

A COVENANT WITH THE POOR

For discussion within our parish of St Vincent's Sheffield.

- A request has been made to the Parish Council to discuss St. Vincent's making a Covenant with the Poor. (The request came via the St. Justin Group, whose main activity is to raise money for the work of the Daughters of Charity and the Medical Missionaries of Mary in Africa.)
- Parish Covenants with the Poor were first set up in the 1990s in response to Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter inviting Catholics to commit themselves to working for the poor in the new Millennium. At that time St. Vincent's did a review of its activities to ease poverty, but did not proceed with putting together a Covenant. The Hallam Justice and Peace Commission has encouraged parishes to look at the idea again.
- (For an example of a local Covenant successfully established and maintained, see <https://www.stwilliamofyorksheffield.org.uk/miscellaneous/covenant-with-the-poor>.)
- A Covenant with the Poor would be a formal parish document. It would list the work we do to raise awareness of and alleviate the causes and effects of local and global poverty. It would show our existing commitment to Catholic Social Teaching and help us focus on maintaining and developing it. It would be an agreement to commit a certain amount of parish income to named charitable activities.
- We might list our commitments under the headings of prayer, wealth sharing and advocacy.
- Current activity in the parish which would form part of our Covenant (not an exhaustive list):
- Global poverty: support for St. Justin's; Cafod; UCM shoe box appeal; Living Simply initiatives such as fairtrade.
- Local Poverty: support for St. Wilfrid's; SVP work; support for Assist (destitute asylum seekers)
- UCM support for various initiatives.

- Causes supported by the annual Pantomime and Christmas Bazaar.
- Possible additional areas for committed regular support might include Aid to the Church in Need, The Medaille trust -which works for victims of human trafficking-, and Church Action on Poverty - the national ecumenical effort to address poverty in the UK.
- The question of committing a percentage of the parish income annually is a difficult calculation at the moment, because income has been affected as a result of the Covid pandemic. It is proposed that a special second collection could take place during the year for designated projects coming under the Covenant.

The Parish Council would like to hear from parishioners what they think of this proposal.