

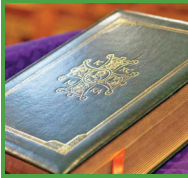
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The CatholicPost



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Stronger Together: Jews, Muslims and Christians unite on Mitzvah Day

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All embodied Mitzvah Day's theme for 2024 of 'Stronger Together' - defying the forces which wish to tear us apart and, instead, uniting as one to support local charities and build bridges of commonality

More than 35,000 people of all faiths and backgrounds came out on Mitzvah Day to do good deeds all across the UK.

Those taking part in Britain's biggest interfaith day of social action included Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey, London Mayor Sadiq Khan, Bishop of Edmonton Revd Canon Dr Anderson Jeremiah, Progressive Judaism Co-Lead Rabbi Charley Baginsky and Imam Asim Hafiz, the Islamic religious advisor to the Chief of the Defence Staff.

They were joined by tens of thousands of Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Baha'i and people of all religions and none in more than 2,500 projects encompassing care home visits, cooking for those in need, litter picks, card-writing, park clean-ups, and food bank and winter clothing collections.

All embodied Mitzvah Day's theme for 2024 of 'Stronger Together' - defying the forces which wish to tear us apart and, instead, uniting as one to support local charities and build bridges of commonality.

Mitzvah Day Founder and Chair Laura Marks CBE said: "After a truly challenging year, on Mitzvah Day our faith communities did what we do best - we came together to give back.

"It was so heartening to see our most senior leaders from across the religious

and political spectrum put on their green T-shirts, roll up their sleeves and join us in these acts of citizenship, community-building and helping those who need us most."

Siobhan Garibaldi National President of the Catholic Women's League and co-ordinator of the SVP Vinnie Packs welcomes Mitzva Day. She told ICN: "In the past children from several Jewish and Catholic schools have gathered together to fill hundreds of Vinnie Packs for us. (Emergency cold weather packs given out to homeless people containing hats, socks, gloves, toothbrushes and other useful items) Its a wonderful opportunity for pupils of different faiths to get together and realise how much they have in common."

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer wrote a personalised thank you card for the staff of Spring Grove Care Home, which was then hand-delivered by the home's local Labour MP Tulip Siddiq, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, during a Mitzvah Day musical event for residents and their families.

The Prime Minister said: "Mitzvah Day is a day of service, uniting thousands of people from different faiths and backgrounds to do good in support of those in need. No matter the challenges we face, and no matter what our differences may be, we are always stronger together - and I am incredibly



Imam Asim Hafiz, Rabbi Charley Baginsky and Bishop of Edmonton at Hammerson House - picture by Yakir Zur

inspired by the volunteers taking part." Sir Ed Davey took part in an intergenerational ballet dance to bring cheer to the residents of Nightingale House Care Home. He was joined in the dancing by Mitzvah Day Chair Laura Marks CBE, youngsters from the Apples and Honey Nightingale nursery and the residents themselves.

The Liberal Democrat leader said: "It was a delight to join the community at the Nightingale Care Home to mark Mitzvah Day, and to see the generosity of spirit reflected in so many acts of kindness across the country. The theme of this year's Mitzvah Day, Stronger Together, is a timely reminder that we all have much more in common than divides us."

In a flagship interfaith event, London Mayor Sadiq Khan packed 'Create and Make' boxes filled with fresh vegetables for people supported by the Mayor's Fund for London, joined by Deputy Mayor Debbie Weekes-Bernard and volunteers from the Jewish and Muslim networks at City Hall.

Jeremiah came together in a show of solidarity at care home Hammerson House where residents and volunteers - including from Caritas Westminster, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster and local Jewish communities - packed for Food Bank Aid and sang and danced together.

Rabbi Charley Baginsky said: "This was a heart-warming event on a very special day. Mitzvah Day provides us all with an incredible opportunity to take part in making the world a little bit better and remind ourselves how much stronger we are when we work together."

Imam Asim Hafiz said: "Whether through zakat in Islam or tzedakah in Judaism, our shared traditions remind us that caring for others is not just an act of kindness but a sacred duty. Mitzvah Day beautifully reflects these shared values, bringing us together to strengthen our communities and make a meaningful difference."

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Why have a Catholic Newspaper?

Pope Francis has said that Catholic newspapers can be a useful tool of evangelisation. In an address to representatives of nearly 200 Catholic newspapers, Pope Francis praised in particular the value, necessity and effectiveness of Catholic and diocesan newspapers, which he said require "a renewed commitment" from priests and the whole church community. Pope Francis said, it is a place where the life of a diocese can be "validly expressed" and where members of the church can "dialogue and communicate."

"There is an urgent need for news that is communicated with serenity, precision, completeness," clarity and thoughtfulness and in a way that favours "fruitful reflection" and reject simplifying a discussion that is strident, ambiguous and insinuating, he said. Pope Francis said, "For all these reasons it is, therefore, desirable that everyone's commitment to ensuring the existence and vitality of these periodicals is not lacking."

About the Catholic Post

The Catholic Post is a new Catholic publication. It is the only National Catholic newspaper that is Carbon Neutral. It is published monthly and aims to bring news, information, faith and Catholic teaching to readers throughout the UK.

About Bellcourt Ltd

We have been a Catholic publishing company for 30 years. During that time we have served the Catholic community with 10 publications and around 3,000 editions of Catholic newspapers which is over 16,000,000 newspapers in total.

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