

# SVP scheme is helping families keep their children in education

Anita Boniface

“FOR the same as it costs for a few bottles of wine you could help educate a child in India”, says Sebastian Muir, board member and chair of the Twinnage Committee at the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP).

Sebastian is promoting the SVP's student sponsorship scheme which helps children from disadvantaged families with costs of education.

The scheme is part of the SVP's Twinnage programme which sees England and Wales partnered with six developing countries around the world, including India.

Often when the main breadwinner in an Indian family is killed or becomes unwell and can no longer make an income, it falls to the children to go and carry out often menial work to earn a wage and support their family.

However, sponsoring a child helps families keep their children in education. Such an education means these children are more likely to go onto further education when older and then get better paid work which in turn helps their extended families.

When a cyclone hit a coastal village in Kerala last year, around 300 fishermen lost their lives. The student sponsorship scheme was able to help families to provide educational opportunities for their children, as well as paying for children who had been orphaned by the disaster.

Because of the strength of the pound, donations can go a long way. Giving £15 for a year can cover up to 85 per cent of a pupil's school fees, or cover



A visit by the SVP to school children with their teachers in Shillong, north-east India – A relatively small donation can transform lives of young people, their families and their wider communities

Picture: SVP

a combination of fees and materials such as books, pens, satchels and uniforms.

The next tier of the scheme is sponsorship of £70 for three years. This enables a student to complete technical or vocational courses such as engineering, nursing or computing.

The third and final tier of the scheme is to give £120 for four years which helps put a student through medical or dental training. Donors are matched with students and receive a photo and certificate when they are twinned with a young person.

Sebastian explains that when sponsoring a child or teenager the

entire community benefits.

“Rural areas in particular have a severe shortage of medical staff,” he says.

Most professionals are drawn to the cities and it comes down to small religious communities to provide healthcare for local villagers.

This means that often there are not enough people to administer the care needed for a village and its migrant workers. The dispensaries and clinics cannot be staffed, and so villagers have to travel dozens of miles to be vaccinated for example. Too poor to own a car or motorbike the journey is by buffalo cart and the challenges of access prevent

people from receiving the treatment they need. Disease spreads and people get sick and lose their lives.

Having more doctors and nurses means help can be offered locally in the villages and towns.

Professionals in the village get to know when someone is newly-arrived and they can ask them to get a vaccination.

“That's how polio has been virtually wiped out in the world except for the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan which are remote areas and do not have sufficient staff to vaccinate the people,” says Sebastian.

Funding a student also helps build the nation through infrastructure.

Engineers and architects design and build the schools and clinics, see to proper sanitation, while teachers educate the next generation, and that in turn benefits the future of the country. This means a relatively small donation has a huge ripple effect, transforming lives of young people, their families and their wider communities.

■ If you would like to support a student in India with their education, please visit: [http://www.twinnage.org.uk/Documents/Student\\_Leaflet\\_416\\_web1.pdf](http://www.twinnage.org.uk/Documents/Student_Leaflet_416_web1.pdf) to download a form or go to: [www.svp.org.uk-donate](http://www.svp.org.uk-donate), telephone: 020 7703 3030 or e-mail: [southwarkcctwin@aol.com](mailto:southwarkcctwin@aol.com)

## BISHOPS' ENGAGEMENTS

### England

#### Cardinal Nichols (Westminster)

Sun: World Meeting of Families, Dublin. Thu: Travels to Prague to receive the Prague Society HRE Award, 7.30am. Fri: Returns from Prague, 6.30pm. Sat: Memorial Mass for Cardinal Cormac Murphy-

O'Connor's First Anniversary, Westminster Cathedral, Victoria Street, London, SW1P 1LT, 12.30pm. Archbishop Longley (Birmingham) Sat: First Anniversary Memorial Mass for Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Westminster Cathedral, 12.30pm.

Archbishop McMahon (Liverpool) Mon: Mass for the Annual Pilgrimage in honour of Blessed Dominic Barberi, St Anne and Blessed Dominic, Sutton, St Helens, noon.

#### Archbishop Smith (Southwark)

Sun-Fri: Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage. Bishop Arnold (Salford) Sun-Mon:

World Meeting of Families, Dublin. Tue: Meetings, London. Thu: Visit to Lee House Centre for Mission Awareness, Thorney. Fri: Meetings, Wardley Hall. Sat: Leads a Day of Reflection for Catenians, Wardley Hall.

Bishop Davies (Shrewsbury) Sat: Engagements, Cathedral.

Bishop Doyle (Northampton) Sun: World Meeting of Families, Dublin. Mon: Return from the World Meeting of Families, Dublin.

Bishop Egan (Portsmouth) Fri: Meeting Head of Communications, Bishop's House, Portsmouth. Meeting with Knights of Equestrian Order of Holy Sepulchre, Bishop's House, Portsmouth. Sat: Dialogue with Sectors Meeting, Bishop's House, Portsmouth. Parish Visitation, Earley, Reading.

Bishop Hendricks (Auxiliary in Southwark) Sun-Fri: Catholic

Association Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Bishop Heskett (Hallam) Sun: Mass, St Ann's, Deepcar, 9.15am. Mass, St Mary's, Penistone, 10.45am. Wed: Meeting, Bishop's House, 11.00pm. Presentation, Sheffield Furniture Store, 12.30pm. Retirement event, St Joseph & St Teresa's, Woodlands, Doncaster, 7.00pm.

Bishop Hopes (East Anglia) Sat: Mass, Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk, noon.

Bishop Hudson (Auxiliary in Westminster) Sun-Mon: World Meeting of Families, Dublin. Thu: Meeting in Archbishop's House, 11.00am. Sat: Concelebrates Memorial Mass for Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, Westminster Cathedral, 12.30pm.

Bishop Lang (Clifton) Sun-Mon: World Meeting of Families, Dublin.

Bishop Lynch (Auxiliary in Southwark) Mon: Divine Mercy Pilgrimage, noon.

#### Bishop Malone (Auxiliary in Liverpool)

Tue: Mass of Thanksgiving on the 175th Anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Liverpool, Zoe's Place Life Centre, Liverpool, noon.

Bishop Moth (Arundel and Brighton) Sun-Mon: World Meeting of Families, Dublin. Tue: Annual Meeting with Promoters, Seminarians and Enquirers, High Oaks, 2.30pm-4.00pm. Wed: Episcopal Council, High Oaks, 11.00am. Thu: Under 65's at Arundel Cathedral, 11.00am-3.00pm. Mass at St John the Evangelist, Horsham, 7.00pm. Fri: Meeting, High Oaks, noon. Sat: NCSF Meeting, Oxford.

Bishop Stock (Leeds) Wed: Meeting with the Vicar General, Bishop's House, Leeds, 9.00am.

Bishop Williams (Auxiliary in Liverpool) Sun: Celebrates Mass, St Dominic, Huyton, 10.45am. Sat:

Blessing of Statue, Eldonian Village, Liverpool, noon. Serra Annual Dinner, Liverpool Hope University, 7.00pm.

### Scotland

#### Archbishop Cushley (St Andrews and Edinburgh)

Sun: World Meeting of Families, Dublin. Mon: Trustees' Meeting, Archdiocesan Offices, Edinburgh, 1.00pm. Tue: Scottish Catholic Youth Service, Pastoral Centre, Dunkeld, 11.00am. Wed: SPRED Commissioning Mass, St Kentigern Church, Edinburgh, 7.00pm. Fri: Mass, Holy Rood High School, Edinburgh, 9.15am. Council of Priests Steering Committee, St Bennet's, Edinburgh, 2.00pm. Order of the Holy Sepulchre Investitures, Sacred Heart Church, Edinburgh, 7.00pm.

Compiled by  
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