

CATHOLICS FOR AIDS PREVENTION & SUPPORT



**PO BOX 24632, LONDON E9 6XF
NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2010**

THE CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

The UNAIDS theme for world AIDS Day 2010 continues to be '**Universal Access and Human Rights**'. This raises the important and continuing challenge to bring treatment to the poorest people in the world. It also brings to my mind the question of access to appropriate pastoral care for people living with Hiv in the UK. The trustees and volunteers at CAPS continue to work for a greater awareness in our Church of the issues that are raised by Hiv/Aids. We particularly try to support the peer ministry 'Positive Catholics' (PC), which continues to grow, and now has over 80 families registered.

Time and again, PC members report that they feel excluded from full participation in the life of the faith community. The stigma that still surrounds Hiv, for many complex reasons, silences people. Fearful of misunderstanding, judgement and rejection, many simply do not know who to turn to as they face the many challenges to faith, life and relationships, that Hiv inevitably provokes. Yet most Christians would wish to help. In our experience, when asked, fellow Christians do indeed offer support. The Benedictine Communities at Douai and Downside, and the Sisters of the Cross and Passion in the UK, are some examples of generosity, and concrete expressions of solidarity, as they welcome the PC members into their homes, offering safe places to meet and pray.

Sometimes it is not that we do not care, but rather, we are not sure what to do. If people living with Hiv in our own community remain hidden, how can we help? In the UK, there is no formally mandated pastoral care on offer from the Catholic Church. The community that is the Positive Catholics' peer ministry, seeks to be at least one point of contact, where Christians living with the virus can be reassured that they will be understood and accepted, without fear of judgement. Who better to trust with your own anxieties and troubles, than brothers and sisters in Christ who have 'travelled the same road'?



Vincent Manning with the CAPS Banner at the Papal Vigil in Hyde Park, London, 18 September 2010

Catholics living with Hiv are, with the support of friends, seeking to provide fuller access to the wider community of faith for those many who are at present fearful, isolated and alone. Gathering in the company of Jesus, and sharing together in faith, a certain healing can happen. Strengthened through Christian fellowship, one can move beyond isolation and personal pain, to joyfully reach out to others living with Hiv on the margins.

Will you help us to offer access to the 'hidden ones'? How will they know they are welcome in our community of faith? Perhaps you will assist us by displaying our leaflets and posters in your own parish and community? In this small way, you too can reach out to others living with Hiv, sending a sign to our brothers and sisters that all are welcome in this Church. Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Vincent Manning - Chairperson, Catholics for AIDS Prevention & Support

Editorial note:

Some readers may notice that our use of language in regard to 'Hiv' and 'Aids' is unusual and inconsistent. These are not typing errors! Language changes with use over time and we have opted to treat both Hiv and Aids as 'proper nouns', in original pieces, (even though we realise they are acronyms). This is because both terms have entered common parlance as signifiers of conditions and situations. Many people have expressed unease with the use of capitals for HIV/AIDS, as they come to dominate the text visually, and may indicate for some an 'alarmist quality' where none is intended. At this point we are experimenting, and hope to debate the use of language more fully in the future. We also hope to include an article in regard to the appropriate use of terms and language for the 3rd/4th decade of the pandemic when further reflection and discussion has taken place. Similarly as an organization we will move towards standardizing our own usage.

This is what the Incarnation means - A personal reflection

Jean Vanier is the founder of the L'Arche Community, an international movement which helps people with disabilities to live lives in fellowship, to their full potential. He was appalled at what he perceived to be the institutionalization of people with learning disabilities; and so the L'Arche Community had its humble origins when he invited two men with learning disabilities to share his home. L'Arche today describes its charism: "our communities are places where people can take time to explore who they are, not just what they can do. They are places of welcome where people are transformed by an intense experience of community, relationship, disability and difference."

Increasingly, we live in a world which places value on people according to their utility: what they can do, what they can contribute, what they can produce, whether or not they are a "drain" on our society or our country. We live in a society "troubled" by the poor, the sick, the disabled and the elderly. But the Church teaches that people have value simply because of who they are. Jean Vanier shows us that something wonderful happens when those of us who have power, strength, talents and resources reach out to those whom society deems not to have power, strength, talents or resources. By reaching out to the vulnerable, we begin a relationship with them. In beginning this relationship we share something of their story and we inevitably share some of their life. Through sharing vulnerability, we become vulnerable too; and by becoming vulnerable we become a friend. By becoming a friend we bring love into being. This is what the incarnation means: God who is power reaches out to human beings who are powerless; as God becomes vulnerable God becomes a friend. And in becoming our friend he makes love possible.

Through its encounter with people who live with Hiv, the Church is called to express friendship with the excluded, the powerless, the rejected and the poor; and in doing so to build the bonds of love. Like the L'Arche Communities, the Church is challenged to become a "place of welcome" for people marginalized, by Hiv and Aids, "where people are transformed by an intense experience of community and relationship". This is something we try to model in Positive Catholics; and this is something our brothers and sisters in Positive Catholics so generously receive from the many priests and religious who have so warmly welcomed us into their "homes" over the years.



In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells the "church": don't just invite your family and friends to a fantastic party "invite the poor, the disabled, the lame, the blind" (Lk. 14:12-14) because, by doing this we extend the bonds of human love. In holding out a hand of welcome to people living with Hiv and Aids, the community of faith shares something of their story. By sharing in vulnerability, the Church is made vulnerable too; and by becoming vulnerable the Church becomes a friend. By becoming friends we, the Church, bring love into being. This is what the incarnation means.

John Thornhill - CAPS Trustee

This is what God wants me to do: A Retreatants reflection.

"I have learned the difference between 'cure' and 'healing'." Douai 2010

Some of us have been encouraged to pray to be cured of Hiv infection in church. At the same time, each request for a miracle cure, is to be accompanied with often very substantial offerings of money, as a sign of faith. For those of us who have little, this represents a very real sacrifice. When no cure occurs, pressure to offer more money follows. It is a sign that I lack faith if I am not cured. More faith and a greater sacrifice is called for. However, Jesus' question "what do you want me to do for you?" (Matt 20:29-33), brings to mind the constant offer of friendship and love that Jesus invites us to enjoy, and the need to pray constantly. A passage from Hebrew scripture reminds us that God does not want worldly sacrifices and offerings from us; God does not require payment for God's friendship. Rather, God invites us to meet the challenge to '..act justly,...love tenderly...and walk humbly with our God'. (Micah 6:7-8). Love justice. Love mercy. Love God and each other, and I shall be healed.



Hiv, Justice & The Big Society

What is the Church doing about the Big Society? The Big Society is a key component of the new Coalition Government's agenda: it is all about the creation of a society in which "individual citizens feel big: big in terms of being supported and enabled; and having real and regular influence." It is about the creation of a society where citizens are "doing for themselves" with less reliance on the state. The Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols is "encouraged at the echoes of Roman Catholic teaching emerging in the language of the new Coalition Government". The Work and Pensions Secretary, Iain Duncan Smith, a Roman Catholic who founded the Centre for Social Justice, has called for a "blend of social justice and the common good" to permeate policy making; the kind of language we see echoed in Catholic social teaching.

Poverty and social exclusion is a big problem for many people living with Hiv in this country. This is because many people living with Hiv have long term serious health problems, are in receipt of social security benefits; or have difficulty accessing the workplace. For asylum seekers and

refugees living with Hiv, their residency status in the UK may prevent them from working. A new report by the National AIDS Trust and the Terrence Higgins Trust shows that one in six people living with Hiv experienced severe poverty. Massive cuts in welfare spending and in government grants to public sector organisations in the recent spending review, will mean that the poorest will suffer the most. The Terrence Higgins Trust has recently announced that it is reopening a national Hardship Fund for people living with Hiv who may be in severe financial need.

So where does this leave the Big Society? In an age of austerity, what role can individual Catholics and the Church at large play in achieving social justice for people living with Hiv? Positive Catholics has benefited from the generosity of Catholic grant making trusts. Their support has enabled Hiv positive Christians to build hope and community together, to put the Big Society into action in little ways. Positive Catholics has also taken the hand of friendship from some of the religious congregations in England: their generosity has been an inestimable blessing to people who have feared judgement and rejection from the Church. On an individual level, Positive Catholics has been blessed by the voluntary efforts and contributions of individuals who have given of what little they have to bring the love of Christ to the world.

But what more could be done? Are there talents and skills in the wider faith community which could be shared with people of a Christian faith who are living with Hiv? For a family fearing deportation, are there people who have legal knowledge who could informally offer their advice? For Hiv positive parents struggling to get their child into the school of their choice, are there people who understand the admissions process who could offer informal guidance? For the Hiv positive woman who fears she may lose her benefits, are there people who understand the benefits system who could offer informal sign-posting? For the Hiv positive man who is lonely or depressed, are there people who can offer their time to lend an ear or a shoulder to cry on? Jesus says "when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me" (Mt. 25:44). That might sound a bit harsh in a world where there is so much need, but people living with Hiv do face multiple exclusion. In an age where the Big Society may have to pick up the reins of support relinquished by a poorer, smaller state, Catholic Social teaching calls the faithful at large to share in a collective responsibility for achieving social justice and the common good.

John Thornhill - CAPS Trustee

The Holy Pitman? Dominic Barberi: Newman's confidant



His coat fitted nowhere. His waistcoat seemed like a cast-off...his shoes innocent of polish and he wore the meanest and most wretched hat that could be seen in England out of the collieries. Mgr. Searle, Vicar General to Cardinal Wiseman.

When his form came within sight, I was moved to the depths in the strangest way. The gaiety and affability of his manner in the midst of his sanctity was itself a holy sermon. John Henry Newman.

These two quotations reflect the impression made by Blessed Dominic Barberi, the first Provincial of the Passionists in the United Kingdom and the man who received Newman into full communion with the Catholic Church. Dominic had longed for over thirty years to be sent to England, feeling called by God to proclaim the Passion of Christ here. He arrived into industrialised Victorian England, from rural Italy, on 27 November 1840. He told Dalgairns, "Catholics are mistaken if they fancy that copes and chasubles and beautiful music will do a great deal,... let them try to cope with those evils our system has all but given up on in despair" and, "Let them preach barefoot in the streets of our great towns."

Between 1841 and 1849 he walked barefoot in our industrial towns and cities, endured hunger and

humiliation, dwelt poor among the poor; preached and was derided. In Stone, Staffordshire, he was pelted with stones, which he picked up and kissed. By the time of his sudden death in 1849 at the age of 57 he had established Passionist communities here, preached many missions and retreats, reached out to the starving migrants, and befriended Newman and many others outside and inside the Church.

Thirty years after being received into full communion with the Church, Newman testified officially to Cardinal Parrochi (in connection with Dominic's "cause"): "*He (Fr. Dominic) had a great part to play in my own conversion and in that of others...No wonder I became his convert and penitent...His sudden death filled me with grief...I hoped, and still hope that Rome will crown him with the aureole of the saints.*" The fact that it was Dominic who received Newman was no accident. His kindness, goodness, and ecumenical attitude had already made an impact on the Tractarians.

On 5 May 1841 Dominic wrote to the Tractarians at Oxford, in response to their letter to *L'Univers*, penned by John Dobree Dalgairns. Dominic's quite substantial response adroitly answers their contentious points on the Thirty Nine Articles, indicative of his thorough knowledge of the issues. More important, however, is the way in which Dominic addresses them, as "*Beloved Brethren in Christ and servants of the Lord, there is nothing daring for love to venture....writing to you as a friend to dear brethren.*" Anglican clergy had rarely been addressed in such courteous terms by a Catholic priest or Catholics. At the end of this very long letter he says, "*Adieu then dearest brethren, be you in peace and the God of peace and love be with you, Amen.*" This was the beginning of a warm relationship. Following his first visit to Littlemore on 24 June 1844, where Newman lived a community life, Dominic informs the General of the Passionists in Rome, "*I was received with every token of cordiality and sincere regard by Dr. Newman and his disciples.*" He then says, "*These men work like martyrs for a good cause.*"

As early as 1842, Dominic says in a letter to Mrs Canning, (cousin of the Hon. & Rev. George Spencer, a future Passionist; and the ancestor of H.R.H. Diana, Princess of Wales); "*Let us do something for our separated brethren. We must do all we can, and God will do what we cannot...*" In 1843 Dominic informs her, "*I have just received a very extravagant letter from one of the Oxford men. He is a good friend of mine, and well disposed to towards the Catholic religion. Pray for him and for me.*" Dominic writes again in June 1843, "*The movement at Oxford is very strong...Let us pray for those poor men who are working very hard. The finger of God seems to be there in a wonderful manner.*" Such sentiments and language are almost unbelievable at that time and would not be on the lips of many of Newman's coreligionists, let alone Catholics.

It was at this time that Dominic also corresponded with *The Tablet's* founder, Frederick Lucas, the Quaker convert to Catholicism. Dominic privately wrote asking Lucas to tone down his rather acerbic language about non-Catholics. Lucas later publicly acknowledged his debt to Fr. Dominic. In September 1843 *The Tablet* reported that "*a 'Discourse on the Unity of the Church', was given in St Mary's Church Manchester by the Rev. Fr. Dominic, Passionist, and he has written in English a course of controversial lectures which, in the opinion of competent persons, are admirably suited to this country and to these times.*" To a friend Newman said of Dominic, "*He is a simple and quaint man, but a very sharp and clever man too.*" This fellow with the "*most wretched and meanest hat that could be seen in England from out of the collieries*" was more than he appeared. Heart speaks to heart, indeed, as Newman would say.

When Dalgairns, one of Newman's closest associates, asked Dominic to receive him into the Church at the Passionist's house in the Black Country..... Dominic agreed and asked, "*Will you be so kind as to present my best respects to the Rev. Mr Newman, Mr. St John, and to all your holy companions in Littlemore. Dear Littlemore I do love thee!*" We forget how striking this form of address would sound to the recipients of the message in those days. Dominic goes on to say, "*When the holy Superior of Littlemore will come then I hope we shall see the beginning of a new era.*"

Blessed Dominic, 'the holy pitman', could also empathise with Newman's struggle in his journey of faith. He wrote to a fellow Passionist in Italy, "*the difficulties multiply so quickly and seem so endless, that I felt myself at the last extremity, and was about to go back to Italy.*" To another he wrote: "*such sufferings, and of every kind, would be too much for a giant. Last Sunday I broke*

down and wept bitterly." No wonder they could have a 'bit of a gossip,' as Newman twice records, about his and Ambrose St. John's three days with Blessed Dominic at the Passionist's house at Aston, Staffordshire in December 1845, three months after his reception.

On 3 October 1845, Newman resigned his fellowship of Oriel. On 5 October he wrote in his diary, "*I kept indoors all day preparing for general confession.*" In Newman's letters of early October 1845 he speaks of Dominic with quiet affection and confidence. In a letter to his friend Henry Wilberforce, he reports: "*Fr. Dominic the Passionist is passing this way on his way from Staffordshire....He will stay as a guest.... He does not know my intentions, but I shall ask of him admission into the one true fold of the Redeemer on Thursday or Friday; if it be God's will, I shall be received.*" Dominic arrived on 8 October.. The following day Newman's diary states: "*Oct 9th Admitted into the Catholic Church with Bowles & Stanton.*" Dominic stayed for three days with the group in Littlemore after their reception into full communion.

Dominic had written much earlier to the General in Rome. "*I am dressed in secular clothes. If you saw me you would smile. Still I am sure God recognises me easily enough even in this get-up!*" And so, Blessed Dominic who looked as though he came from the collieries now rests in Sutton, St. Helens, Lancashire, a once famed colliery area. Today Passionists in England continue Dominic's mission in sites of suffering. The visit of Pope Benedict XVI to beatify Newman is an opportunity also to celebrate the man who received Newman into full communion with the Catholic Church, Blessed Dominic Barberi, the apostle of ecumenism.

John Sherrington CP - CAPS Trustee

No Wonder

Wonder, which is unlimited in its scope, expands our horizons and links us to the infinite. It is a doorway to two kinds of openness to the other: it tends to welcome and to worship. Wonder is, as Aristotle said, the starting point, the driver, of knowledge. But, more importantly, when we wonder we reveal a receptivity that is a necessary prelude to participation – neither possessing what we attend to, nor being controlled by it. Wonder opens up a space in us, facilitating a little more wholeness. Without wonder, there is no chance of wholeness.

No wonder, no child-likeness, no growth, no maturity.

No wonder, no curiosity, no questions, no learning, no education, no wisdom.

No wonder, no receptivity, no grace, no redemption.

No wonder, no space for the odd, no attention to particularity, no room for the individual, no real inclusiveness, no sense of the whole, no real Catholicism.

No wonder, no spirituality, no faith, no justice.

John Sullivan, Liverpool Hope University

Dates for your diary!

Ecumenical World AIDS Day Service for Youth

Cathedral Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Regent Street, Wrexham LL11 1RB

Tuesday, 30 November 2010, 19.00 - 21.00 including refreshments.

Members of Positive Catholics will be sharing their experience. All are welcome.

World AIDS Day Mass

St. Catherine of Siena Church, Bristol Street, Birmingham B5 7BE,

Wednesday 1 December 2010, 19.00. <http://stcatherinesbirmingham.org.uk> The Mass will be celebrated by the Parish Priest Fr. Jim Fleming SSC and prepared by Positive Catholics Birmingham.

Further details, contact Positive Catholics: positivecatholics@gmail.com

World AIDS Mass

The Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and St Gregory, Warwick Street, Soho, London W1B 5NB

Sunday, 5 December, 17.00, Celebrant: Fr. Kieran Fitzsimons OFM. Members of Positive Catholics will be available to chat with people after Mass. All are welcome.

Positive Catholics Annual Review and Planning Meeting

Members of Positive Catholics peer ministry will meet on the afternoon of **Saturday January 22nd 2011 from 2 – 7pm** in Vauxhall, London for this annual time of reflection and planning. If you are a PC member please try to attend to make your contribution. New members will also be very welcome. What did we do that went well this year? What is our shared mission and vision for 2011?

Positive Catholics retreat weekends 2011

Spring retreat at **Downside Abbey**, near Bath. **1-3 March 2011**. We hope to schedule in some time for retreatants to meet with the renowned theologian Dom Sebastian Moore and fellow Benedictine Dom Dominic Mansi, for a 'shared conversation' session.

Summer retreat at **Douai Abbey**, near Reading. **5-7 August 2011**.

Autumn retreat at **Downside**, **30 September - 2 October**

Catholic newspaper coverage

Look out for an article in **The Universe**, **28 November** to mark WAD, on the ministry of Positive Catholics and the work of CAPS.

Hiv Related Poverty

A new report by the Terrence Higgins Trust and the National AIDS Trust analyses the underlying reasons why people with Hiv face poverty. Over a quarter (29 per cent) of applications to the Hardship Fund gave the immigration system as the main reason for poverty. In October 2009, the Government support for single asylum seekers was reduced from £64.30 to £35.13 a week - just £5 a day. A further 17 per cent of people said that problems relating to the benefits system were the main cause of hardship. These problems included awaiting a benefit decision, changes to the benefit system, or delays in receiving benefits they were entitled to.

http://www.ght.org.uk/news/article/39031/19/10/2010/Rise_in_Extreme_HIV_Poverty

News in Brief From Positive Catholics 2010

With support from friends and the generosity of sponsors we were able this year to hold three retreat weekends at Downside and Douai Abbeys. A report from our main summer retreat can be found at our webpage <http://sites.google.com/site/positivecatholics/> Please also see '*This is what God wants me to do: A Retreatants reflection*' in this newsletter.

For many people the retreats are the first actual encounter with the shared ministry and community of Positive Catholics. Again Christians from other denominations have enriched us with their presence and contributions. Increasingly the question at the end of these weekends for everyone is "where do we go from here?" Meeting the challenge to sustain real support and Christian fellowship for our daily lives, building on the strengthening and friendship experienced 'on retreat', is not easy.

As well as continuing to meet regularly in London through the year, we are delighted therefore, that this year we saw the first tentative beginnings of regional group meetings in both the Midlands and the North. A small group met in Birmingham on a wet day in May 2010, at St. Catherine's Church, and it is hoped that as with 2009, there will be a special liturgy to mark WAD again this year. Beginning and sustaining the small group meetings takes patience and time, nothing is easy. However we hope that from this first meeting, a community network of support for people in the Midlands can eventually be established.

Blessed with more active members, this year we also launched 'Positive Catholics' in the North. The Sisters of the Cross and Passion in Manchester have generously offered us a beautiful meeting place in the grounds of their convent, and on September 11th about a dozen of us gathered for our inaugural meeting. A wonderful meal (African fare) was cooked, and we had a chance to begin to think through what we want for each other. The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 6th. We hope

that with encouragement, this initiative will become a real presence of Christ in the midst of Hiv in the region. We want to thank Sr. Margaret, CP, in particular, for her willingness to share our journey, and Adela for her commitment to lead.

News from CAPS Trustees

This year most of our energy has been spent on supporting the Positive Catholics ministry. In addition to the WAD events listed here, we are able to report on a few other notable activities and developments.

Supporting Families

In the past year we have been able to support, through advocacy and referral-on to specific agencies, some families faced with a variety of social needs. Through our networks we were also able to link some families in with pastoral support in their local parish. We have also supported a few individuals to access some much needed 'respite' care this year.

We have also helped in an advocacy role for families seeking admission to Catholic schools for their children this year, and have advocated on behalf of others in regard to immigration issues. Although our efforts are meagre, we are determined to stand or fall, in solidarity with people in need, whenever we are called upon to do so.

Into the Future - Sustainability

The membership of Positive Catholics has grown since our last newsletter, and there are now over 80 families who are registered. The question of consolidating and sustaining future activities was raised at a meeting in September, where trustees approved the following two statements in regard to the Positive Catholics ministry:

Commitment – Member involvement: To actively identify and encourage those members who have talents and gifts which they are willing to offer in service to the wider community network. In this important way we will increase our capacity to respond to the pastoral needs that exist. It is important that no person feels over burdened with responsibility, as this can be counter-productive. Therefore, our duty of care requires us to provide the proper means of support to members who take particular responsibility. A person's individual circumstances must always be borne in mind. We must remember that we are involved in ministry alongside people who are often poor, or marginalized in other ways, and who endure the many affects of living with illness.

Commitment – Structural sustainability: Over the next 1 – 3 years, we will explore viable options that secure PC as a ministry for the future, in terms of structure and finances. This process must demonstrate consultation with members of PC at every stage, so that 'ownership' of ministry remains with the members. We will seek to balance the tension between the probable need to secure employed positions in the ministry, with the protection of the ministry as both peer lead and principally voluntary in nature.

CAPS - A Catholic voice in the Hiv sector - *Trustee involvement with the South London Hiv Partnership*

A trustee has been actively involved in a south London initiative to develop new and innovative ways of providing peer support services with other agencies including The Terrence Higgins Trust and local Primary Care Trusts. In return for around 2 days work each month he has secured a 'fee' of £250 monthly to support us in our peer support services. This one activity, in addition to small grants received has meant that this year we had sufficient dependable income to be able to plan for our activities. This has also been one important way by which CAPS has been able to 'be a Catholic voice and presence' in the wider world of Hiv sector agencies - educating and informing others as to the significance and benefits of Catholic faith in the midst of Hiv.

CAPS – A voice for Hiv in the Church

CAPS and Positive Catholics was proud to be represented at the Papal Vigil in Hyde Park during September. With a newly commissioned banner our striking black cross draped in a red ribbon took its place amongst the many parishes and organizations present. Several of our members were there, and provoked much interest, ensuring that in some small way those members of the Body of Christ living with Hiv were not quite so hidden.



CAPS presence at the Papal Vigil, Hyde Park, London, 18 September 2010

We also sponsored a member of Positive Catholics to attend the Catholic Association for Racial Justice Urban Network retreat in October 2010.

How you can help

Please commit to pray for us, regularly. Please consider supporting us financially. We continue to operate on a very small budget. The enclosed CAPS leaflet includes a GIFT AID declaration. If you are a British tax-payer completing this enables us to claim back 28p in every pound you donate to CAPS - cheques payable to "CAPS".

We are keen to recruit active and committed new trustees to reflect the diversity of people we serve. We especially welcome people with skills/expertise in finance and budgets; fundraising; marketing; asylum and immigration issues; benefits advice. Women and members from ethnic minority groups are also under-represented presently in the trustee group. If you think that this may be something constructive for you to offer, please contact the Chair to discuss further. Sincere thanks to all our friends, prayer supporters, religious communities, trustees and members of Positive Catholics, who encourage and inspire us in our work for God's reign.

CELEBRATING WORLD AIDS DAY 2010

Many of the following websites have information and/or worship material, as well as other resources which can be downloaded:

UNAIDS - www.unAids.org

National AIDS Trust - www.nat.org.uk

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) - www.cafod.org.uk

National Catholic AIDS Network (NCAN) - www.ncan.org - *this network is no longer active, but the website is maintained*

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance - www.e-alliance.ch

The Balm in Gilead - www.balmingilead.org

You might want to gather with people of other faiths or from other Christian traditions to mark **World AIDS Day** or ensure that your parish or community acknowledges the challenge of HIV in its liturgies. If so, **POSITIVE RITES** is a 90-page booklet you should have.

Published originally by *Catholic AIDS Link*, it brings together all sorts of liturgical resources for formal and informal celebrations, Masses on various themes around World AIDS Campaigns. Copies are available, **£3.50 incl. p/p**, cheques payable to "CAPS". Order from:

CAPS, PO Box 24632, London E9 6XF or e-mail us: positivecatholics@btinternet.com

World AIDS Liturgies 2010

You may wish to use the following texts for World AIDS Masses, or other liturgies around World AIDS Day, 1 December:

Hymn: O Christ, the healer. *Tune: Rockingham*



O Christ, the healer, we have come
to pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored,
when reached by love that never ends?

From HIV our flesh endures
our bodies clamour to be freed;
yet in our hearts we would confess
that wholeness is our deepest need.

How strong, O Lord, are our desires,
how weak our knowledge of ourselves!
Release in us those healing truths
unconscious pride resists or shelves.

In conflicts that destroy our health,
we diagnose the world's disease;
our common life declares our ills:
is there no cure, O Christ, for these?

Grant that we all, made one in faith,
in your community may find
the wholeness that, enriching us,
shall reach the whole of humankind.

Lighting of Advent Candle:

Since World AIDS Day is usually around the 1st Sunday of Advent, the 1st Advent Candle is lit. If your celebration is on another Sunday, or at another time after this, then light the appropriate number of Advent wreath candles.



Reader:

In spite of global economic and political crises, we have the human resources and the growing scientific knowledge to stop so many of our sisters and brothers, daughters and sons, from dying of AIDS. We lack the will to do it. There can be universal access to prevention and treatment, support and care. There can be an end to stigma, racism, and homophobia as we protect human rights. This is as much a spiritual problem as a matter of political will – not of those living with HIV, but of churches and societies who fail to do what is right and just in the land, or deny the challenges before them.

In this Advent time we celebrate the coming of God's Word in human flesh, in Jesus of Nazareth, a Word of welcome and inclusion made flesh, of justice and respect, of value, healing, wholeness and joy for all the people. As we light this Advent candle we explode all darkness with Christ's light. Let us bring ourselves, our friends and families, living and dead, into this circle of light: *the Advent candle is lit:*



All: We proclaim God's mercy and forgiveness as the light of Christ enfolds us and casts out fear. We shall live in the light of God's justice and rise beyond all that threatens our humanity.

A Creed for the AIDS pandemic

We believe that God loves the world and the proof of that love is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his coming again in glory.

We believe that through the reconciling power of the Cross, God's love seeks to embrace all people regardless of creed, colour, gender, or sexual orientation, and that the AIDS pandemic is not God's judgement but a place where his glory may be revealed.

We believe that God has called the Church to be the agent of his love and justice in this broken world. We believe that Christ's love compels us to live no longer for ourselves but for him, and that the Gospel calls us to care for our sisters and brothers in Christ, to share in their sufferings and to seek and do the common good.

We believe that as stewards of the talents we have been given, we have a responsibility to use them to help all affected by the AIDS pandemic.

We believe that, as Christ's disciples, we are called to comfort the broken-hearted, help the oppressed, care for orphans and widows, and minister to the sick.

Therefore, as God's people, we covenant together to pray regularly, give generously, fight stigma, encourage one another, and share in fellowship with all who live with or are affected by HIV. **Amen** (*adapted from Christian HIV/AIDS Alliance*)

Bidding Prayers

God our Creator, opens our hearts and minds to see in Christ not only power and glory, but weakness and rejection. As we pray, may we have that mind in us which was in Christ Jesus who was smitten and wounded for our sake:

How long, O God, how long, year after year, must we hear the statistics that HIV and AIDS tread their increasing and relentless way through this world, through this nation, through our diverse communities? Turn us from complacency to commitment, from silence to justice-filled love and action. Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

How long, O God, how long, must we stand by while stigma and prejudice are allowed to savage your people, all created in your image, precious in your sight? Strengthen our resolve to stand with all those subjected to hatred and violence, discrimination and oppression because of their race, gender or sexual orientation. Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

How long, O God, how long, must people living with HIV and AIDS, their partners and families, their parents, carers and friends be stigmatised in fear, rather than welcomed for the rich gifts of their humanity? Give us thankful hearts for the lives of all positive people, known and unknown, and in our communion of spirit let us rejoice in the memory all who have passed into glory. Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

How long, O God, how long, until those nations whom we have paralysed with unjust debts will be able to take their rightful place at your table of plenty, created for all? Enliven us to work for equity in access to all appropriate prevention, care and treatment for all living with HIV or AIDS, throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

How long, O God, how long, until the day will come when the work of researchers, and scientists, doctors and nurses, carers and activists will see the full fruit of their labours in a viable vaccine and

sustainable treatments? Inspire our imaginations and skill to press forward in hope and determination. Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

How long, O God, how long must individuals and agencies in the Christian community experience their work to combat HIV/AIDS as too often a criticised activity? Let us now pray for the work of Caritas International, CAFOD, Catholics for AIDS Prevention and Support, Positive Catholics, CARA, London Ecumenical AIDS Trust, and we also remember national and local groups throughout Britain and Ireland and the various countries we represent (*other relevant organisations may be named here*)
Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

How long, O God, how long will we remember your faithful people who have died from HIV-related illnesses? *If appropriate those who have died may be named or some silence kept*

As we prepare to share the gifts of God for the people of God, may we recognise that it is the Body of Christ which suffers at this time. It is the mind of Christ which is racked with fear and confusion. It is the image of Christ which is blasphemed in prejudice and oppression. May our prayers enable us to see in this crisis not punishment but the place where God is most powerfully at work, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: As the darkness grows round us. *Tune: Stuttgart*

As the darkness grows around us
Shadows lengthen into night,
God fulfil your advent promise,
In the gloom let there be light.

In our childhood's understanding
Life seemed limitless and free,
Now we face the contemplation
Of our own mortality.

Life seemed simple spread before,
Now distorted, futile, flawed;
Child-like hope has been extinguished,
Fear, with understanding, spawned.

Here in doubt and dereliction,
Searching for the reason why,
Hoping prayer might kindle kindness,
Hoping you might hear our cry.

Longing for your Advent promise,
Light in darkness, joy for pain,
Hoping we might find the pathway
Back to life and love again.

Now we're startled by the stillness,
Stark surprise that you are there,
Then we're blinded by the dazzle
Of the dawning of your care.

Blessing & Dismissal:

*The blessing of God, giver of life, be with us as we receive a gentle, powerful and healing touch. **Amen***

*The blessing of God, Redeemer and bearer of pain, be with us as our burdens are shared. **Amen***

*The blessing of God, Sanctifier of all, be with us as we are sent to be a blessing for others. **Amen***

*Let us go in peace to love and serve God in the world and to continue this celebration in each other's company. **Thanks be to God.***

Hymn: People think, to be free. *Tune: Personent hodie*

People think, to be free, this is how you must be:
Concentrate just on me - never mind the others -
Sisters, friends and brothers!

**Set us free, free, free! Set us free, free, free:
Free to love, free to serve, free to be God's people.**

Jesus said that he came to set free sick and lame,
Said to us: Do the same - then you'll really know me,
And to others show me. *Chorus ...*

Wheelchair bound, trapped at home, ill with AIDS, all alone:
Knock the door, use the phone, just a little sharing
Means you're really caring. *Chorus ...*

Slaves who work without pay, those deprived of their say,
Innocents locked away: need us to stand with them,
Love and justice give them. *Chorus ...*

Sometimes fear holds us back; fear of loss, fear of lack;
Fear of pain, fear of flack; as God's love enfolds us,
Fear no longer holds us. *Chorus ...*



Catholic AIDS Memorial Book & Quilt Panel - World AIDS Mass 2008

If you would like the name(s) of loved ones inscribed in the Catholic AIDS Memorial Book, please complete the enclosed form and return to CAPS. Names are included in Bidding Prayers on the 1st Sunday of each month at the 17.00 p.m. Mass at the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption & Saint Gregory, Warwick Street, Soho, London W1B 5NB

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NAM: Lincoln House, 2 Brixton Road, London SW9 6DE - Tel. 020 7840 0050 - info@nam.org.uk

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***** Catholic AIDS Link was dissolved in December 1999 - contact CAPS (Catholics for AIDS Prevention & Support - PO Box 24632, London, E9 6XF) for information re publications etc.**



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