strong faith. Brian had a sparkle in his eyes and a very warm smile. He kept the memory and meaning of the AIDS years alive, and his remembrance of the past compelled him to care for those living with HIV today. He will be missed by so many people.

Alan Hawkins

(1942-2018)

Alan (pictured right) was a great supporter of CAPS. He died earlier this year after a short illness. In his memory we share some of his words on Peace. We thank God for his life and Gospel witness.

'Pax vobiscum', by Alan Hawkins, from We Will Seek Peace and Pursue It (Wild Goose Publications)

*Let peace fill our lives, our world, our universe.
Peace, peace, peace ...*

(From the Universal Prayer for Peace, said daily by Iona Community members)

Just about everybody I know is not at peace and strives for it. So many people wake in the night disturbed by an uneasy mind, worrying about issues which, in the broad light of day, often dissolve.

For many years I have believed that it is better to live with one's worries: just accept them as a part of life. As sure as eggs is eggs, as soon as you resolve a worry or angst another one comes along to take its place. It is human nature to not be at peace. It is how we live with this, cope with it that is important.

I expect you, like me, can think of individuals, a very few, whom we have met or still know whom we see as people at peace ... it quietly radiates from them. What have they got which most don't?

I had a job doing electrical work which took me into people's homes, all manner of homes: the very wealthy, the very poor. One family which stands out in my memory were living with the bare essentials of life – no carpets, no electronic gear, no ornaments – yet they oozed contentedness. It flowed from them. They weren't simple people but they lived simple lives, appearing to crave for nothing. They were very happy with what they had and thanked God for every blessing. They made the most of every minute and everything.



CAPS News Items

CAPS Supports International Research Project

by **Dr Emily Jay Nicholls**
(Goldsmiths University of London)

‘Disentangling European HIV/AIDS Policies: Activism, Citizenship and Health’ (EUROPACH) is a Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) funded project under a collaborative network of universities in the UK, Germany, Poland and Switzerland. It is concerned with how histories of HIV are mobilised in current policy and activism. The project will result in the establishment of a European Archive of HIV, including video-recorded interviews with people who have been involved in HIV policy and activism.

I have been attempting to record and analyse the history of HIV in order to understand how this history has impacted on the current response. This has introduced me to people who have engaged with HIV in various ways. I have come into contact with people involved in non-governmental organisations, statutory agencies and clinical practice and engaged with topics such as the histories of antiretroviral medications, the criminalisation of HIV transmission,

the histories of HIV prevention, and the experiences and activism of women living with HIV.

Curious about religious responses to HIV in the UK, I contacted CAPS. After speaking with Chair Vincent Manning, and other activists he put me in touch with, it became clear that including accounts of the Catholic response to HIV would be important in order to ensure that these histories were available to researchers in the future. In many accounts of the history of HIV, there is little mention of the work of faith groups and where they are mentioned, this is rarely in a manner which is reflective of the kinds of support and activity which I have had the privilege of hearing about during the course of the research. There is clearly much that can be learned from the experiences of people involved in church based activism. Thank you for your help in ensuring that these histories are preserved.

The archive will launch in September 2019 and will be available online. To read more about the project, please visit us at www.europach.eu. You can also e-mail me at e.nicholls@gold.ac.uk

Positive Faith on the road

Since the launch last year of CAPS innovative Public Health England



funded online resource ‘Positive Faith’ there has been a steady flow of visitors to the website. CAPS volunteers have run introductory workshops at St. Anne’s Church, Soho and St. Martin’s Church, Epsom. We have received funding for a further three workshops to be conducted in 2019. (See ‘Reflections’ by John Padwick overleaf). The short films have also been used to help clinicians support their patients (see Patient

whose pastor told her ‘Don’t take your medication’ p.26 in this issue).

Top: Screening of Positive Faith film at St. Annes's Soho, Left: Positive Faith at St. Martin's Epsom, Right: Positive Faith Posters.

Reflections on a recent presentation by members of CAPS

by **John Padwick – Lay minister,
Diocese of Guildford**

A month ago Vincent, Abigail and Lazarus visited our Anglican church of St Martin's in Epsom for an evening presentation. It's a well-off and well-educated church, which as a community has probably never thought about the continuing challenges of HIV and AIDS in the UK, especially to the church. As the lay minister responsible for organizing the meeting I was quite uncertain how we would respond. In the event 15 people came, the majority lay or ordained ministers or health professionals. Vincent gave a general introduction, we watched the short film 'Why is HIV an issue for Christians?', and Abigail and Lazarus from the South West London Fellowship shared their experiences. The need for positive Christians to be able to draw affirmation and encouragement from the resources of their faith as well as from the state caring professions emerged clearly, and how in turn positive Christians can – and in this meeting did – strengthen others. We closed with a shortened form of Evening Prayer gathering up some of our concerns, emotions, and hopes. Nothing remarkable about that – but everyone experienced the evening as

deeply moving. Most of us including myself had thought HIV was an issue we had dealt with twenty years ago. The presentation brought the challenge up-to-date and obliged us to think deeply about our calling as Christians. The dignity and sensitivity the presenters showed in speaking of their own experiences enabled the rest of us to share more deeply and openly than we have done for a long time. A visiting Church of Scotland minister said afterwards that it was the best church meeting he had attended for many years. In the parish ministry team meeting that took place the next day, we found ourselves asking how we can be more sensitive and welcoming to those in our own church or in the wider community who feel themselves cut off, alienated, or on the edge. Thank you, Vincent, Abigail, and Lazarus – you have not only made us aware of the needs of people living with HIV



in the community but challenged us to search our own hearts for a response.

**CAPS New Patron – Bishop
Christopher Chessun**

Trustees are grateful that the Anglican Bishop of Southwark, Rt. Rev. Christopher Chessun agreed to become our Patron after meeting with our Chairperson and being involved with the launch event for Positive Faith last year. As Southwark diocese remains the location with the largest resident number of PLWH in the country, it is right that the Bishop of this area shows solidarity and expresses the concern of the Church.

CAPS Chair attends CARITAS Leadership training week in Rome

The first ever CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network - England & Wales) week long gathering for member agencies was held in Rome last September. CAPS Chair, Vincent Manning joined around 50 leaders of Catholic Charities and Diocesan Caritas Directors to talk about Catholic Social Teaching and its application. The week included

*Left: CAPS Chair, Vincent Manning,
Ambassador Sally Axworthy & David Livesey;
Top: CSAN members at the Vatican; Bottom:
CSAN members at Ambassadors' residence.*



workshops and break-out sessions where the challenges of making the Gospel actually effective and relevant in response to the many social challenges in society today were discussed. The trip also included a visit to St. Peter's Basilica and Mass with the Bishops of England and Wales at the (much more beautiful) St. Paul's outside the walls. Charity leaders also visited the International HQ of Caritas and met with officials from the 'Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development' and enjoyed a wonderful lunch with the UK Ambassador to the Vatican Sally Axworthy. Chair Vincent Manning said that the highlight of the trip for him was the visit to the Sant Egidio community, also in Rome.

International & ecumenical coverage of Positive Faith

Positive Faith has received coverage internationally since the launch in October 2017. We recommend these articles available online:

- *How a new Catholic resource is serving those living with H.I.V./ AIDS in Britain* by D. Stewart SJ (in *America: The Jesuit Review*)

<https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/11/21/how-new-catholic-resource-serving-those-living-hiv-aids-britain>

- *HIV & the Body of Christ* by V. Manning (in *Thinking Faith*)

<https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/hiv-and-body-christ>

- *Films open up the lives of Christians affected by HIV* by Hattie Williams (in *The Church Times*)

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2017/6-october/news/uk/films-open-up-the-lives-of-people-affect-by-hiv>

- *The Body of Christ still has HIV. It's time to talk* by Jim McManus (in *The Pastoral Review*)

<https://www.thepastoralreview.org/index.php/issues/current-issue/1526-the-body-of-christ-still-has-hiv-it-s-time-to-talk>

- *Positive thinking: Living with HIV* by Vicky Cosstick (in *The Tablet*)

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/11379/positive-thinking-living-with-hiv->

Right: Positive Faith Workshop

Supporting CAPS

Getting Involved



If you have felt encouraged in your faith, if you have been inspired by what you've read in this newsletter, please consider donating your time, your talent, or your financial support.

You can donate by contributing online through our secure PayPal connection: scroll down to the lower left side of our website, www.caps-uk.org. Or call / email us for information on setting up a direct debit.

You can also support us by signing up for 'Give as You Live', an online service that collects donations from over 4,000 retailers – sending a small percentage of your purchase's value to the charity of your choice. Register for free at <http://give.as/charity/catholics-for-aids-prevention-and-support-caps> or via www.giveasyoulive.com; search and select 'Catholics for AIDS Prevention and Support'; and go shopping online with one of their registered retailers. At no cost to you, the website collects a donation from the retailer and sends it to CAPS.

If you have skills that you're willing to share in marketing, research, policy writing, computing, press/media, finance, or fundraising, please contact Vincent at chair@caps-uk.org to arrange a conversation.

It is your generosity that allows CAPS and Positive Catholics to support and strengthen people who are in need.



Notices & Dates

World AIDS Day Saturday 1st December 2018

Remember to include prayers for all those affected by HIV and AIDS in your church on Sunday 25th Nov. or Dec. 2nd. Use the prayers provided on any of CAPS websites, or compose prayers of your own and share them by email with CAPS. People living with HIV are often unseen and unheard. Our public prayers around World AIDS Day give us an opportunity to show our concern; a small step to express solidarity with all those affected.

World AIDS Day services

Mass for World AIDS Day will be celebrated at The Church of the Immaculate Conception, 114 Mount street, London W1k 3AH on Thursday Nov. 29th at 6pm. Fr. Shaun Middleton presiding. Refreshments served after Mass.

Sacred space to remember and pray

From the evening of Weds. 28th Nov. until Dec.3rd the Catholic AIDS Link Memorial Book, Quilt Panel and 'Pieta Silk' will be on display in the St. Aloysius Chapel also at the Church of the Immaculate Conception (address above). The display is free to visit. This is provided as a contemplative space to mark World AIDS Day in order to remember those who have died and pray for all those living with HIV today.

Christian Communities Welcoming LGBT People

In London the RC Diocese of Westminster extends a special welcome to LGBT people at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, 114 Mount Street, London, W1K 3AH. Especially at the 17.30 Mass each 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month. lgbtcatholicswestminster@gmail.com - www.lgbtcatholicswestminster.org

CAPS is in partnership with 'The Passionists'. Our members and friends are encouraged to visit the website at www.passionists-uk.org The Community of the Passion welcomes all people who wish to explore faith and life and are committed to social justice.

A 'Must' for your Diary

Why not pick a date now and mark your calendar, even if it is 2019, when you will use the *Positive Faith* resource in some way in your local community. Make a start, begin a conversation with others in your church, college or school.

Making Your Church or Clinic a More Welcoming Place for People Living with HIV

CAPS 'All Are Welcome' Card is an easy way to let people know that they have found a welcoming church. Why not follow Fr. Bob's example? (see Correspondence following an inquiry from a Parish Priest, p28). It is an easy way to raise awareness about HIV and faith in your congregation or your local clinic. We have designed this card to be ecumenical, and to offer the best possible points of contact.

We invite you to cut this page out. Share it with clergy or other church leaders. Have a discussion with your pastor or parish council about what it means to display this card at your church. Stick it on your church bulletin board. Bring it to the clinic or surgery. Let people know.

Below is some basic information about HIV that can help shape the discussion:

- There are more than 35 million people infected with HIV globally.
- Although medicines have become more available, only 32% of children and 41% of adults who are eligible, actually received HIV treatment in 2014. Millions remain in need of essential treatment, care and support, especially in Africa, a continent that cries out for justice.
- 108,000 people are infected with HIV in the UK.
- Approximately 50,000 are living with HIV in London. (Southwark Diocese has the highest resident number of people living with HIV.)
- An estimated 1 in 5 people living with HIV in the UK do not know that they are infected.
- We know that there are significant numbers of Catholics and Christians living with HIV.
- It is very likely that in your Parish there are people living with HIV, or families who have a member living with HIV.
- Catholics for AIDS Prevention and Support (CAPS) is the only national Christian response focussed on the needs of PLWH in the UK.
- The 'Positive Catholics' ministry is the only national Christian pastoral ministry to people living with HIV in the UK.

CAPS resources & Positive Catholics materials are also available for download from our website. A single flyer or poster might be the lifeline that someone needs.





All are welcome in this place

For faith sensitive HIV support

Email: info@caps-uk.org

Phone: 07505 608 655

Websites: www.caps-uk.org

www.positivecatholics.com

For general HIV advice & support

THT Direct: 0808802 1221

www.POSITIVEFAITH.net