<u>Weekly Message from Fr William for the First Sunday of Lent 2022</u>

Dear People of St Mary's

Just before the invasion of Ukraine, the International Rescue Committee published its watchlist of the world's top 10 humanitarian crises for 2022.
- Sudan with 3 million internally displaced and 14 million in need.
- Syria with 7 million internally displaced and 14 million in need.
- Somalia with 3 million internally displaced and 8 million in need.
- Myanmar with 14 million in need, with conflict and civil unrest spreading.
- DR Congo with 6 million internally displaced and 27 million in need.
- South Sudan with 8 million in need, and conflict-driven food shortages.
- Nigeria with 8 million in need, with 12 years of conflict increasing to spread.
- Yemen with 21 million in need and destruction of health and other critical systems.
- Ethiopia with 4 million internally displaced and 26 million in need.
- Afghanistan with 24 million in need and near universal poverty.
Not to mention the millions of refugees from these conflicts.

Ukraine will surely be among these top humanitarian crises of the world.

Any time is a time to reach out in love to our brothers and sisters around the world, particularly those most in need, and to reach out with concrete acts of love, care and support.

Lent in particular is a season when we grow in our capacity for love – our love for God, and the love with which we reach out to others. Starting this Sunday, the first Sunday of Lent, there will be opportunities for us to respond to those in most urgent need of our support. This will be especially through CAFOD, which as well as being a long term overseas development agency also has emergency response programmes in place for Afghanistan, Ukraine, and other places of humanitarian crisis.

May Lent 2022 be for all of us a time of love, when we grow in our capacity for God's love, and in our love for each other, through giving and through prayer. And may God's love prevail in our conflict riven world.

William

First Sunday of Lent, 6 march 2022