



**Prisoners'
Sunday**
13 October 2024

Dear Parish Priest / Parish Secretary,

This year Prisoners' Sunday – the national day of prayer and action for prisoners and their families – falls on 13th October. Prisoners' Sunday is an important opportunity for us all to direct our thoughts and prayers to the needs of prisoners and their families, and those who work to support our brothers and sisters affected by the criminal justice system.

The number of people in prison in England and Wales is increasing and our prisons are in crisis. In our communities there are more children and families who have a loved one in prison and who may be struggling with stigma, isolation and perhaps hardship, as a result.

Pact is the national Catholic charity working to support prisoners, people with convictions, and children and families. Pact's work is deeply rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. Pact continues to restore hope and dignity to thousands of people affected by imprisonment. Staff and volunteers work in 68 prisons across England and Wales. Their care and practical support help people in prison stay connected with their families. We know that retaining strong family bonds is a significant factor in preventing reoffending.

In the pack accompanying this letter you will find more information about Pact and Prisoners' Sunday, including bidding prayers and a parish poster. I ask you to lead your parish in prayer on Sunday 13th October for all those affected by the criminal justice system. Together we can help prisoners and their families make a fresh start.

Please include the following in your newsletters the weekend of 13th October and the weekend before:

Prisoners' Sunday - 13th October. We will remember prisoners and their families at Mass this weekend. Prisons are in crisis and life for prisoners and their families in our communities is challenging. Pact, the national Catholic prison charity support prisoners, their families and their children, offering them hope and the chance to turn their lives around. There will be a second collection to support Pact's important work.

Pact's Faith in Action team have resources and opportunities for Catholic people to explore how they might respond to Jesus' challenge, 'I was in prison and you visited me'. Information can be found on the Pact website www.prisonadvice.org.uk

The support of Catholic communities makes a huge difference to Pact and to the impact the charity can make for people living through what may well be the worst times of their lives. I express my wholehearted gratitude, on behalf of Pact, for any support you are able to offer.

Do contact Pact's Head of Faith in Action, Julia Corcoran, by email at parish.action@prisonadvice.org.uk with any questions or concerns.

With the assurance of my prayers,

Yours in Christ,

Rt Rev Bishop Richard Moth

**Liaison for Prisons
Bishop of Arundel & Brighton**

Prisoners' Sunday 13 October 2024

“Today you will be with me in paradise...”

Prisoners' Sunday is an opportunity to put your faith in action and to consider how we as individuals, as a Church, and as communities are serving our brothers and sisters affected by imprisonment.

Last year, our dedicated staff and volunteers supported more than 485,000 prison visits, assisted more than 36,000 family members through the Prisoners' Families Helpline and helped over 408 people with emergency welfare grants. Our work is a lifeline for many thousands of people struggling to stay afloat or to make a fresh start.

A message from His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols



As President of Pact, the national Catholic charity for people in prison and their families, I invite you to join with me in supporting this year's Prisoners' Sunday, on 13th October. Pact supports people throughout England and Wales, whatever their beliefs. Pact's work is varied, and includes care for children whose parents have been sent to prison, as well as offering practical assistance to people leaving prison, who are trying to make a fresh start and put their past behind them.

Pact workers can be found inside many prisons, working alongside chaplains, to support people who may be experiencing mental illness or losing hope. An important element of Pact's work is to support prisoners and their families to maintain their family bonds, recognising the anxiety, isolation and perhaps hardship they may be experiencing while a loved one is in prison. This work has been hugely influential, and it is now recognised that it is one of the most effective means to reduce the risk of re-offending by former prisoners.

Jesus himself commended those who showed concern for prisoners: 'I was in prison and you visited me'. Pact continues to rely strongly on the support of Catholic parishioners. I encourage you to play your part in its important work, whether through prayer, volunteering or financial support, putting the values of the Gospel into action and working for the common good of all.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster
President of Pact

Prisoners' Sunday Bidding Prayers

God of mercy, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison and for their children and families. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. May your love overcome struggle and heartache and bring new life.

Lord God, we commend to you all who work or volunteer, in courts, prisons and communities. May they know your presence with them as they work and may their efforts inspire us to share your love ever more widely.



Ways your parish can Pray – Act – Give

Please hold a second collection for Pact this Prisoners' Sunday, or on a suitable Sunday of your choosing.

- Use the resources in this guide and on our website during your Mass on Prisoners' Sunday, to raise lasting awareness within the parish community.
- Take a look at our Prisoners' Sunday events guide on our website and consider holding an event for your parish or group - www.prisonadvice.org.uk/prisoners-sunday
- Encourage parishioners to consider whether they might be called to volunteer for Pact, from home or in a local Pact service.
- Please invite people to consider leaving a gift to Pact when making their will. Pact is a member of Your Catholic Legacy - www.yourcatholiclegacy.org.uk
- For those who feel inspired to consider a more bespoke level of involvement, including a philanthropic gift, please encourage them to get in touch with Amy Drake at amy.drake@prisonadvice.org.uk

More resources for Prisoners' Sunday

 www.prisonadvice.org.uk/prisoners-sunday

 07710 170 942

 parish.action@prisonadvice.org.uk

If you're unable to celebrate Prisoners' Sunday on 13th October, please do consider celebrating Mass for Prisoners and their families on another day.



Name of Church/Parish:

Contact name for Parish:

Our Church/Parish has raised for Prisoners' Sunday 2024

This was raised by:

Mass collection

Special event

Other

Please tick this box if you would like us to contact you about ways for members of your congregation to volunteer for Pact in your local area.

Please send all cheques to: Pact, 29 Peckham Road, London SE5 8UA Remember to include all gift aid responses you have received. We can provide bank details if you want to make a bank transfer. Please do not send cash.

Kindly supported by

CCLA
GOOD INVESTMENT

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REGULATOR**



@PactFaithAction

The Prison Advice & Care Trust (Pact)
29 Peckham Road, London, SE5 8UA
Charity no. 219278 | Company no. 356443