

Introduction to the CAFOD Advent Prayer Pilgrimage

The aim and ambition of the CAFOD Advent Prayer Pilgrimage is to be a family that prays together so it can stay together AND shows it is a family that cares for its community and the earth.

Rather than a set of links and resources, the aim is to provide a 'walk to somewhere' through prayer and to join in a shared activity that will bring us together a little in these times of social distancing.

The walk is a virtual one. You will cover your chosen 'distance' by choosing some prayer activities and show yourself you have 'reached your destination' by filling in the star points on your Christmas star map.

The Christmas star map is ready to download from the parish website. This is for you to colour in, design or fill in with words that will remind you of what you have thought about as you say your chosen prayer. It could be simple, i.e. an item you have been inspired to donate to the food bank; or complicated, i.e. the realisation that you need to say thank you to someone for kindness they shared a long time ago.

The prayer activities are also available to download from the parish website. Each week in Advent there will be a theme that has been inspired by the hymn 'Walk with Me, O My Lord': a favourite in the CAFOD group. The short reflection picks up the message in the verses of the hymn and connects it to our journey to Christmas and our journey with our sisters and brothers nearby and throughout the world as we wait, hope and try to support one another.

Along the way, the hope is that we will find moments to receive as well as give the care, love and compassion that will bring justice and love and peace to the whole world.

There is a practical element too. Each week challenges us to remember our sisters and brothers – the ones we are not related to or are not our friends already. Just like the gospel on the feast of Christ the King says, whenever we looked after another..."you did it to me". The Christ Child asks us to care for Him through caring for our world; and the people in it.

You may choose a gift that will make a difference to your immediate community (not least the gift of time): you will know best what it is you can do. It should not be hard but it should be filled with compassion.

If you are stuck for ideas then we suggest a gift to your local food bank and we have put the local food banks information sheets on the parish website. If you do this already, then you might choose a different kind of item [sometimes small changes make us more thought-full].

The CAFOD group thought of this because our normal collection of food bank contributions has been impossible to maintain during Covid/lockdown; and because we have not been able to do our normal Harvest Festival collection of donations for the food banks.

The thinking behind the CAFOD group's idea is to allow us, as a parish, to grow together while apart; 'pray together' some new and some familiar prayers; and provide some motivation for change... of a gentle and persistent nature.

Change for Good.

Borrowing from Gandhi's philosophy that "You must be the change you want to see in the world."

Remembering our community ideal of Living Simply: in a spiritual as well as a physical sense.

Thank you.