



St Vincent's Centre
Carlisle Place
London SW1P 1NL

Registered Charity Number 1079764

Telephone 020 7592 1850

Fax 020 7592 1870

info@passage.org.uk

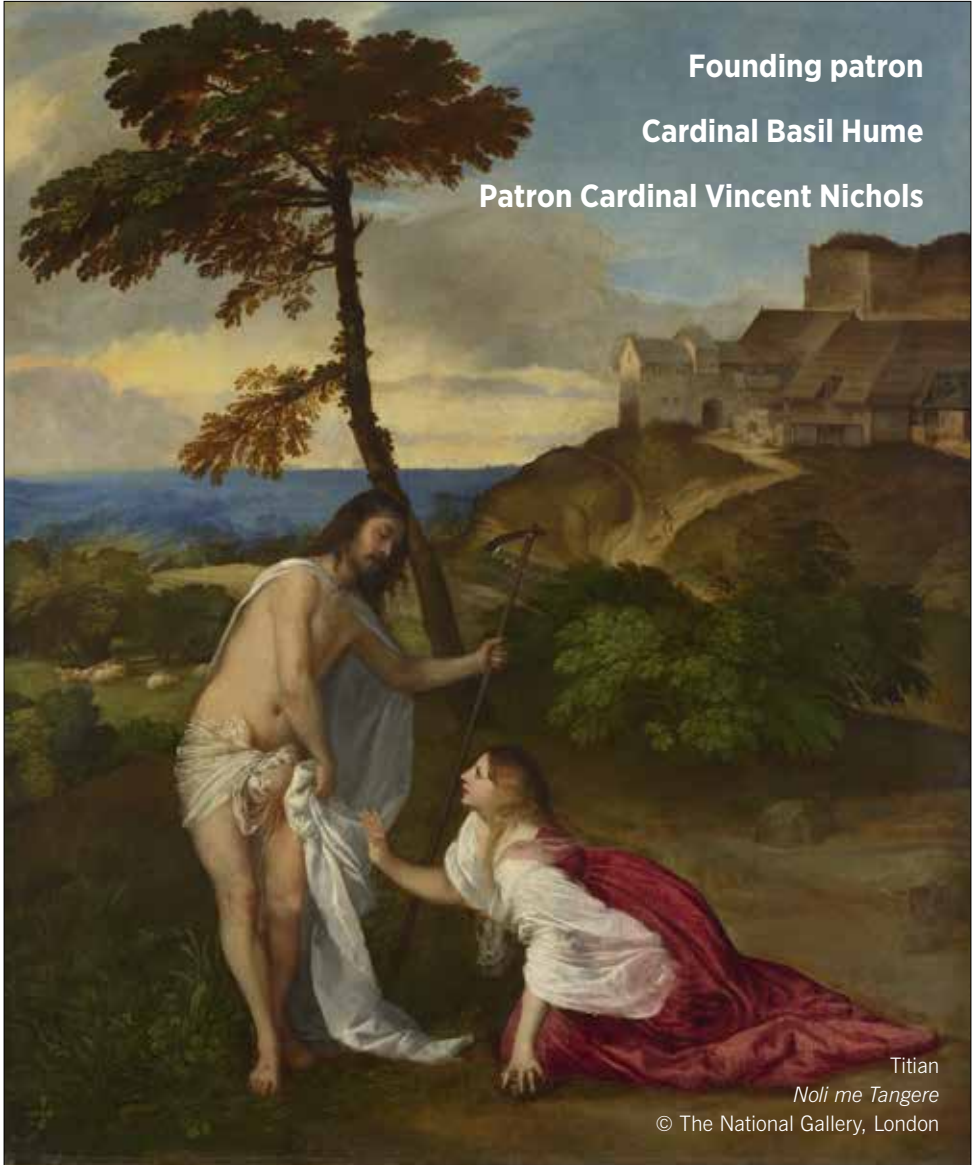
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Easter newsletter, 2017

Founding patron

Cardinal Basil Hume

Patron Cardinal Vincent Nichols



Titian

Noli me Tangere

© The National Gallery, London

Dear Friends

I hope this newsletter finds you well and that you are enjoying the brighter evenings.

Easter is a time when we celebrate new life, and at The Passage we are thrilled to be continuing our work that enables so many people to set out on a new path of optimism and to end their homelessness, despite the continuing cuts to our statutory funding.

For many getting, and of course maintaining, employment is crucial to this, as is ensuring that no matter how tough life may get, there is a place to turn to for help.

I am, therefore, delighted to share with you two stories from our work with clients at The Passage that demonstrate how your support for our work enables us to be there for those who need us the most.

Getting and maintaining employment

As we have reported in previous newsletters, we are really pleased at the way our employment and training area (which is part of the wider St Vincent's Centre refurbishment), is enabling so many people, such as Wayne, to find employment.

Wayne is a 50-year-old British man who had been working in California as an Audio Visual Engineer. When he lost his job he was entitled to nothing in the USA and used the last of his funds to return to the UK but, since he had worked abroad for several years, he found that he was not entitled to benefits in Britain either. A family member was able to offer him short-term accommodation, but he quickly became street homeless.

He found that very frightening, and that meant

that he hid from known rough-sleeping sites. As a result, it made it difficult for our street outreach service to find him.

However Wayne presented himself at our Resource Centre at the start of October 2016 and was inducted into our employment service. Armed with a new CV and a LinkedIn account – which we helped him create – he undertook an intensive daily job-search.

He spent hours searching websites, and sending off CVs and applications. Two weeks after he started his search, he was given an interview with a well-known supermarket chain, but unfortunately was unsuccessful. That was a blow and he needed a great deal of support to re-establish his confidence quickly.

Three-and-a-half weeks after his first attempt, however, he secured an interview for his



dream job: working for a company that installs audio-visual equipment in luxury yachts, homes and vehicles. This time he was successful, although there was one last obstacle in his way – he couldn't make a successful start at working while he was rough sleeping. We paid for interim accommodation until he was paid and found himself more permanent accommodation.

Wayne's story is a reminder of how the lives of even very settled people can unravel quickly and make them street homeless.

For Jacob, however, it was more about ensuring that he could maintain his employment. When he returned from travelling abroad to attend his father's funeral, the landlord had changed the locks on his privately rented accommodation. A worker on low pay, Jacob suffers from depression and is asthmatic.

When he came to The Passage Resource Centre, he had been rough sleeping or sofa surfing for four months. He had multiple debts from different payday lenders and, unpaid mobile phone bills, that added up to thousands of pounds. He had no funds to pay for a deposit or rent in advance, and was not eligible for a Local Authority deposit scheme.

We identified two priorities: first, to find Jacob affordable accommodation; second, to provide him with the support to manage his finances better. We found him accommodation with a housing association and paid his rent in advance so that he could end his homelessness.

He also engaged with our welfare worker to learn how better to manage on a small budget and how to manage his debts.

Jacob has maintained his employment and is settled into his accommodation. We provided advocacy and advice, to help him negotiate the cancellation of an outstanding £2,000 debt. The Passage is all about lasting change so it was very important that we work with Jacob to ensure that he did not get into debt again. Thankfully after this work Jacob now has the skills to manage his budget. He reports that his depression has improved and that he is moving on with his life.

Cuts vs demand and impact

It is fantastic that your support enables us to provide vital help for people like Wayne and Jacob.

Since 2010, demand for our services has increased dramatically, and the impact of our work has been steadily increasing. Since 2010 we have helped approximately 3,000 people a year off the streets and into our services. We have increased access to employment during that period and are now helping more than three times as many people off the street and into work each year than we were seven years ago. We have achieved all this, despite a £630,000 cut in statutory funding.

We know more cuts are on the way but we are determined to keep meeting the demand for our services and making a true impact for those who have nowhere else to turn, but our work would not be possible without your continued support: it makes a real difference and truly transforms lives.

Events

We are holding our three annual events again in 2017.

Our Garden Party will be on Friday 21 July, from 6pm, in the College Garden, Westminster Abbey.

Our Night under the Stars concert will be on Tuesday 7 November, at 7.30pm, at the Royal Festival Hall.

Our Carol Service will be on Friday 15 December, at 6pm, at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey.

There are also opportunities to take part in two sponsored walks: on Sunday 14 May there is a sponsored walk for participants to raise funds for our Home for Good scheme; and on Monday 22 May we are looking for people to take part in the London Legal Walk to raise funds for our advice services.

For more details, please visit www.passage.org.uk/events/sponsored-walks/

Flyers for the garden party and the concert are enclosed. I hope you will be able to attend.

Thank you

Thank you again for your continued support for our work. It enables people like Wayne and Jacob to have the opportunities everyone deserves and to take that step into a new life knowing that The Passage is there to help them on their journey.

Embarking on a new period in life can be daunting for anyone, but thanks to your support for our work they are not alone. So, thank you again for enabling The Passage to give hope this Easter; empowering our clients to bring about real transformation in their lives.

I hope you and your family have a blessed, restful and very peaceful Easter.



Mick Clarke, Chief Executive

Thank you if you have recently supported The Passage with a donation, or if you support us regularly with a standing order.

We write to all our supporters at Easter: those who have given and those who are about to give.



One of our volunteers collecting at Victoria station.