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An interview to Father Alexander Sherbrook, parish priest of St. Patrick's in Soho, London.

You have received attention in the media for your efforts in bringing the Good News¹ to Soho a district famous for sex shops and seediness². What specific initiatives do you promote?

Our parish church of St. Patrick is opened 12 hours a day and the blessed Sacrament is exposed every day. We simply give people the opportunity to come, love and worship God whenever they want.

Is it possible to overcome drug abuse through prayer?

Drug addiction has a lot of causes –educational ,psychological, social, medical, physical, but the most important element, which is often overlooked is the spiritual cause. When we look at drug addicts we often see an emptiness in their lives. By meeting and praying with them we need to be able to bring them to the Lord and to fill this spiritual gap³

You have also established "S.O:S. Prayerline". What is it and how is it organized?

"S.O.S Prayerline " is, like **Samaritans**, the 24/7⁴ organization which provides confidential emotional support over the phone for people who are experimenting feelings of distress⁵ or despair, but the difference is that we say to the caller "would you like us to pray for you?"The caller is invited to a deeper union with Jesus ,so that he may receive strength hand cure.⁶

Does it work?

SOS Prayerline has received so far more than 20,000 calls, it is operated by laypeople⁷ after they have received a training in theology, psychology, telephone skills, such as how to avoid traps you can get into.

What do you do for homeless people?

Every Tuesday we have what is called an "Open house", where we invite the homeless, the hungry or the lonely to come and join us for a meal, prepared and served by volunteers. But we also all, volunteers and

¹ Buona novella

³ Di cattiva reputazione

³ vuoto

⁴ 24 hours -7 days a week

⁵ angoscia

⁶ guarigione

⁷ laici

homeless, pray together, both at the beginning and at the end of the meal, so also this work for the needy⁸ is centred on prayer; it's about feeding the soul as well the body.

You are a Catholic priest but your relatives are Anglican. How did they react when you decided to become a Roman Catholic priest?

My father was Anglican ,but my mother was Catholic. They were all very surprised because I had never really had a Catholic formation, but as time went on they became very supportive⁹ and decided that it would be lovely to have a priest in the family.

[Adapted from an article by Mario Conte]

Activities :

1. Complete this summary of the above interview by adding the missing words listed below in scrambled order:

Good News –feed-parish-meals-prayer-workshop-power-catholic-desperate-initiatives-organization-lives.

Alexander Sherbrook is a.....priest in Soho.
His.....church is opened 12 hours a day to give people the opportunity to.....God whenever they want. His aim is to bringin the district of Soho with some specific

According to father Alexander.....is very important to fill emptiness of drug addicts'..... and can help them to overcome drug abuse. Another important.....of his parish ,is "S.O.S. prayerline" , also based on the.....of prayer to support and heal.....and distressed people. Also homeless are helped withprepared and served by volunteers . But even for this initiative prayer is very important because , as father Alexander States, it is necessary to.....the soul, as well as the body.

2. Find information about Soho and make a short report about it, including some photos.

⁸ bisognosi

⁹ di aiuto,di supporto