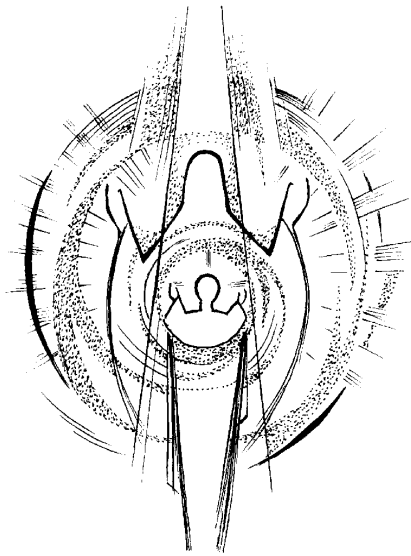


Marian-Care



St Marie's Catholic Church, Southport, is named after Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She reveals her Son to the world as the Way of Love, and calls us to imitate his care for all his brothers and sisters.....

'When I was hungry you gave me food'
(Mt 25:35)

History

Since the establishment of the parish of St Marie's, here in Southport, way back in 1839, caring for those in need has been at the heart of our Christian community. From the old Presbytery and Convent, countless housekeepers, priests and religious sisters have given what they could to those who came to the door in need of food.

More recently, with the old Presbytery made into a home for retired priests and the Convent becoming the Parish House, it was discerned that this ministry to the hungry must continue, but in some new ways.

The Parish House is first and foremost the Priests home, but is also used for various things, from the Children's Liturgy of the Word to R.C.I.A., from S.V.P. to Sacramental-preparation....the priest meets families to arrange baptisms or funerals, couples preparing for marriage, people who come to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation....and much other good work goes on in this place.

Alongside this, though, the care for the hungry continues.

Realistic

We are aware we cannot possibly meet all the needs of the people who come to the door asking for help, so we are clear about our parameters and limitations:-

- ❖ We give simple food (sandwich, biscuit, crisps and cake when we have enough in) and either a hot cuppa or a cold drink
- ❖ We never give money
- ❖ We don't give clothing etc
- ❖ Where there seems to be a genuine need for help we refer to other groups working locally in this field
- ❖ Marian-Care operates Monday to Friday 10a.m. – 12 noon and 2p.m. – 4p.m.

Catholic Church response

The suffering and need we see on our streets is deeply disturbing and, though we know we can't solve all the problems of the people who come to us, we attempt to shine this little ray of light in the form of the food, drink, caring and kindness it's given with.

This is the Catholic Church's response to what we experience in the centre of Southport. We are not part of any other grouping that does good work with, for example, people who are homeless in our area, but what we do compliments their efforts.

Facts and figures

- ❖ 200 – 250 requests for food each week
- ❖ over 10,000 bags of food given out each year
- ❖ the helpers who work in the Parish House for Marian-Care are voluntary, giving of their time and energy from the goodness of their hearts
- ❖ we expect to spend about £8,000 this year on food and drink
- ❖ this money comes, not only from the people of St Marie's, but also most of the parishes in our Pastoral Area of Southport and Formby have supported us over the last few years, as well as other parishes from the likes of Melling and Ormskirk. The Sisters of Notre Dame in Birkdale send us cups and lids so we can give hot drinks, and some people drop off gifts by the door when they come to Mass on Sunday (from tea-bags to coffee, sugar to bread, tins of tuna to butter)
- ❖ Each week we supply teabags, coffee and sugar to 'Alcocare', an SVP charity, who assist about 60 people with alcohol or drug addiction

How you can help

- ❖ By praying for the people we serve, that our act of kindness may help them to experience hope, become more aware of their dignity and value.....and of the help that is available to them if they really want to improve their lives
- ❖ You can think of us during your weekly shop (nothing exotic, please, as we give the same to everyone and can't afford any more than the basics):- tea-bags, coffee, sugar, butter/margarine, bread, cheese, ham, canned tuna or salmon, milk, orange/blackcurrant juice, biscuits and cake are always needed and appreciated
- ❖ You can contribute towards our expenses via a one-off donation or you may like to make a standing-order (and if you gift-aid, of course, we can buy a few more loaves at no extra cost to you!). Please make cheques payable to 'Marian-Care Account'

However you're able to help, know that **you** are part of what is 'Marian-Care', **your** help makes an important difference.....and that the Lord Jesus, through His beloved Mother, Mary, bless' you!.....

The words of the King.....'in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me' (Mt 25:40)

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