***KEY QUOTES***

To live in community is not a question of option, but one of vocation. Christianity, by its very nature, demands the formation of community. Christianity cannot be conceived without relating to others, and relating to these people in love.

*(Oscar Romero “The Mission of the Church in the Midst of the Crisis in the Country” August 1979)*

We therefore welcome the call of the Congress for a more Christ-like attitude towards the poor, the powerless, the homeless, the handicapped, the deaf and the blind, the elderly and all who suffer in today’s society. The parish community should place such people at the centre of its life and concern. As the Congress Declaration stated: “In them we see the image of Christ crucified, a focus for our love and care, whose needs we must recognise and meet, and from whom we receive a living witness of Christ’s passion”.

*(The Easter People 124)*

***FOR REFLECTION***

What do these quotes say about the quality of:-

1. pastoral care

b) social life and activities in your church community?

If you had to score yourselves on the quality of pastoral care and social activities what would you give yourselves and why?

What do these statements mean for us in a situation where there will be fewer priests in the future?

**Visiting the sick and housebound**

Many of the sick and housebound in our parishes fulfil a most important ministry in holding the parish community in prayer.

With fewer priests and fewer members of organised groups in many of our parishes, the ministry of communicating with and visiting the sick and housebound is crucial. Our response must be proportional and realistic but we must be careful not to lose contact. In one parish in the deanery large Christmas and Easter cards are laid at the back of church a few weeks before the feasts to allow people to sign and offer their own best wishes. The cards are then delivered by hand just before the great feasts to all known sick and housebound.

In one of our deanery parishes, in addition to regular visits from Ministers of Communion from the parish itself, the Dean has visited every one of the known sick and housebound each Advent and Lent for the last two years. This has been very much appreciated by all concerned. It needs to be planned well in advance, and requires the services of the regular visitors to drive the visiting Dean around, introduce him to people and ensure he has refreshment breaks!

If you are reviewing the situation in your own parish or beginning to do this in a more structured way, then the following notes may help you:-

Check you have people who:-

* are prepared to visit a small number of parishioners in a given area and have know when to arrange for a priest, deacon or Minister of Communion to visit
* have the ability to know when to visit and when to leave!
* have the willingness to pray with the person if appropriate
* can show discernment to know when and when not to speak (or touch)
* have the ability to make a cup of tea!
* are committed to regular support
* have a willingness to listen
* remember to take a copy of the parish bulletin
* are willing to support each other by regular contact
* have safeguarding clearance for vulnerable adults

**Moving on…** In light of this reflection, the key quotes, the examples and the checklist, how do you react to the actions taken by the parishioners and what action can you take as a parish community in these changed times.

You may find the generic *“Action Planning Profoma*” helpful as you plan for the future………………………..

##### *(Please insert your own parish name here before copying for parish use)*

##### *Parishes of Hope*

*Celebrating, consolidating and securing the Mission of the Church in Doncaster Deanery; - an opportunity to deepen the faith of our Parish communities in changing times*

***“Gratitude for the past, enthusiasm for the present, hope for the future” (John Paul ll)***

##### *Visiting the Sick and Housebound*

##### *Diocese of Hallam*

##### *Doncaster Deanery (St Charles Borromeo)*

***Dean: Rev Augustine O’Reilly V.F.***

*Our Lady of Sorrows & St Francis, Armthorpe; Blessed English Martyrs, Askern; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Bentley; St Alban’s, Denaby Main; Our Lady of Mount Carmel Intake; Sacred Heart, Balby; St Paul’s, Cantley; St Peter in Chains, Doncaster: St Mary’s, Edlington; English Martyrs, Mexborough; St Joseph & St Nicholas, Moorends; Christ the King, Rossington; Our Lady of the Assumption, Stainforth; St Joseph & St Teresa, Woodlands.*