

A NEW AND LIVING WAY

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2015 Parish Pack



Cardinal Vincent Nichols visiting Wormwood Scrubs prison

Prisoners' Sunday

11th October 2015

An Appeal from His Eminence Vincent Nichols

Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

As President of the Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact), I invite you to join with me in supporting Prisoners' Sunday. This is a welcome development which I hope will ensure our prayers for the needs of prisoners and their families, while also offering Catholic parishes the opportunity to support the work of Pact in other ways, such as volunteering, signing Pact's new Charter for Prisoners' Children, or giving financial support.

The Gospel has a habit of holding before us uncomfortable challenges that disturb our sense of what is just and good, and it may be that this annual appeal on behalf of prisoners and their families is similarly uncomfortable. For the needs and struggles of prisoners and their families is hardly a cause for popular sympathy and support.

Nonetheless, as I read through the Gospel passage set for Prisoners' Sunday I wondered how comfortable do we really find Jesus' invitation to his Kingdom; an invitation to all – prisoners included?

A king holds a wedding banquet to which all are invited. However, the well-to-do seem reluctant to attend and give their excuses – perhaps fearing those with whom they will have to mingle. The king is enraged and commands his servants to go out and draw in from the streets everyone they can find. This they do and the wedding hall is full. But once again the king is enraged as he finds one of his guests exploiting his invitation.

To respond to the King's invitation to this banquet means that we can no more set conditions on who else is invited, than we can turn up and assume that nothing more will be asked of us. We are all invited, but would we rather not attend perhaps for fear that we may be asked to change our lives?

On Prisoners' Sunday my prayer is that we may find the courage to look beyond our systems of worldly justice, however necessary these may be, in order to know and show that all are truly invited to share in his Kingdom. And I commend to you the work of Pact who in a myriad of very practical ways seeking to make that invitation real to prisoners and their families.

Yours sincerely

+ Vincent Nichols

Cardinal Vincent Nichols
President of Pact



About Pact

Who we are:

Pact is an independent national Catholic charity working throughout England and Wales with the mission of supporting prisoners and their families to make a fresh start and to minimise the harm that can be caused by imprisonment on offenders, families and communities.

Pact's journey began in 1898. It was originally founded by two Catholic lawyers under the name of Catholic Prisoners Aid Society and was also known as the Bourne trust. Although our name has changed over the years, our vision, mission and values continue to be drawn directly from Catholic Social Teaching, Scripture, and the tradition of the Church.

What we do:

- WE PROVIDE:**
-  **1. Befrienders in court when a family member is sentenced**
 -  **2. A helpline for prisoners' families and their friends**
 -  **3. Visitor centres at prisons for families visiting a relative**
 -  **4. Supervised play areas inside prisons for prisoners' children**
 -  **5. Family support workers**
 -  **6. Parenting and relationship training courses**
 -  **7. Mentoring and resettlement support for ex-offenders**

Why we do it:

We believe in the innate dignity and worth of every human being, and in the possibility of their rehabilitation and redemption, no matter what they have done.

Andy Keen-Downs, CEO of Pact

Prisoners and their families face stigma and discrimination in society and their suffering is often overlooked. We want to stand up for them when no one else does, give them care, practical support, sympathy, encouragement, and show them the path to a 'new and living way'.

Your help with Prisoners' Sunday:

A day to direct our thoughts and prayers to prisoners, their families and children. Prisoners' Sunday is the occasion to make a difference and be there for those who most need.

As a Catholic charity we have faith in the assistance of the Church in helping us continue to carry on our vital work. Last year's day of prayer and giving raised £35,000, and this gave a great boost to our work and encouraged us to thrive and succeed. For example, the extension of our Basic Caring Communities (BaCC) to women was a direct result of Prisoners' Sunday.

Please help us continue our work by holding a second collection on Prisoners' Sunday

A Taste of What We Do

Basic Caring Communities

Basic Caring Communities (BaCC) is one of the many projects ran by Pact in support of ex-offenders. A Basic Caring Community is a group of four volunteers putting their faith into action, and one ex offender. BaCC volunteers assist newly released prisoners, helping them to resettle into the community and not re-offend. Each group provides a mix of practical support, companionship and a real sense of community for the ex-prisoner.

The thinking behind Basic Caring Communities

Coming out of prison can be a frightening and lonely experience. The wish to 'go straight' can be very strong, but often the support and help is simply not there. Many prisoners walk out of the prison gate with no one to welcome them back into the world. This is one of the reasons why 47% of adults are reconvicted within a year. However, when family, friends or community are there, this stats substantially decrease. And this is what BaCC is for!



**Thank you for supporting the work of Pact!
Please help other ex-offenders to make a
fresh start this Prisoners' Sunday.**

I am delighted that Pact's Basic Caring Communities programme is now up and running in the Diocese of Clifton. It is especially encouraging to see the project now serving female ex-offenders. This is a brilliant project and a real concrete expression of our discipleship.

Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton

NEWS!

Extending BaCC to women

From November 2014 BaCC, based in the Bristol area, has begun supporting and befriending female ex-offenders from HMP East Wood Park. So far this service was provided only to male ex-offenders, but services for women are under way. Your help on Prisoners' Sunday will give an invaluable support to this project, and will enable PACT to extend BaCC to many more women ex-offenders across England and Wales!



Brian (BaCC)

I'm Brian and on the day I was released from prison I had nowhere to go and no one to turn to. All the agencies that were meant to help me on my release had let me down. I was on the edge; suicidal, desperate. If it wasn't for Pact I don't know where I would have ended up.

The first day of being released is so important and without my Basic Caring Communities group I would have been back on the drink and the drugs. Not only that, but I would have been put back in prison for sleeping on the street. Pact gave me practical and emotional support. It was truly lifesaving to have somebody there who was non-judgemental, who would listen, give advice and be sympathetic to my plight. It really was the story of the Good Samaritan happening to me. It was one stranger helping another stranger out of the goodness of their hearts. It was Pact which has helped me on my journey into being received into the Church just this year!

Kelly (Parenting Courses)

My name is Kelly, I'm 38 years old and I've been in and out of prison for the last 22 years. I've got three children and one grandson. I find the work that the Pact Family Engagement Worker has done with me has really helped with my family ties. In Prison there is limited support for women like me who need help liaising with the Social Services regarding my children's welfare. The Pact worker gave me the most important thing: her time.

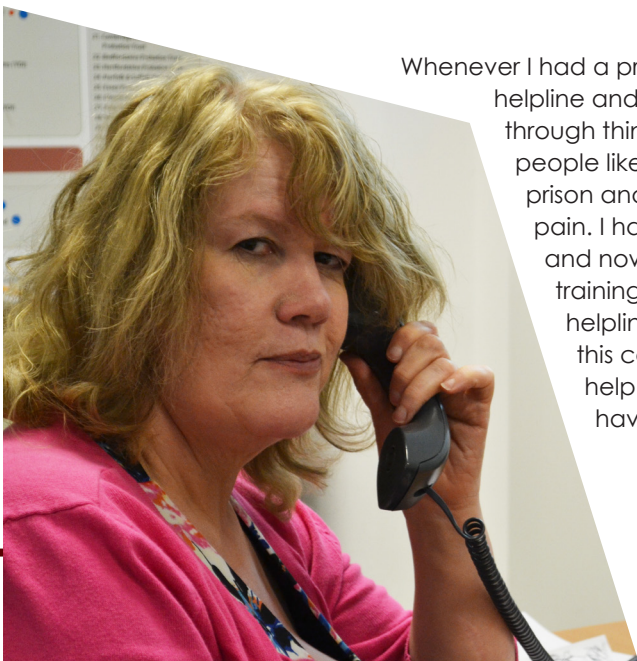
I really enjoyed the course I did which covered different parenting skills on how to be a good Mum. In the course we made things for our children and at the end of the sessions our children visited us with their other parent. This was a special visit, completely different to our normal ones, at these family days we can stand and even play with our children. Normally we must always sit opposite our children and not move from our seats without permission. I've also recorded a CD with bedtime stories for my youngest; at night time he can at least hear Mummy's voice until I get out of here. My Partner plays them every night as part of my children's bedtime routine. All of this is due to the work of Pact, all of us Mothers here in HMP Eastwood Park owe a lot to Pact, we are grateful.



Sheila (Helpline)

I am Sheila and I had my son in prison for 13 years. At the beginning I was in pieces and didn't know what to do. Someone told me about the Pact helpline and that's how I got to know the service. I don't know how I would have managed without them; they helped me with everything. They really understand the needs of families; they give a non-judgemental listening ear when you want to pour your heart out. Pact's support through the helpline and the coffee mornings gave me the strength to go on. It is hard to do it on your own.

Whenever I had a problem I would call up the helpline and they would help me go through things. At coffee mornings I met people like me; many had a son in prison and I felt I was not alone in my pain. I have been going since 2008 and now I am taking a leading role, training volunteers and I became a helpline volunteer myself! Having this continuing support is a great help to me and I want others to have it too.



Pact

in the
Words
of our
Service Users



Sermon Notes

One of the most poignant places in a prison is the visits hall. These are usually fairly featureless places, with maybe a crèche in the corner for young children, where the world outside and the world inside a prison meet. There are groups of chairs around a table, with one chair on its own, for the prisoner, and a group of three for his or her visitors. Around the edge of the hall prison officers maintain a watchful eye, making sure that nothing illegal passes from one to another. It is a place of whispered conversations, of stress sometimes as fragile relationships struggle along, but very often it is a place of love.

It is here that a mother, a daughter, a grandmother, or a partner will look long and hard at the person they have come to visit. They will have known the prisoner long before he or she became a prisoner. And they will know them so well. It could be said of these people that they look steadily at the prisoner and they loved them.

Of all the words in our gospel this morning, these words about Jesus are deeply moving. A young man, full of ideals, full of energy, full of hope, has heard about this good man who seems so different from other people he may have encountered. He wants to come close to Jesus, to please him, and so he asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. He thought he knew the answers to this question, but maybe he didn't know Jesus as well as he thought. You see, this young man's encounter was with God, with God who knows us through and through and who knows what stands between us and eternal life - in the case of this young man his attraction to riches.

But does Jesus, seeing into this young man's heart, reject him or condemn him? No, the gospel tells us that, knowing him so well; he looks steadily at him and loves him.

Those who end up in prison, in that visits hall, do so for many complex reasons – maybe through greed, plain and simple, maybe through a love violence for its own sake, but often the reason why people commit crime are indeed complex. And it is so important, if people in prison are to 'make all things new' to begin a new life that they stay close to those who know them, to those who love them and who will support them once they are released.

We all need to be challenged about how we lead our lives, about our values and our relationships. Today's gospel should help us to do this. But we also need to support those who find this process so difficult and yet remain loving of those in prison. We need to support the families of people in prison so that they can support those they love in making their lives new again on release.

Please pray for those in prison, that they have an encounter with Jesus Christ and know that they are loved. Please pray for those who love people who are in prison.

Please pray for the work of the Prison Advice & Care Trust (Pact) and all those who give real practical support so that loving relationships may be strengthened, even in the somewhat bleak atmosphere of the visits hall.



Written by Fr Rodger Reader,
Catholic Bishops' Prisons Adviser.

Children's Liturgy Material

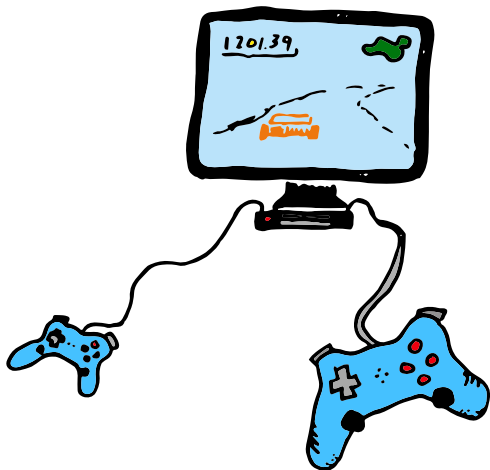


Created by Joanne Hornby,
Chaplain to Pact

So a rich young man asks Jesus how to live forever. And Jesus who knows this man's deep thoughts knows that he also wants to hang onto stuff that makes him happy.

Say we have a special toy, a new bike, a play station; something that makes us happy. Well there's nothing wrong with that. But what if Jesus said "someone else needs it more"-what would you do? Well Jesus isn't saying we can never have nice things but he is saying that we have to put God first. The rich young man had been good all his life but he couldn't quite put Jesus first.

People in prison lose their freedom because they did something wrong. They wanted something that didn't bring them life and closer to God. So they go to prison and there are people there who care about helping them not to do those things again. God cares very much about people in prison and we know that from Matthew 25: 39 where Jesus shows us that he cares about them. So let's think a little about this....



- What possession would we be sad to lose?
- Could the rich young man have put his money to good use for others?
- When we behave badly, how can we get close to God again?
- How does it feel to give something to someone?

Prayer:

**Holy God,
Thank you for your gift to us of your son, Jesus. Please help us to put you first in our lives and share what we have with others.**

We ask you to be with people in prison and help them as they get closer to you.

Please be with all those who lose what is special to them and help them to know that you are with them.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

Teachers

At this point you could give the children a flat biscuit and some icing pens with the instruction to make the face of Jesus or the Rich young man, and with the intention of giving it to someone after Mass.

Requirements: Flat biscuits, Icing pens, Kitchen roll



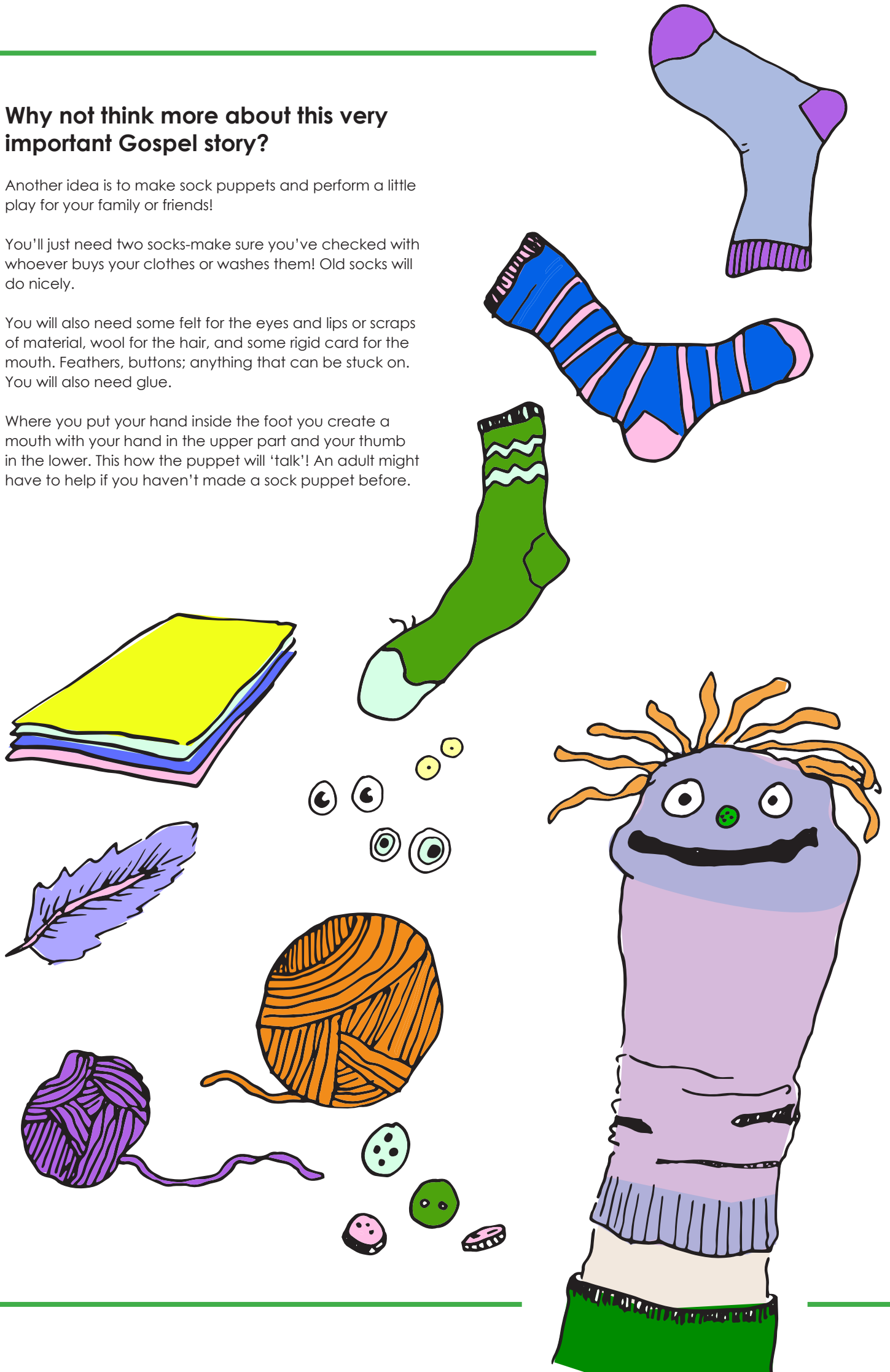
Why not think more about this very important Gospel story?

Another idea is to make sock puppets and perform a little play for your family or friends!

You'll just need two socks-make sure you've checked with whoever buys your clothes or washes them! Old socks will do nicely.

You will also need some felt for the eyes and lips or scraps of material, wool for the hair, and some rigid card for the mouth. Feathers, buttons; anything that can be stuck on. You will also need glue.

Where you put your hand inside the foot you create a mouth with your hand in the upper part and your thumb in the lower. This how the puppet will 'talk'! An adult might have to help if you haven't made a sock puppet before.



P Z X W K M S I L V E R
 A S U O I C E R P H T E
 S D J Q N S K F V O G T
 S S W P G N D B C N O E
 X T G Z D W J O X O O R
 C E O M O N E Y M U D N
 F A D N M A S T E R P A
 W L M Z E Q U U T F E L
 Y D R E R U S A E R T X
 N E E D L E F D R T E Y
 M C Y T U A E B M O R Z
 N W P E E L P I C S I D

Words:

MASTER
 HONOUR
 JESUS
 STEAL
 TREASURE
 KINGDOM
 CAMEL
 GOOD

SILVER
 NEEDLE
 EYE
 PETER
 WISDOM
 DISCIPLE
 POOR
 STONE

BEAUTY
 PRECIOUS
 ETERNAL
 GOD
 PASS
 MONEY

Words can be found by searching forwards or backwards and diagonally forwards and backwards.
 All the words appear in the readings Mark 10:17-30 and Wisdom 7:7-11

What You Can Do

Pray

We value the support of people of faith through prayers. We ask you to pray for the projects, the prisoners, ex-offenders, their families, children, chaplains and prison staff, probation officers, victims of offenders, the work of Pact, our staff and volunteers.

Volunteer

Our volunteers carry out a variety of important and rewarding roles, giving an invaluable contribution to the work of Pact.

If you would like to spend some of your free time at the service of ex-offenders and their families, there are many opportunities available to you. Our projects include BaCC and JustPeople among others. We provide ongoing training, expenses and support.

See our website for current volunteer vacancies: www.prisonadvice.org.uk/Get+involved

Sign the children's charter

Last year, Pact teamed up with a group of children and young people who have had a family member in prison, to ask them what changes they'd like to see in the Criminal Justice System. The result was 'Our Voice: the Charter for Children & Young People with a Family Member in Prison' (also known as 'Our Voice'). The young people, supported by Pact, are asking other youth, adults and organisations to make their voices heard and create real and long-lasting change.

If you agree with the Children's Charter please join us and lobby your local MP for these voices to be heard.

Sign up today at:
www.prisonadvice.org.uk/OurVoice



Donate

Information and instruction for collection

Please hold a second collection in aid of Prisoners' Sunday for Pact.*

1. After Mass, count the money collected and write the total amount on the collection form which you can find below.
2. Bank the cash in your usual way and go online at www.prisonadvice.org.uk/prisoners-sunday and follow the instructions
3. Alternatively, send a cheque made payable to Pact at:
Pact, 29 Peckham Road, London, SE5 8UA
4. Please make sure you enclose:
A cheque for the total, made payable to Pact.
A completed collection form in order to identify your parish. (Please cut this out of the resource booklet)

*If you require more gift aid envelopes and/or would like to have a speaker from Pact to come and give a presentation for Prisoners' Sunday, call the Supporter Relations team on 020 7735 9535.

Thank you for taking part in Prisoners' Sunday 2015. It is your help that makes Pact's work possible. Your parish donation will enable us to reach out to more prisoners, ex-offenders, families and children, and provide comfort and relief to those most in need.



Please fill in the following and return to Pact, Many thanks.

We enclose a cheque for £..... from our Prisoners' Sunday Collection.

Name of Parish Priest: Diocese:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Email address:

Please use the below space if you wish to add any comments:

Have you got a Pact Parish contact?

Is there a parishioner who would like to be the Pact point of contact for your Parish? If so, please send us their details (with their consent) so we can contact them directly:

Name: Telephone number:

Address: Email:



Prisoners · Families · Communities
A Fresh Start Together

Thank you for supporting the work of Pact!

Please help more prisoners, ex-offenders, families and children to find a 'new and living way'

Pact

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Prison Advice & Care Trust



@prisonadvice

Notices for Parishioners

Prisoners' Sunday 2016 will be on the 9th of October, and will mark the beginning of Prisoners' Week (9th to 15th October 2016); thus bringing these two occasions together once again.



www.prisonersweek.org
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[#prisonersweek](https://twitter.com/prisonersweek)