



## **'Heart speaks to Heart' - being a missionary and synodal diocese.**

### *A Six-Week Course for the Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia*

#### **WEEK 5: LOVING SERVICE (PILLAR 4)**

We often think that our 'active' life of service is in tension with our 'inner' life of contemplation and prayer. But in both dimensions of life, we are seeking to encounter Jesus and to serve Him. Matthew 25 makes this very clear - the Lord that we worship and adore in the Eucharist and in prayer, we also encounter in the least of His brothers and sisters.

St David reminded his followers:

*"A gwnewch y pethau bychain a welsoch ac a glywsoch gennyf – Do the little things well that you see me doing."*

We are encouraged and challenged by the witness of another's life of service and generosity. It has been good these past three years to discover the variety of ways in which Catholics in the Diocese are engaged in projects of loving service of our neighbour - food banks, homeless projects, SVP, outreach to those with special needs, support of CAFOD, Aid to the Church in Need, Missio, Apostleship of the Sea, and so many more. We experience the Lord on the Cross in these, the least of His children. In their love and suffering, and their great joy, they teach us how to live our faith in simple and practical ways. They show us the living body of Jesus present in His Resurrected wounds in which He manifests the depth of His love and His suffering. Our personal encounter with Jesus in prayer, helps us to see Him in those who are least, and when we meet Him in them, we also want to seek Him in prayer, in the Blessed Sacrament, at Mass, and in our prayerful reading of the Scriptures.

I want us to encourage and strengthen *Caritas Cardiff-Menevia*, our diocesan network which seeks to support and encourage practical initiatives of loving service at local level. This will include practical ways in which we can assist in the situation of refugees, in those caught up in modern forms of slavery, or with initiatives seeking to care for 'our common home'. I have been deeply moved to hear of the desire of parishioners across the diocese to be involved in these areas of loving service.



Neither should we see this as in conflict with our desire for people to deepen their personal relationship with Jesus, or as a hindrance to sharing our faith. Perhaps we need to grow in confidence about being more explicit about the motivation for the good works we do. This too, is part of sharing our faith. It is not a matter of proselytising but of helping others, and ourselves, to see the intimate link between prayer and loving service.

**For reflection (Week 5):**

1. **Many may feel we are – at last – on ‘safer ground’ here: the loving service of others is something we may feel we are ‘better at’ and ‘more comfortable with’ than ‘Evangelisation. Is this so? Why might this be? Are they linked – and how?**
2. **‘My child, without God we are too poor to be able to help the poor’ – thus St Teresa of Calcutta when asked why she enquired of a priest who came to see her ‘how many hours do you pray a day’ (rather than invite him to ‘love the poor more’)? Is this our experience? How could it become like this for us? How can we become better at linking ‘loving service’ and prayer?**