



This month I would like to share briefly about the recent Prayer and Reflection afternoon held on 26<sup>th</sup> September at St Augustine's Parish, Solihull. On behalf of the Pastoral Care Project I would like to thank Bishop David McGough for celebrating mass and for his talk; to the clergy and parishioners from St Augustine's Church for their support in helping organise and hosting the

day, and to St Peters Catholic School teachers and musicians who led the prayer service. The Project volunteers, speakers and group session leaders, Sr Angela Murphy, Rev Mark Fisher and Mrs Glenys Roberson.

The theme "His mercy is from age to age" from gospel of Luke inspired the day bringing together people of all ages; the young musicians and the older people, as well as professional carers – several making long a journey to be with us. The purpose of the day was an invitation to deepen our awareness and response to those in our families and in our neighbourhood who have dementia. The feedback received was very encouraging expressing interest for further days.

We are so grateful to the speakers who also led the sharing groups, the helpers who prepared the food, and the clergy who prepared and led the prayer service. The way in which the exposed Blessed Sacrament was draped with the stole and people were invited to come forward if they wished, to touch the hem of His garment was moving - it was humbling to be so close to Jesus in this way.

A few days afterwards as I was reading the feedback and reflecting on the day itself, I thought about the people who sent prayer intentions and the people who have dementia, those who may be agitated, experiencing feelings of restlessness and longing, feelings I myself experience. Yet, on Saturday I experienced how gently the Lord was breathing His peace into my life, gifting me His love and healing. I thought back to many years ago when I spent one day each week with residents in St Vincent's Care Home in Birmingham and how much they gained from praying before the Blessed Sacrament. Even though the residents had varying degrees of loss of some of their senses - the loss of speech and understanding seems to be what all of us find difficult to manage, the prayers, hymns and silence enabled each resident to feel close to the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Despite their confusion their sense of knowing God's presence was clear by their expression of stillness and peace, and why not, he promised where two or three are gathered he will be in our midst and Romans Chapter 9: 31-39 St Paul helps us to understand that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God. "Will tribulation, or distress, ... I am convinced that neither death, nor life... will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Drawing inspiration from the Magnificat, I can imagine as well as rejoicing in the Word of God, Mary and Elizabeth confided in and supported each other. Maybe you have a desire to help in some way those in our families and in our neighbourhood who have dementia that they may experience this mercy of God - the Pastoral Care Project would be happy to assist. Perhaps your time and skills would lend itself to joining with us to set up such a day in your parish or your skills and time given as a trustee for the Pastoral Care Project - we look forward to hearing from you.

As a charity we are already preparing for the forthcoming year of mercy, which Bishop David McGough spoke about during his during his talk on Saturday when he said "it is *a year where God shows us His mercy in the face of Jesus.*"... I would appreciate your continued prayers and support for our charitable work in whatever way you can. Write to me, Mrs Frances Molloy, Project Manger, Pastoral Care Project, St George's House, Gerards Way, Colleshill B46 3FG or telephone 01675 434035 or visit our website [www.pastoralcareproject.org.uk](http://www.pastoralcareproject.org.uk) which has a variety of resources.