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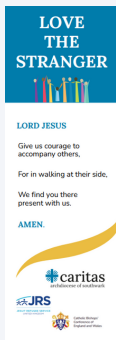
Commission for Promoting
Racial & Cultural Inclusion

Newsletter

Summer 2025



IN THIS EDITION



Read about some new
parish resources for welcoming
refugees



Reflect on the experiences
of the Uganda Martyrs



Find out how we're expanding
across the Archdiocese

Foreword

Canon Victor Darlington

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we journey through the summer months, I am glad to present to you our newsletter of the Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion in our Archdiocese. I am heartened by the vibrant witness to faith, justice, and compassion reflected in this edition of our newsletter. It is a sign that the Holy Spirit continues to stir hearts and inspire action in every corner of our Archdiocese.

From the practical outreach of the Toolkit to the new resources supporting refugee welcome through *Love the Stranger*, we are reminded of our calling not only to worship, but to serve. These stories show how the Gospel is being lived out with courage and generosity — how parishes are opening their doors, their hearts, and their hands.

The legacy of the Uganda Martyrs, as shared so movingly by Deacon Alfred Banya, offers us a powerful image of fidelity, representation, and hope in the face of adversity. And through the witness of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha — a woman of deep faith, humility, and cultural resilience — we are invited to celebrate the universality and diversity of our Church.

I pray that the reflections and updates in these pages will not only inform but inspire you to continue building a Church that welcomes, uplifts, and accompanies — a Church that is missionary at heart and ever attentive to the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Yours in Christ,
Canon Victor Darlington

WHAT'S NEW?

Toolkit on Tour: Reaching Every Parish

A look at how the Commission is taking its Toolkit on the road, sharing practical resources and advice with deaneries across the Archdiocese.

Love the Stranger: New Parish Resources

Learn more about the new refugee welcome resources produced by Caritas Southwark in partnership with JRS UK.

Caritas Southwark & Justice and Peace

Find out more about how we plan to grow our relationship with these two social justice arms of the Archdiocese.

The Uganda Martyrs: A Potent Symbol of Representation

Deacon Alfred Banya tells us about the powerful legacy left by the Uganda Martyrs and how they function as a symbol of hope and inclusion for us today.

Saint of the Month: Kateri Tekawitha

Read up on the life of this inspiring saint!

Dover: A Place of Sanctuary & Hope

Hear from Caritas Southwark about a moving ecumenical event held in Dover to mark the start of Refugee Week — a powerful few hours of reflection, solidarity and shared commitment to welcome the stranger.

Racial Justice Sunday: February 1st 2026

A date for your diary — next year's Racial Justice Sunday Mass will be taking place on February 1st 2026 at St George's Cathedral!



Toolkit on Tour: Reaching Every Parish

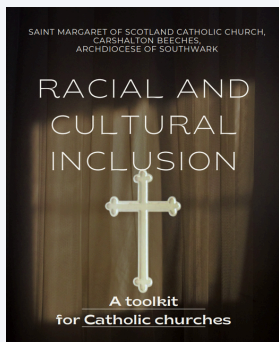
Deaneries throughout the Archdiocese have invited members of the Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion to address them about our recently produced **Toolkit**. Commission members have spoken at recent meetings of the Sutton, Bexley, Camberwell and Tonbridge deaneries.

Following these meetings a number of individual parishes have requested speakers or follow-up materials. Materials which can be provided include a multi-lingual Welcome notice and images and short biographies of saints from around the world.

The Toolkit provides comprehensive practical advice for parish groups seeking to promote racial and cultural inclusion at parish level. It includes details of website links and resources, many of which are available free of charge.

Topics covered include setting up a parish racial and cultural inclusion group; welcoming new parishioners; obtaining racially diverse pictures, statues and Repository items; composing Bidding Prayers for people in other countries; ensuring diversity in parish ministries; dealing with racial incidents; and organising multi-cultural celebrations and events.

Commission members are available to speak at deanery meetings and in individual parishes. If you would like a speaker contact Michael Heaney at michaelheaney@rcaos.org.uk.



Love the Stranger: New Parish Resources to Support Refugees



As Catholics, we've got a long tradition — stretching right back through the Old Testament — of welcoming the stranger and showing love to those in need. It's a big part of who we are.

That's why the Church has always spoken clearly about our responsibility to welcome migrants and refugees. In fact, in 2023, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales published *Love the Stranger*, a powerful reminder that we're called to respond with compassion and action in today's world.

Building on that, Caritas Southwark has teamed up with JRS UK to put together a great set of resources designed especially for parishes and deaneries.

You can find them on the Caritas Southwark website. These tools are here to help your community get involved in welcoming refugees — whether through practical support, prayer, raising awareness, or taking action in other ways.

Caritas Southwark / Justice & Peace

Over the coming months, we'll be building stronger connections with Caritas Southwark and the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission.

Together, we'll be working more closely to share resources and ideas as well as exploring the crossovers between our workstreams.

The Uganda Martyrs: A Potent Symbol of Representation



June 3rd marked the feast day of a group of Christian converts who were executed between 1885 and 1887 by the King of Buganda (modern-day Uganda) for their faith.

Their execution at the time must have seemed an insignificant event in a remote part of what was then considered by Europe 'The Dark Continent'. Their significance began to be realised across the world when they were canonised in 1964 by Pope Paul VI. This was a historic moment that recognised holiness in all God's people irrespective of racial origin.

Every year, the Ugandan community in the UK celebrates Martyrs' Day slightly later to allow invited guests to attend the celebration in Uganda on the feast day itself before travelling to the UK.

This year the main guest was Archbishop Raphael p'Mony Wokorach, M.C.C.I, Archbishop of Gulu in northern Uganda. He was hosted in one of our parishes in the Archdiocese of Southwark, although he was the main celebrant at the Mass held on July 28th in St Benedict's Abbey Church, Ealing and attended by many from Southwark.

The Uganda Martyrs are a potent symbol of representation. They show that holiness is universal — not limited by race, culture, or geography. Their canonisation affirmed that Africans can not only be members of the Church but also examples of sainthood. These martyrs remained steadfast in their Christian convictions despite severe persecution. Their willingness to die rather than renounce their faith is a clear testimony to their sanctity. Their lives and deaths challenged stereotypes and demonstrated that African cultures could produce saints deeply rooted in both their Christian and cultural identities.



This year the Uganda Martyrs day has been celebrated during the Church's Jubilee Year. The Jubilee Year logo prominently features four figures, representing all of humanity, arriving from the four corners of the earth, embracing one another to convey the solidarity and fraternity that ought to unite all peoples. The figure in the foreground is grasping the cross, which is the unifying element of our faith – a faith that the Uganda Martyrs shared. Irrespective of our race, it is this faith that unites us and bestows us with hope.

-Deacon Alfred Banya



Saint of the Month



Saint Kateri Tekawitha

Saint Kateri Tekawitha is the first Native American saint. She was born in 1656 in a Mohawk village in present day New York state.

Her parents died when she was four as a result of a smallpox outbreak which left Kateri's face scarred and her eyesight impaired.

At the age of 11 she met Jesuit missionaries and formed a wish to become a Christian. As a result, she was beaten and threatened by her adoptive family and was stoned and threatened by other villagers.

When she was 18 Kateri fled to a Jesuit mission in Canada where she joined a settlement of other Native American converts. She was baptised in 1676.

Kateri then spent the remainder of her life in prayer, work and penance while praying for the conversion and forgiveness of her family.

In 1679 she consecrated herself to Jesus, taking a vow of perpetual virginity.

Following a deterioration in her health, she died in 1680. She reportedly appeared to three people after her death. Kateri Tekawitha was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1980 and canonised by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012. Her feast day is celebrated on 14th July.



Dover: A Place of Sanctuary & Hope

We are delighted to share news of a special ecumenical event held to mark the beginning of Refugee Week 2025. The gathering, which brought together a rich tapestry of voices and communities, was hosted by Caritas Southwark — with whom we share a strong and purposeful partnership — as part of our shared mission to build a more just, compassionate and inclusive society for all.

This vibrant event, attended by around 80 people, was co-organised with Seeking Sanctuary, Cliffs of Sanctuary, the Social Justice Network, the Diocese of Canterbury, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and many others. It offered a moving start to Refugee Week, not only as a time of remembrance and awareness, but also as a celebration of resilience, hospitality, and community.

Held in an atmosphere of warmth and welcome, the event featured reflections, poetry, live music, shared food, and moments of prayer and silence. It served as a powerful reminder of the strength that comes from diverse communities standing together in solidarity with those who have been displaced or marginalised. Voices from across different faiths and backgrounds shared stories of both challenge and hope, enriching our collective understanding of what it means to offer sanctuary.

Most inspiring of all was Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin's speech, which reminded us of our common humanity and our obligation to love and protect the stranger, whoever they may be.



“...we have a common humanity”

“...community is about belonging”

“...there is only one human race”