



Marking Prisoners' Sunday this October

Our work helps to provide a bridge of support, keeping families together, reducing reoffending and creating safer prisons. Prisoners' Sunday is the Church's national day of prayer and action in support of prisoners and their families, and the work of Pact.



In preparation for 8th October (or a nearby Sunday), we encourage you to:

- ▶ Look out for your Prisoners' Sunday parish resources pack- arriving next week
- ▶ Put up the poster
- ▶ Pray using the bidding prayers
- ▶ Arrange a second collection for Pact's work
- ▶ Request a speaker for Mass

Bishop
Richard Moth
shares:

“Income from Prisoners' Sunday is very important to Pact. It helps with planning ahead and meeting the urgent needs of vulnerable people affected by imprisonment.”

Responding to challenges in the justice sector: Malc's story



This year's HM Inspectorate of Prisons annual report once again highlights the impact of staffing shortages on prisoners' time out of cell and concerns about the care of those in prison living with mental ill health. In response CEO Andy Keen-Downs called for "prioritising prisoners' health and wellbeing and supporting them to build or maintain positive relationships with family and significant others." This approach is proven to reduce reoffending, create safer prisons, and ensure better outcomes for prisoners and their families.

The support of Catholic and Christian people and parish communities provides us with critical financial resources and the encouragement and inspiration to continue walking alongside our brothers and sisters affected by imprisonment – people like Malc*.

Malc was a few months from the end of a long sentence. He had struggled with mental ill health for much of his life but was working hard to turn things around. Like many prisoners, he was anxious about leaving prison and finding a place back in society.

Malc was taking courses, staying positive and preparing for release. He owned only a couple of boxes of items he had collected over the years. Among his belongings was a treasured set of clothes his parents had sent him so he had something 'good' to wear on his release day. Unknown to them then, they would not live to see Malc walk through the prison gates.

A few months ago, Malc left prison temporarily to attend a hospital appointment. A young prison officer made an honest mistake and neglected to lock Malc's cell door while he was away. When Malc returned, he found that all his carefully collected belongings had been stolen, including the clothes from his parents. This hit him very hard. His mental health deteriorated, and he was placed on suicide watch. The prison's Deputy Governor called on the Pact team to see if they could help.

Pact's worker Charmaine* sat with Malc and listened to how he was feeling. They discussed the items he had lost and agreed on which were most urgent to replace. Pact organised toiletries and other essentials for Malc's last few weeks inside, and Charmaine reassured him that the team could provide respectable clothes to wear on his release. Although they would not be the same as his mum and dad had given him, the gesture went some way to restoring Malc's dignity and peace of mind.

At first, Malc was embarrassed and tearful. He felt terrible about receiving charity. But Charmaine explained that Pact's supporters - some of whom had been in similar situations - cared about him and his future.

Thanks to Charmaine's support, Malc was removed from suicide watch and can now face the future, knowing Pact is there for him. The Deputy Governor told us that the few items Pact provided through the generosity of supporters may well have saved Malc's life. He is back on track and can make a fresh start on his release.

Given the continuing pressures on the justice system, our work in prisons, courts and communities across England and Wales is vital. Pact staff and volunteers strive to make a difference, shining a light into the darkest places and bringing dignity and hope to the children, families and individuals they encounter.

Thank you for your support and solidarity with all those affected by imprisonment.

*names changed to protect identity



You can find Pact's Faith in Action work on Twitter and Facebook. Follow us @PactFaithAction

Pope Francis shares blessing for Pact's work

This year marks 125 years since Pact's formation as the Catholic Prisoners' Aid Society. Recently, CEO Andy Keen-Downs was privileged to meet with Pope Francis at the Vatican, asking him to bless an image of Mary Untier of Knots on behalf of those affected by imprisonment in England and Wales.

Andy said: **"It is hard to express what this symbolic and spiritual support from Pope Francis for Pact's work means. His concern for people in prison is well-known. To bring back a physical symbol of that care to prisoners in England and Wales is humbling."**

Over the coming months, Pact's Faith in Action team will share the image and Pope Francis' blessing with people in prison and our Catholic and Christian supporters and friends.



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Putting your faith into action

We'd love to hear your ideas and how you've been walking alongside our brothers and sisters affected by imprisonment. Get in touch at parish.action@prisonadvice.org.uk. Here's what we've been up to in recent months...

Pact celebrates inaugural supporters' Mass



Earlier this year, we gathered for Mass with friends and supporters at HMP Wormwood Scrubs, chosen for its beautiful, spacious chapel. Bishop Paul McAleenan was our main celebrant, and some of the men serving sentences joined us for the occasion. In our bidding prayers, we asked, **"God of mercy, may your love overcome struggle and heartache and bring new life."**

Following the service, we escorted guests to the Visitors' Centre outside the prison gate for conversation over refreshments. We extend a huge thank you to all who attended and for the different ways they support Pact and those we serve.

Second successful parish to prison pilgrimage

Faith in Action Volunteering Manager Marie and Parish Rep Paula organised a pilgrimage from St Margaret of Scotland parish, Carshalton Beeches, to HMP High Down this summer. Following morning Mass, accompanied by Radio Maria England, 35 pilgrims walked to the prison before gathering to pray outside the walls. The Pact team also welcomed the group to the Visitors' Centre for refreshments and a presentation about our work and its impact on those affected by imprisonment.

You can find information about arranging your own parish-prison pilgrimage on our website at www.prisonadvice.org.uk/prisoners-sunday.



AGM & Volunteer Awards with Lord Keith Bradley

This year's AGM and Volunteer Awards take place on **20 September at London South Bank University**. We are delighted to welcome Lord Keith Bradley as our keynote speaker, reflecting on the challenges facing those with mental ill health and learning disabilities in the criminal justice system. His speech will be followed by our national Volunteer Awards and a reception. [Book your place online at pact1.link/AGM23FS](http://pact1.link/AGM23FS).

Our AGM is also an opportunity to meet our trustees and consider whether you might be interested in serving as a volunteer on our Board. We welcome applicants who will champion our values and bring different professional skills and life experiences. We're particularly interested to hear from people from diverse communities, young professionals, and those with expertise in psychology and the NHS. For more details, email Anna Smith at ea@prisonadvice.org.uk.

Read our interview with Chair of Trustees, Phil Taylor OBE: pact1.link/PhilT23



Staying in touch



We always respect our supporters' wishes and would like to know if you're happy to keep receiving Fresh Start. If you are, then you don't need to do anything.

If you'd like us to stop sending Fresh Start or if your contact details have changed, you can get in touch by:

Telephone: 07710 170 942
Email: fresh.start@prisonadvice.org.uk
Post: Pact, 29 Peckham Road, London, SE5 8UA

Dates for the diary

Go to www.prisonadvice.org.uk/events or scan the QR code



- **Cathedral Mass for Prisoners' Sunday**
8 October
Birmingham, Northampton, Nottingham, Plymouth, Southwark, Wrexham
- **10 October**
Westminster
- **15 October**
Arundel & Brighton
- **Online JustPeople Workshop**
25 October, 9 am – 1 pm
- **JustPeople Roadshow - Northampton**
18 November, 10 am – 1.30 pm
- **London Carol Service**
5 December, 7 pm
Our Lady of Victories Kensington
- **Birmingham Carol Service**
7 December, 7 pm
Our Lady & St Brigid Northfield



Pact is the national Catholic charity supporting prisoners, people with convictions and their children and families. We provide caring and life-changing services at every stage of the criminal justice process: in court, in prison, on release, and in the community.

Pact's journey began in 1898 as the Catholic Prisoners' Aid Society and our vision, mission and values are taken directly from Catholic Social Teaching, Scripture and the tradition of the Church. We believe in a society in which justice is understood as a process of restoration and healing, in which prisons are used sparingly and as places of learning and rehabilitation, and in which the innate dignity and worth of every human being is valued. We work for the common good of Society, taking a public-health based approach that intersects criminal justice, child and family welfare, mental health, wellbeing provision and health & social care.

Contact Us:

Website: www.prisonadvice.org.uk

Email: parish.action@prisonadvice.org.uk



The Prisoners' Families Helpline offers support for families who have a loved one in contact with the criminal justice system.

www.prisonersfamilies.org

member
caritas
social action network

Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Pact is registered in England and Wales as a charity (no. 219278) and a company limited by guarantee (no. 356443)