

## Homily: Parish Live Simply Programme - So Far

Last year our Parish Community as a whole supported the proposal to work together and achieve the Cafod *Live Simply* Award. We agreed that this offered a very practical way to become more united as three local Churches in the One Parish of Our Lady of Kirkstall and jointly to promote the welfare of our human family, of our fellow creatures, and of our planetary home. We hope to achieve the Award, but - more importantly - to live out wholeheartedly the Gospel of Jesus to love one another and to act as responsible stewards of the world entrusted to us by God for our care.

The three key elements of the Programme - as we now know well - are that we each and all try harder to *Live Simply, in Solidarity, and Sustainably*.

To **Live Simply** means to be content with that which is enough for our needs, not in excess of our requirements; not taking more than our fair share of the world's resources; not being greedy and thereby depriving others of the basic necessities of life.

To **Live in Solidarity** means that we take care of one another, especially the poorest in the human family, be they within our own locality or country, or in distant lands. We recognise that today we live in a 'global village': how we behave - even in our own homes - impacts upon the welfare of others although they may be far away. We are particularly concerned for the marginalised, the dispossessed, for the impoverished, and for refugees.

To **Live Sustainably** means that we do not take from 'mother earth' more than can be replenished; we do not plunder natural resources without thought of how - or if - they can be replaced; we do not produce material goods in excess of our needs; we do not pollute the air and land and sea so that they become detrimental to our health - or even uninhabitable - for us, or our fellow creatures.

In his most recent Encyclical *Gaudete et Exultate - Rejoice and Be Glad* - our Holy Father Pope Francis reiterates in his own way the invitation to Holiness of Life which Jesus gives us all in the Gospel. The Pope reminds us to pay heed to the small things because when taken together these have dramatic impact on the welfare of all. We must, he writes, *strive for all that is great, better and more beautiful while at the same time being concerned for the little things, for each day's responsibilities and commitments* (#169).

Many years ago our own Bishops, in their response to the deliberations of the National Pastoral Congress held in 1980 wrote these stirring words:

*We acknowledge the responsibility which rests with the People of God and with each individual to work for a more just distribution of the world's good and resources, for more comprehensive programmes of sharing our wealth with others in greater need, and for the adoption by individuals and communities of a simpler and more just life style.*

*We must be aware of our responsibility for the whole of our environment, the created world which God has entrusted to our care and of which we are merely stewards, accountable to the Creator for the use we make of it. (#166).*

These sentiments have been expressed more fully and more urgently by Pope Francis in his challenging Letter *Laudato Si - On Care for our Common Home*.

During the past year we in Our Lady of Kirkstall Parish have been engaged in a variety of endeavours to respond to this challenge...

We have been **praying** together at Mass on the first Sunday of every month for our efforts to bear fruit. There has been great **collaboration** of parishioners across our three constituent local churches of Holy Name, St Mary's. and the Assumption of Our Lady in this enterprise. With the encouragement of their Leaders the young people in the several sections of our **Uniformed Organisations** have played an important part in the developing of our Live Simply programme. The Communities of our two **Primary Schools** have been engaged in promoting our efforts in and beyond their classrooms and assembly halls. **Families and individuals** are becoming involved in the activities of the Programme and in carrying out the monthly practical resolutions **at home** as best they can. And a very readable and informative **monthly Leaflet** describing the aims of the *Live Simply Award* and detailing the programme in our own parish has been ably produced by a sequence of parishioners in turn.

This weekend there is being distributed a **Special Edition** of this Leaflet, in full colour, and with many photographs illustrating the range of activities that have been undertaken over the months since the programme was inaugurated. It began last year, you may remember, with a **Survey** to try and gauge the whereabouts of the parishioners of Our Lady of Kirkstall in relation to the key ideas behind the Live Simply scheme. The purpose of this Leaflet is to celebrate what has been achieved since then, and to encourage our ongoing commitment to the task. At some stage in the future it may be helpful to undertake another survey to discover what progress has been made within our lives - as individuals, as families, groups, as churches, and as a Parish community.

In today's Mass the Scriptures themselves urge us onwards. The first reading from the Book of Wisdom reminds us that God brought all things into being and created us in the image of his own self to enjoy our life in this wonderful world and forever - *imperishably* - with him in the one that is to come. St Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, our second reading, urges us to *balance our surplus against the needs of others* and to be as generous in spirit as was the Lord Jesus. The Gospel tells how He brought back to health and vitality a little girl who seemed to have died. We pray that our actions in accordance with his teaching and example will effect greater justice in the human family and further the integration of all that is.

As we prayed in the Gospel Acclamation: *May the Lord enlighten the eyes of our mind so that we can see what hope his call holds for us.*