

- My name is Anne McNulty, and I am a member of the Good Shepherd St Vincent de Paul conference
- And I thank Fr Michael for allowing time for me to talk with you today about our purpose and work

We have distributed leaflets outlining our work – and our annual report of all activities conducted across the last year will be available as you leave Mass today.

So, I intend to draw attention to some key aspects of our work today.

- SVP members are ordinary people called to turn concern into practical action and help to alleviate poverty – in all its forms and whomever it may affect...*indeed one of the central tenets of the society is to see the face of Christ in everyone we meet*

You are a very lucky person if you have not, at some time in your life, needed kindness, friendship and support

- An unexpected illness
- Change in family circumstances
- Loneliness
- Job loss or financial difficulties
- New to the area and seeking friendship
- New home but no furniture
- No home and seeking safety

Our mission is to meet needs such as these: for example, by...

- **Befriending** – a keystone of our work
  - Regular visits to people at home or telephone calls
  - Especially important for parishioners who can no longer come to Mass
  - Visit people in Care homes/hospital
- Ensuring everyone in our parish community can participate in parish events if they wish to – subsidising the costs where finances may be a barrier
- Supporting people to get back onto their feet
  - Support re debt management
    - Perhaps liaising with energy/financial companies to agree repayment schedules making payments more manageable
  - Helping navigate the Benefits system to ensure people receive the help they are entitled to
  - Support with job seeking/work visas
- **Supporting families in our schools**
  - Winter clothes/coats
  - Food vouchers
  - Supporting our school Mini Vinnies – school conferences for primary school children who meet to help those in need in their school/local community
- **Material assistance** – items such as clothes, furniture, emergency food shopping, baby equipment/toys, food bank referrals
- **Signposting - To do this we may engage with**
  - A range of other organisations/charities/services who may be able to help us meet the needs of others
  - And other organisations may refer people to us for help
- **Twinning**
  - We are also twinned with a SVP conference in Kerala, India and we support them to support their local community too – hands stretched across oceans with common goals

## **Monday Welcoming Space – an important part of our work within our local community of Madeley**

- Started as part of a government initiative to open church/charity facilities to provide a warm space when energy costs were rising...became...
- a trusted and valuable support hub that has extended our reach into the community (Madeley Mayoral Award for work within the community in 2024)
- Offer hot drinks/soup/snacks – friendly chat
- Everyone is welcome including parishioners
- Some who attend face significant challenges in their lives
  - o Homeless – in need of warm clothes/food/tent/cooking facilities and companionship
  - o Some may need an advocate to access services/benefits and to liaise with government/local authority teams
  - o Mobile phones/devices are key to many services and so we also provide tech support to ensure they can remain in contact with key people
  - o Asylum seekers/refugees
    - Help with Home Office bureaucracy – referral to Legal Immigration specialists
    - Engage with charities supporting Refugees e.g. TTR

We have always been lucky to have had tremendous support from this parish community

It's fabulous to see our Parish is growing but this also means the need is growing

If you would like to do more in the parish – or find out what you could do – please talk to us after Mass

Appreciate you may not have the time for a regular commitment – but you may have skills or the time to help on an ad hoc basis as a Friend to the SVP? Perhaps...

- Help in the Welcoming Space
- Help when we need to source/deliver furniture
- IT Tech skills or Testing electrical equipment – to ensure it's safe to donate

Importantly you may know someone who needs support – let us know and we may be able to help (we have a policy of absolute discretion with everyone we support)

We have successfully applied for appropriate grants and bursaries from the local and parish authorities, national organisation and philanthropic trusts to enable our work. But donations are a key funding stream for us – there will be members with a collection box as you leave church but there is no pressure, multiple calls on generosity. Our leaflets contain details of other ways of donating should you prefer.

If you can donate and qualify for Gift Aid, please complete a Gift Aid form so we can claim the 25% tax rebate from the government – increasing the value of your kind gift

In my experience I have gained so much during my time as a member:

- greater awareness of the challenges people face – often from people who are generally unseen
- Learned more than I have taught
- Laughed much... and cried a little
- Been humbled ...but also inspired by the remarkable people I meet
- Most of all I have been very privileged to gain an insight into people's lives and help a little...or a lot

Ordinary people can do extraordinary things...and a group of ordinary people...working together... can make a world of difference

Finally, I would ask everyone to please include the conference and those we support in your prayers

We look forward to seeing you in the Lower Room after Mass for hot drinks and cakes (lots of cakes) and there will be the opportunity to speak to members there or following Mass for more information.

Thank you for your time

Good evening. As you may know, I'm Steve McPhillips and I'm a member of the Good Shepherd SVP (St Vincent de Paul) Group. Don't worry, I'm not going to be speaking too long; I'm sure you'll all be looking forward to getting home for dinner !

If you managed to have a read of the leaflets we handed out last week, you'll know that we work in our local community to help anyone in need; whether that's financial help, help with clothing and furniture or even just a friendly listening ear.

I'd like to begin by thanking **you** for your support of our work in the past. That support has come in the form of your very generous cash donations whenever we ask for financial help with our work. Of course, by way of a spoiler alert, there's a good chance I'm going to ask for some further financial support this evening !

But, your support hasn't just been financial. Many Parishioners have very kindly come to our aid when we ask for non-monetary assistance with things like donations of clothes, furniture, sewing machines, kitchen utensils and many, many other things. Those items, when we make an appeal for them, are a lifeline to our beneficiaries and can literally change their lives in a positive way.

We have also been blessed with continuing support in the form of Parish volunteers to help with the operation of the Welcoming Space in the Lower Room every Monday from 10am until 2pm. Of course, we are also very grateful to Father Michael for the ongoing use of the Lower Room for this much needed facility for members who really need (and appreciate) it in our local community. We have a rota for volunteers so that no-one has to attend every week, so if you think you'd be able to help with this work, please do let us know.

I can't mention the Welcoming Space without also acknowledging the financial support we've had in the past from Madeley Town Council, Telford & Wrekin Council, Shropshire Welcoming Communities and other organisations to whom we've applied for help. The Ugly Duckling Restaurant faithfully supplies us with home-made soup every single week.

We have a faithful group of attendees at the Welcoming Space and we know that they all appreciate the food, warmth, companionship and support offered each week

In addition, we realise that many others in our local area may be struggling in some way. We in the SVP would like to do what we can to help, but we can't help unless we know of the need, so please do feel free to approach us in complete confidence. It may be a friend or someone you know who needs help, or it may be you. We have a dedicated telephone number which you can use to make contact with us locally, and in private.

Our resources are limited, but our experience has shown us that God will always provide.

And our attempts to help, extend beyond this congregation; help from the SVP is available to all, not just those in the congregation or of the Catholic faith.

If you think that you could help us in any way with your time, please do let us know. You don't need to make any time commitments and you don't need to become a full SVP member to help. You don't need any experience either; if you can provide some of your time, that's experience enough.

And now, turning to money matters, you'll see from our annual Report to Parishioners (which you'll get on the way out) the income we've had to 31 March 2025 and where we've spent that money. You'll see that we spent just over £1,100 more than we received in the year. Luckily, we had a healthy balance brought forward from the previous year, and we didn't run out of funds. Incidentally, the Report also lists all of the types of assistance we've been able to provide to beneficiaries recently.

Your very generous cash donations over the years have been our lifeblood. Without them, we simply couldn't do what we do to help others. So, once again, we're asking for your financial support with a donation of whatever you feel you can afford. Every penny and pound counts.

If you're a taxpayer, please also Gift-Aid your donation. It's free money from the Government , and that can't be bad ! Gift-Aided donations bring us several hundred pounds extra each year.

Annette and Bernadette will be loitering at the back of Church with donation baskets and Gift-Aid forms. Please do feel free to take a Gift-Aid envelope away with you if you wish and bring it next week when you come to Mass, if you don't want to fill one in this evening. Thank you in advance for the generosity I think our Parish has become renowned for !

Also loitering at the back of the church are Eileen and Sue. They'll be handing out the annual Report I mentioned a moment ago. Please do have a read when you get home.

Thank you all for listening and for your generous support to date, and thanks once again Father for your continuing support.

Good morning. I'm Michael, a member of the Good Shepherd St Vincent de Paul Conference. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you this morning and to make our annual appeal.

If you got one of our leaflets last week, you'll know that our Society was founded in Paris in 1833 and has grown throughout the world since then in 150 countries and with almost 1 million members. The essence of our work is to help needy people in our local community; financial help, help with clothing and furniture, sometimes just a friendly listening ear.

First of all, I want to thank **you** for your regular support for our work, which we really do on your behalf: support in the form of your very generous cash donations when we ask for financial help with our work.

Your support isn't just financial, though. You also help when we ask for donations of clothes, furniture, sewing machines, kitchen utensils and many other things. Things that provide a lifeline for our beneficiaries and which really change their lives in a positive way.

We are also blessed with continuing support from Parish volunteers who help us run our Welcoming Space in the Lower Room every Monday, and from Father Michael for the ongoing use of this much needed facility for people in our local community who really need it. If you think you'd be able to help with this work, please do let us know; we have a rota for volunteers so that no-one has to attend every week.

Talking about our Welcoming Space, I want also to acknowledge the financial support we receive from Madeley Town Council, Telford & Wrekin Council, and other organisations we've become adept at seeking funding from. We also owe a huge thank you to The Ugly Duckling Restaurant in Long Lane, who have supplied us with free soup every Monday since we opened up.

We have a regular bunch of people in the Lower Room each Monday, who appreciate the food, warmth, companionship and support we provide. It has become a real community hub where attendees also benefit from emotional support, help with job-hunting, form-filling, access to the day's newspapers, and even technical support for their phones and tablets. I've lost count of the number of times I've heard, "Michael, there's something wrong with my phone!"

We know there are more people locally who are struggling in some way. We want to do what we can to help, but we can't help unless we know of the need, so please do feel free to approach us in complete confidence. It may be a friend, or someone you know who needs help, it may be you. We have a dedicated telephone number which you can use to make contact with us locally, and in private, as well as a dedicated email address. Both are on the leaflet you got last week.

Our resources are limited, but in our experience when the need is there, God provides. And our work extends beyond our Catholic congregation; we are available for anyone we can help; not just our parish and not only Catholics.

If you think that you could help us in any way let us know. The only experience you really need is to be able to give us some of your time, that's enough.

You'll see from our annual Report to Parishioners (which you'll get on the way out) how we have spent our income in the year to 31 March 2025, as well as all of the types of assistance we've been able to provide to beneficiaries.

Your very generous cash donations over the years are our lifeblood. Without you, we simply couldn't do most of what we do to help others. Yes, we are asking for your financial support with a donation of whatever you feel you can afford. Every penny and pound counts for us and our beneficiaries.

If you're a taxpayer, please also Gift-Aid your donation. It's free money from the tax collector; very apt in the context of today's Gospel reading, and brings us several hundred pounds extra every year.

Lemuela and Felix will be at the back of Church today with donation baskets and Gift-Aid forms. Please do take a Gift-Aid envelope away and return it next time you come to Mass, or complete one this morning.

Also at the back of the church are Sylvia and Paul who can give you a copy of our annual Report to read later.

Thank you for listening, for your regular support, for your prayers; and thanks, Father, for your continuing support.