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## **"All are Welcome"**

### **Mathew 11:19**

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard!'"

### **Laudato Si #98**

He was far removed from philosophies which despised the body, matter and the things of the world. Such unhealthy dualisms, nonetheless, left a mark on certain Christian thinkers in the course of history and disfigured the Gospel. Jesus worked with his hands, in daily contact with the matter created by God, to which he gave form by his craftsmanship. It is striking that most of his life was dedicated to this task in a simple life which awakened no admiration at all.

## **CARITAS DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH**

I'm sure many of us have felt on our own at times, not understood, wishing for someone to talk to, someone who can just listen to us. Its obvious that in today's society and although we are well connected, social isolation remains a big problem which can lead to other problems in areas of mental health, addictions etc. In addition some of us may even have been rejected by our parish priest or church congregation and wrongly judged due to our present situation, perhaps being divorced, remarried or LGBT. To counteract this Caritas projects are always open to all, a genuine place where all are really welcome. An example would be the Caritas InSight projects where anyone who is feeling isolated can come along and take part in a range of activities after which everyone has a shared meal together, a real place where all are welcome.

## **Action – do we really in our heart believe that all are welcome?**

### **Personal**

Are there times when I should have been more welcoming to those whom I would rather not speak to? Have I subconsciously absorbed the prejudices of family, friends or even the church? Could I possibly speak to the homeless person on the street rather than just walking past?

### **Family**

Have I ever heard other family members express a viewpoint that shows intolerance? Next time can I be brave enough to challenge these words even if it might mean some rejection and differences of opinion?

### **Parish**

Is our parish a truly welcoming parish? Do we make that extra effort to welcome back those who have been hurt or felt judged by the church? Are we more concerned about judging who is naughty or nice rather than seeing God's presence in each and everyone who comes into our parish? When we say "welcome" do we really mean "tolerated" instead? Could I ask for something to be put on the parish noticeboard or newsletter to indicate that all are indeed welcome?