

A HEART FOR THE POOR

Cardinal Cormac:

- Jesus emphasised that love is at the heart of the message of God in Jesus Christ.
- Our teaching as Catholics is important – but the way we live out our faith by loving and caring for the poor and needy is what gives a powerful witness.
- When we talk about love, what comes first is God's love for us: we were created in love by God and He loves us with an infinite love.



Lord David Alton:

- "Give us this day our daily bread" reminds us that there are people in the world – and in our own communities – who are desperately in need of physical and spiritual sustenance.
- "There is sufficient in this world for our needs, but not for our greeds" – Mahatma Gandhi.
- There are 800 million people in the world living below the level of decency.
- 1.3 billion people live on less than 70p a day. 3 billion live on less than £1.50 a day.
- 100 million children die each year from readily treatable diseases.
- Being pro-life is to engage with these issues and to care for people at every stage of life and be on the side of the poor.
- In developing countries workers are subject to dreadful conditions that we do not tolerate in this country.
- There are many things we can do to register our disapproval; or we can change our shopping habits to influence things.
- Scripture teaches us clearly: "You must love your neighbour as yourself"
- It is sinful to discriminate against the poor.
- The letter of James reminds us that faith without good works is dead.
- Our churches need to become sharing communities.
- "The world needs to recognise that we all are part of a single creation – one human family." – Cardinal Hume
- "It's in the shelter of each other's lives that the people live." – Celtic proverb. (i.e. mutual responsibility.)
- "A person is a person because of other people" – Nelson Mandela.
- How can we respond as Christians – the problem seems so great?
- "Your small change can make a great difference" - Cafod
- "We must pray as if everything depends on God; and work as if everything depends on us." – St Augustine.
- We need to combine heart and head, work and prayer.
- Perseverance is important: It took William Wilberforce 40 years to achieve the abolition of slavery.
- The Church teaches us that we must care for the material as well as moral and spiritual demands of mankind.
- "We are not entitled to a freedom of indifference" – Pope John Paul II
- "You people in England are technically more wealthy than we are in Calcutta, but by the lack of your response [over the issues of abortion and homelessness] you are poorer." Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta.
- We may have social security, hospices, hospitals and a whole range of facilities to help people – but do we have love?

Scripture for reflection (Matt 25: 34-40)

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Reflection: Is there anything I can do – particularly this Lent – to make even a small difference?

CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development)

By supporting them, we can play a part in bringing about justice and equality in the developing world.

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Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to see you in the face of every one in need; and help me to care for them out of love for you, recognising that you love me so much that you gave your life for me.