

Caritas Diocese of Salford Anti-trafficking and Modern Slavery Report

Part 1 (2015-2019)

February 2021



This report is the first in a series that charts the story of one Catholic parish and how it took up the challenge to fight one of the world's largest and most lucrative illegal trades.

The report covers the period up to the October 2019, In Plain Sight Conference, inspired and led by Salford Diocese. It summarises our work under the headings of parishes, schools, the Freedom Bus and Journey to Freedom, and Publicity. It concludes with some thoughts on our impact

Caritas Anti-Trafficking was initiated by parishioners in the Parish of Our Lady of the Valley, Diocese of Salford, in Clitheroe, Sabden and Dunsop Bridge in 2014 with the aim of awareness raising and fund raising in partnership with the Medaille Trust. It was a partnership that worked well for both parties with awareness raising having a victim focus and all funds – over £5,000 generated - going to the Medaille Trust.

From the start it was clear how little people knew about human trafficking and how important was the need to raise awareness. The Parish had a number of parishioners who were able to make significant contributions: the Parish Priest who was also the Rural Dean; the Detective Chief Inspector in charge of serious crime including human trafficking in East Lancashire; the Director of Caritas Salford; the News Editor of East Lancashire Newspapers; a sign designer; a website technician; a teacher; and a leader who was prepared to work proactively and coordinate. Although the skills in this team might appear to give a significant advantage over other parishes it is probable that many parishes have an equally strong, if different, mix of local expertise.

A much wider range of awareness raising began to feature when the Diocese of Salford took the parish initiative into its charity in 2015, though talks in churches and schools continued to generate funds for the Medaille Trust.

Caritas Anti-Trafficking led a number of significant initiatives until October 2020 when we led the In Plain Sight Conference in London, the culmination of talks with the Santa Marta Group and Caritas Social Action Network over a period of several months. This event was the first of its kind bringing together over 70 representatives from dioceses, religious congregations and other organizations and was a watershed moment in our thinking and strategy.

Some of our initiatives between 2014 and 2020 are outlined below.

PARISHES

2016 was the Year of Mercy and Mgr John Corcoran, our Parish Priest, saw it as an opportunity to raise awareness of human trafficking and raise money for the Medaille Trust. At an early deanery meeting in 2015 he encouraged the St John Southworth priests to appoint Medaille reps in their churches and to have a Medaille fund raising presentation during 2016. This

generated 12 Medaille anti-trafficking representatives in 17 churches in St John Southworth Deanery, and fund raising talks for the Medaille Trust in 8 churches.

In 2017, Caritas Diocese of Salford, in partnership with the Medaille Trust, organized a prayer card initiative. The prayer card which had Our Lady and prayers on the front, and the signs of human trafficking on the back, was designed by a volunteer graphic designer in our network. We printed 10,000 cards with Our Lady and another 1,000 with a cross for the other local Christian communities. The first batch went to the churches in St John Southworth Deanery, launched on July 16, 2016 with the Gospel of the Good Samaritan. Priests were offered the option of using a homily based on the Gospel drafted by the Assistant Priest at Our Lady of the Valley. In November the exercise was repeated throughout St John Vianney Deanery.

The prayer card evidently struck a chord with people and cards based on our design and using our words were produced in the Diocese of Nottingham and by the Santa Marta Group. In addition the St John Vianney Deanery supplemented the standard card with a larger duplex version, perforated down the middle – “Take one, Share one” – where people were invited to take the double card, keep half and give the other half to someone else.

In 2018, the Santa Marta Group gave us advance warning that Day for Life that year was to have the theme of human trafficking. We led up to the day with a massive promotion exercise in the Diocese which entailed large scale circulation of four newsheets between January and June, Medaille magazines to all churches in April, correspondence with all priests and a promotional video with Bishop John Arnold. We met with 7 of the 8 rural deans and spoke at 3 deanery meetings. We designed and printed 50,000 cards with the signs of human trafficking on one side and what to do in the event of seeing something on the other. We sent enough cards to churches for every Mass attender on the day and encouraged priests to have someone hand them out as parishioners left church. The exercise was supported with a call to action in place of the homily in some churches.

SCHOOLS

Between 2015 and 2019 we had contact with 9 secondary schools (not including the seven schools that attended a Crosby Question Time event) and 3 primary schools, with talks/workshops in 7 secondary and advice to 2 primary schools. In 2015 the Medaille Trust launched an education pack which went to all secondary schools in England and Wales. We promoted the pack in Salford but also in Lancaster and Middlesborough Dioceses via their secondary school education advisor who was part of our network. We don't know the extent of take-up following talks to RE Heads and Head Teachers but one successful spin off was in a secondary school where the teacher in our Parish group worked. The school decided to develop their own materials different to but based on the Medaille Trust format. Year 9s had lessons in turn on

Art, Drama, History and Music, all with a modern day slavery theme. In the afternoon the best offerings from each class were then presented to the full group and the winner declared. The day finished with a presentation summing up the day and the main issues and a prayer.

Work with the Edmund Rice group of schools culminated in a Question Time event in Crosby with a panel comprising representatives from the Santa Marta Group, the Medaille Trust, Lancashire Police, the Pan Lancashire Anti-Slavery Partnership and chaired by Caritas Salford. Pupils attended from 8 schools in Northern England, Greater Manchester and Merseyside. At the end of the session each of the schools presented their ideas for future action.

THE FREEDOM BUS AND JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

For the 2016 Year of Mercy a parishioner from Our Lady of the Valley designed and signed the Mercy Bus which operated in the Diocese throughout the year. In 2018 the same parishioner designed and signed the Freedom Bus which was another double decker bus with the same bus company. Caritas paid £700 for the signs and the sign designer and volunteers signed the bus over a 2 day period. The bus has had 8 outings to Lancashire Constabulary anti-trafficking road shows and other events publicizing the issue via its signs and the National Slavery Helpline number. Continued use of the Freedom Bus is funded by Lancashire Constabulary. The bus is on the school run most weekdays during term time and reports from sightings come from a wide geographical area.

Journey to Freedom was designed by Joe Howson of Lee House Mission Awareness Centre, another of our partners in partnership with Caritas Salford. Journey to Freedom is a 15 minute walk through of 8 rooms representing different aspects of modern slavery told via audio stories through headphones. The mobile exhibition takes 2 hours to be assembled by a team of volunteers and it has featured in all the Pan Lancashire Anti-Slavery road shows and a number of schools where typically it remains on site for one week. The exhibition was funded by Caritas and Lancashire Constabulary. To reflect our partnership with the Medaille Trust the exhibition carries the Medaille Trust logo along with others.

PUBLICITY

In July 2015 East Lancashire Press published the first of four full page or double page articles on human trafficking. The full series covered the Our Lady of the Valley initiative, the Medaille Trust, Lancashire Police and Caritas Salford. The articles were republished in the Lancashire Evening Post. Publicity has always been an important feature of Caritas Anti-Trafficking and there were further articles in the 6 East Lancashire Press newspapers and also the Catholic press. We have also had 3 local radio slots.

Significant coverage of our work was in October 2015 when the Europe Bureau Chief of The Christian Science Monitor spent two days with Our Lady of the valley parishioners having found us on our webpage. The Christian Science Monitor had started a series looking at solutions to counter human trafficking and some of the best efforts in the EU. Our Parish was the only one the Christian Science Monitor was able to find. The article: *From England's pews, a quiet abolitionist finds his voice on slavery* appeared later that month.

Up until early 2020 when the time investment was deemed too large justify it we had sent out over 150 emails to a network of over 200 people and the diary format of the website had grown to over 60,000 words not including the many pdf documents covering notes of meetings and details of events, accessed via links. The webpage is currently under review with the diary format likely to change to include important items in more accessible form.

For a fuller list of what we have achieved see our Parish Model.

OUR IMPACT

It is clear from the above that there has been an enormous of work with many people reached. Thousands of individuals in churches, at talks, workshops, conferences and in schools have learned about human trafficking and how they can help the fight to eliminate it. In addition there has been much media coverage and over 60,000 cards plus a lot more communication within the Diocese. Via this communication and publicity and along with the Freedom Bus and the Journey to Freedom we will have reached many thousands more but apart from the few who respond directly it is hard to know what impact we have made and how some individuals may have been profoundly changed by what we have done.

We have learned of how some who having listened to us have carried the banner with their own initiatives but there could be many more we know nothing about. A striking example of how something quite small can ignite something of significance comes from a batch of Medaille Trust St Bakhita prayer cards left by us in the Cathedral Centre bookshop. A man who had never heard of St Bakhita was intrigued and did some research. He then learned of a special Mass in Burnley for the Feast of St Bakhita and heard us speak there. A local radio slot followed and the man is now a fervent promoter of anti-trafficking in his parish.

Ultimately however the success of awareness raising is the number of victims rescued and these successes are hard to attribute. We know from the National Helpline figures for 2019 (equivalent 2020 figures are not yet available) that the number of referrals is increasing year by year as awareness becomes engrained in society via the media, the work of many organizations and charities and a huge increase in Police operations aided by many Police initiated partnerships. The Modern slavery Police Transformation Unit (MSPTU) was launched in April

2017, to provide dedicated specialist teams to support all 43 police forces in England and Wales, to transform the police response to modern slavery.

We don't yet have the National Slavery Helpline figures for 2020 but we know from quarterly breakdowns that numbers are down from 2019 as a result of Covid. This doesn't necessarily mean fewer instances. Covid has created new risks and disruption of anti-slavery efforts.

For 2019 there were 9236 contacts to the National Slavery Helpline up 25% from 2018. From these contacts, 4,739 potential victims were indicated and 1,812 modern slavery cases raised. However the potential victims figure is a poor indicator influenced disproportionately year on year by the scale of individual exercises.

For Caritas Salford we do not know of any victims rescued where a call to the Police or the National Slavery Helpline was triggered as a direct result of one of our interventions. What we do know is that Lancashire Police note a spike in referral numbers after anti-trafficking initiatives. Given the thousands of people we have reached in one way or another since 2014 and the small number of referrals that we do know have resulted, it would seem beyond doubt that referrals to the National Slavery Helpline resulting from our work will be more than we know about, perhaps many more. Given that a significant proportion of calls to the Helpline result in modern slavery cases being raised it seems likely that our efforts will have been repaid with some degree of success.

Although we have had some measure of success we need to achieve much more. The Santa Marta Group, acknowledging the success of a parish based initiative, encouraged us to share more widely with other Dioceses with the aim of building a network to stimulate thought and action and encourage networking and sharing. As plans unfolded for a conference heavily weighted in favour of discussion and action we were influenced by Luke de Pulford of Arise to aim for a partnership document endorsed by the CBCEW and committed to by dioceses and Catholic organizations.

The most important change of thinking arising from the conference and its follow-on is the need to develop partnerships in the strictest sense of the word, partnerships devoid of competition and working in full harmony with, and full knowledge of, common strands in each others' work.

For Caritas Salford this thinking led to the taking on of a part time paid worker and adjusting plans to focus much less on small or local interventions and much more on diocesan and inter-diocesan initiatives. Whilst Covid-19 and the lockdown have reduced the scale and scope of initiatives possible we have nevertheless made some important strides forward and these will be covered in *Caritas Diocese of Salford Anti-trafficking and Modern Slavery Report Part 2: Towards a One Church Approach*