

# LOVE IN ACTION



## CALL TO COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION



“ We need a movement of people who know we need each other, who have a sense of responsibility to others and to the world.”

Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream*



“No man is an island” as John Donne’s poem begins. As human beings, we are called to live in community, with others, growing together and flourishing as a result. We are also called to get involved, Pope Francis urges us to be protagonists, to be the ones who change things.

We are called to be active members of society, our local and global community.

We’re called to support one another. What are my gifts and talents which could be used to the advantage of the wider community?

We can’t just sit back and bemoan what’s happening, whether in our own parish and community, society, or the world. We are called to get our hands dirty, to get involved, to help build a better world. We’re all called to put love into action.

“

Pope Francis,  
*Christ is Alive*

In one way or another, fight for the common good, serve the poor, be protagonists of the revolution of charity and service.”

Josepha has a keen eye for those who might need a helping hand to meet others. She has a natural welcoming heart, but also the gift to be able to get people involved. When she heard of a new family in the parish school with a child with intellectual disabilities, she looked for an opportunity to introduce them to the parish Saturday club. The club brings families together in a mixed ability, open and non-judging group.

The mum brought her son along and discovered a place of belonging, not just for her little boy, but also where she can get support for herself. She found out more about the local area and crucial benefit information from other people’s experiences. Although shy at first, she responded to Josepha’s invitation to get more involved and now enjoys organising termly parish activities for people of all abilities.

“ God’s world is a world where everyone feels responsible for the other, for the good of the other... ”

In reflection, fasting and prayer, each of us deep down should ask ourselves:

**Is this really the world that I desire?  
Is this really the world that we all carry in our hearts?  
Is the world that we want really a world of harmony and peace,  
in ourselves,  
in our relations with others,  
in families,  
in cities,  
in and between nations?**

Pope Francis, *Vigil of Prayer for Peace*

## REFLECTION

“

Matthew 25:40

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.



Using the model from Cardinal Cardijn, reflect on how community and participation are not being upheld locally and globally, what our faith calls us to do about it, and what actions we may be able to take to enable all people to flourish.

What in our local community do we want to change for the better?

SEE

What needs to be done? What is our faith calling us to do?

JUDGE

What are you going to do, alone or with others, to bring about this positive change?

ACT



A community needs a soul if it is to become a true home for human beings. You, the people must give it this soul."

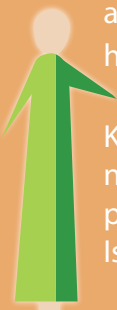
Pope Saint John Paul II



The principle of community and participation comes from the idea that we're not created to be in isolation, but as relational beings. We're born to interact with others, learning about ourselves and others through this relationship. Participation is about not remaining on the sidelines, but getting involved – supporting one another, helping build a better world for all.



Look at your weekly calendar. Is there time for you to give to volunteering? Could you make time? Is there something you're always moaning about which you could help improve?



Keep your eyes peeled on the church newsletter, in the newsagents, in the local paper for organisations appealing for help. Is there something you could offer?



## GET INVOLVED!

**CARJ** (Catholic Association for Racial Justice) works to support people from diverse backgrounds in the struggle for a more just and cohesive society  
[www.carj.org.uk](http://www.carj.org.uk)

**JRS** (Jesuit Refugee Service) accompanies refugees and forced migrants, helps improve their conditions, and advocates for their cause  
[www.jrsuk.net](http://www.jrsuk.net)

Many Catholic parishes are involved with community organising. A great way to participate in your local community which takes inspiration from Catholic social teaching

**Citizens UK** brings together 300 organisations that represent the diversity and interest of civil society [citizensuk.org](http://citizensuk.org)

## PARISH PLAN

Think about gathering a few times to look together at how we can respond to the needs of our local community in the light of what we're learning in Love in Action.

Resources and ideas are available to help identify the needs of the community and plan how to respond.

Photos © Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk

