



Diocese of Leeds

A pillar of support from the parish

Mike and Mo's story



Caring for a partner, relative or friend can be hugely rewarding, but it can be emotionally draining and isolating at times. A carer is different to someone who provides care professionally, or via a voluntary organisation, because you have an emotional connection with the person you care for. This connection can make caring more rewarding, yet more difficult at the same time. Many people don't think of themselves as 'carers'. They see themselves simply as a husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter or friend looking after someone who they love.

Mo is a parishioner in our diocese and her husband Mike was diagnosed with dementia in 2012. Mo has been Mike's sole carer since his diagnosis.

"Mike is a joy to be with but I can find the pressure builds up. Following a few tears in Mass one Sunday a couple of years ago, my parish priest noticed my discomfort and got in touch that same evening asking if there was anything the SVP could do to support us. A couple of weeks later two parish



SVP members visited us to ask what Mike enjoyed. Mike had been a keen hill walker so a weekly walk was arranged. Due to Mike's involvement with the Huddersfield Catenians, some of their members also offered to walk with him. The five gents involved have all got to know each other and a weekly walk together has taken place for the past two and a half years. Mike really enjoys the walk which includes coffee afterwards at one of their homes. Interestingly, when we were in Lourdes last summer, the walk continued without Mike; such are the friendships which have been built up."

This story is shared by kind permission of Mo, Mike and walking group members.

Carers need a break and time away but sometimes that can be difficult. Consider the ways your parish can help carers take a break. As well as the SVP, there may be other groups such as the Legion of Mary or the Union of Catholic Mothers who might be able to help.

"We are not what we do. We are not what we have. We are not what others think of us. Coming home is claiming the truth. I am a beloved child of the Creator."

Henri Nouwen

Blessing for a carer

In your devoted but demanding ministry, may you receive God's blessing and be a blessing in return to the one you care for.
When exhaustion overwhelms you, may God renew your vigour.
When patience is tested, may he grant fortitude.
When all seems bleak, may he shed light.
When tears flow, may he bring comfort.
May you and your loved one know his peace, receive his strength and experience his love, surrounding and supporting you always through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen