

Welcome me As I Am – Foreword

Following the decision of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales to initiate the Mental Health Project, *Welcome me AS I AM* is a very welcome addition to the resources available to the parishes of our Dioceses. We owe a debt of gratitude to Ben Bano and all those who have assisted him in preparing these new materials.

While it would be neither possible nor appropriate for our parishes to attempt to become places of primary mental health care, we must all have a care for mental health. This begins with ourselves – and these resources open for us, in straightforward fashion, a number of elements that will help us to be healthy in every sense.

There will be those in our parish communities who will be experiencing difficulties in mental health, especially at a time when the demands on so many have become so great. It is incumbent on us, therefore, to ensure that we are aware of their needs. This will enable our parish communities to be places of welcome, prayer and support for all.

At the heart of all things is our relationship with God and our openness to the Good News of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. We are prompted by the Holy Spirit to be bearers of that Good News. The more our parish communities, our dioceses, deaneries and schools, are places where we are the fullness of life is manifested, the more we shall be responding to the Call of the Gospel.

I am pleased to encourage the use of these resources, as one way in which parish communities can respond to the needs of those who live with difficulties in mental health, to recognise the gifts with which each one is endowed by God, that all may work together for the building of God's Kingdom.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Mott". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Chair, Mental Health Reference Group
Bishops' Conference of England & Wales