**Prisoners Sunday talk 2025**

Hello, my name is X and I am speaking on behalf of Pact. PACT is the Prison Advice and Care Trust, the national Catholic Charity working to support prisoners and their families in England and Wales.

PACT is here for people of all faiths and none, with catholic values influencing the way we work respecting human dignity, walking with love and care alongside prisoners and their families; and believing that everyone can be redeemed and make a fresh start.

A key part of our work is to help men and women in prison to grow and maintain strong relationships with their families. We also provide emotional and practical support to children and families affected by imprisonment. For children having mum or dad in prison is an experience which can damagingly affect the child’s whole life. It is believed that there are about 200,000 children who experience a parent in prison each year. That is a more common occurrence than children who experience divorce. It is an experience that can damage a child’s life. That means tonight hundreds of thousands of children will go to bed without mum or dad at home.

We give prisoners and their families HOPE and a better chance of doing well in the future. Research shows: where family relationships are supported there is a 39% reduction in returning to crime making all our communities safer.

Today is Prisoners’ Sunday, which is a National Day of Prayer for prisoners. We remember those in prison and those impacted by the criminal justice system. Within our church and wider communities there are victims and survivors of crime, people with convictions, family members who have a loved one in prison, employees and volunteers who work in prisons and the court system.

At the start of the jubilee year, Pope Francis opened five holy doors and the second was a door in a prison in Rome. The same prison, where he used to wash the feet of prisoners on Maundy Thursday. By opening this door, Pope Francis reminded us of the need to open all of our hearts. And he reminded us of the importance of love and mercy and the need to remember those in prison.

We hear on the news how prisons are in crisis. Being in prison is an isolating experience and we are reminded by Christ in Matthew 25, that when we visit those in prison, we are visiting Christ. *“I needed clothes, and you clothed me, I was sick, and you looked after me, I was in prison, and you came to visit me.”*

Prisoners’ Sunday is an opportunity to put your faith in action and to consider how we as individuals, as a Church, and as communities are serving our brothers and sisters affected by imprisonment.

PACT asks you to consider supporting our work putting faith into action in three ways:

1) Can you offer some time and volunteer with PACT on our national helpline or at a prison near you.

2) Please keep in your prayers and heart: prisoners, their families and those who support them.

3)If you can, make a donation at the end of mass or online by clicking on the link in the parish newsletter.

Thank you for listening and helping give people their fresh start.