



DIOCESE OF SALFORD

*Pastoral Letter of
The Right Reverend Terence J Brain
Bishop of Salford*

My Dear People,

It is now six months since our Holy Father Benedict XVI came to visit us. The theme of his visit was “Heart speaks to Heart”, the motto of Blessed John Henry Newman. How one heart speaks to another is measured in the giving of oneself to another: “See how these Christians love one another!” Today’s mass readings remind us of this fact.

The first reading, from the prophet Isaiah, assures us that if we give bread to the hungry and relief to the oppressed, then our light will rise in the darkness (Isaiah 58:7–10). In today’s gospel Jesus reminds us that each one of us is ‘the light of the world’ and that we must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing our good works, they may give praise to our father in heaven.

The two readings bring together the two most important things a Christian can do: love God and love our neighbour. The two things are inseparable and we cannot have one without the other. Loving our neighbour is both a personal and a family responsibility that is also shared by the whole faith community– the Family of God – of which we are each a part through baptism.

Pope Benedict in his encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love) put it simply:

Love of neighbour, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost a responsibility for each individual member of the faithful, but it is also a responsibility for the entire ecclesial community at every level:...As a community, the Church must practise love. Love thus needs to be organized if it is to be an ordered service to the community.

“You are the light of the world: you are the salt of the earth!” The ones who, with the Bishop, organise the service of love throughout the

diocese. The salt of the earth: those we can depend on in a time of need: those who come up trumps! The ones who light up our darkness.

Today is a special Sunday in the history of our diocese. Since 1886 our diocesan charity has been the Rescue Society and your love has been focused very much on needy children. For 125 years your light has shone in the love and care to hundreds of children. Times have changed, legislation has changed and we need to enlarge the target of our love.

Consequently we have dissolved the Rescue Society and the Catholic Welfare Society and established a new charity with a much wider remit. It is called CARITAS Diocese of Salford.(CARITAS is the Latin word for love). It will be owned by the family of God in the Salford Diocese and will be the instrument, the lamp stand on which “your light will shine for everyone in the house and in the sight of men, so that seeing your good works they may give praise to your father in heaven”.

Our new charity, Caritas Diocese of Salford, has been specially created to bring together the many corporate acts of mercy and other charitable activities in the diocese. Caritas will create a family of service, both professional and voluntary, that will give expression to the two most important imperatives of our faith – to love God and to love our neighbour.

Our new charity is part of the process of Faith in the Future which began when I came to the Diocese and seeks to find a response to the needs of our own times. However, the story of Caritas has a long and rich history that was begun by one of my predecessors, Bishop Herbert Vaughan in 1886, when he invited Sister Alice Ingham of the newly formed Congregation of the Franciscan Missionaries of St. Joseph to ‘rescue’ and ‘watch over’ children in workhouses by founding ‘homes of street boys’ and to protect ‘young and helpless children’.

My vision for Caritas is that in time all the works of the diocese concerned with social justice will come under the umbrella of Caritas so we have one vision and one purpose but many different ways in which we bring our mission about.

Caritas will also advocate on behalf of those individuals whose voices are not heard and bring together those concerned with the material and spiritual wellbeing of people experiencing poverty, social

injustice or neglect. Caritas will also work directly with the Department of Social Responsibility in the Diocese of Salford and in partnership with the Faith and Justice Commission, Racial Justice, St. Antony's Centre for Church and Industry, Revive refugee & asylum seekers service, St. Joseph's Mission to Deaf People and the Hospital & Prison Chaplaincies.

The new charity will provide professional support to allow local initiatives to grow. It will help us all to realise that what you do in your community is part of the work of the Family of God in the Diocese: we are one in body and spirit serving the one God through the one Lord, one faith and one baptism. It is not to be a charity whereby you put your money on the plate to pay somebody else to do the good works. It is your good work that must shine out through CARITAS.

I have appointed Mr Mark Wiggin to be its first Director and to steer our new charity to every corner of the diocese. I ask you to give him your prayers and support in this tremendous undertaking.

Today is the very first Diocesan Appeal and collection for Caritas Diocese of Salford. Please God in years to come your children and great-grandchildren will be proud to tell their children that their family has been serving Caritas in their parish, in their school, in their Deanery, in the Diocese since it began.

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "+ Terence J Brain". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+ Terence J Brain
Bishop of Salford

Given at Wardley Hall on Tuesday 25th January, 2011, the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul,
and appointed to be read in all churches and chapels of the diocese
on the weekend of 5th and 6th February, 2011,
the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time.



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My Dear People,

“The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matthew 24:44)

How do you react to this statement? The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Do you focus on the first part of the sentence – “the Son of Man is coming”, or on the second part - “at an hour you do not expect”? If we look at the first part of the sentence, do we hear “The Son of Man is coming”, or do we hear “The Son of Man came”? Or even “The Son of Man will come in the future”? Do we think of Advent as primarily remembering an historical event, the birth of Jesus Christ?

There are many people who think Advent is all about past history and has nothing to do with today and our present lives. Yet the gospel says: “The Son of Man is coming” – present tense: now! Advent 2010 is about meeting Christ in the “now”. How do we meet Him? Think about it: take time to be quiet – because it is in the quiet of our being that we meet Him.

All history has a connection with the present and Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever, is not restricted, or confined, by history or time: He is Lord: He is “now”. Some people will only hear “the Son of Man *will* come”, as in the future. He is not coming in my time: I can forget about His coming for the present moment. There will be time later on to think about Him if I need to.

If we think this way we are at risk of never meeting Christ in our lives, nor ever understanding His life: that He came into this world in order that we may have life and have it to the full. We will not be ready to receive Him in the future if we do not understand His coming in the “now”. And the Son of Man is!

