

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE (PHP)



People Helping People is a small project founded in the Chapel of Penha de França by the late Father Bernardino Andrade to help those in need. Our former Bishop D. António once said, "One must find new ways of helping the poor". A very small group of people attending the English Mass decided to do just that after the floods in 2010! In a short period of time, we created partnerships with supermarket chains and restaurants; we have paid dozens of medical prescriptions, we have spent gallons and gallons of petrol riding across the island giving lifts, we have prevented families from going hungry, getting their electricity cut off, running out of gas, losing their homes. **We have tried to keep them warm, keep them hopeful, and keep them dreaming.**

"May our humble and open hearts recognise the presence of Jesus in the weaknesses and wounds of the world."
(Pope Francis)



PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE CONTACTS:

EUROPE: Alexandre Silva, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal.

Email: alex.lupus@gmail.com / penhafranca.php@gmail.com

>> TRANSFER TO BANK ACCOUNT IN MADEIRA:

ACCOUNT NAME:

Associação Gente Ajudando Gente

BANK: Banco Santander Totta

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 0003 4938 1759020

IBAN: PT50 0018 0003 49381759020 94

SWIFT: TOTAPTPL

NIB: 0018 0003 49381759020 94

Bank Address:

Caminho de Santa Quiteria 46A,
9020-119, Funchal
Madeira, Portugal.



When making any donation, please send an email to penhafranca.php@gmail.com with the date, and name on the transfer so that Alexandre Silva is able to confirm that the transfer has been received. Thank you.

Please sign our Visitor's book in the Social Hall.....

leave us your comments, or suggestions, let us know where you're from! ☺ We also have a map where you can place a pin on where you are visiting us from! ☺



Do Stay for
Tea & Coffee

After Mass

Join us across the garden for a cup of coffee, cake, and a chat!

Our Social Hall has a Free Little Library: a cabinet full of books. You're welcome to take a book, borrow a book, leave one in exchange, or even bring in some books that you have lying around that you no longer want. ☺



JOYFUL GIFT

30th March 2025 – 10am Sunday Mass

4th Sunday of Lent – Year C

Chapel of Our Lady of Penha de França

Rua Penha de França 3, Funchal, Madeira

Website and Blog: <http://rcmassmadeira.org/>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/penhafrancachapel

Instagram: www.instagram.com/capela_penha_franca/

Email: penhafranca.newsletter@gmail.com



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Father Joseph (from India) and Deacon Peter (visiting Madeira from the UK) last Sunday during Mass

THE CATHOLIC MASS IN ENGLISH

Good morning. Today we celebrate the 4th Sunday of Lent. Located in the heart of the city of Funchal, the Chapel of Our Lady of Penha de França was built in the 17th century by António Dantas, making it 403 years old this year. A Catholic Mass is held here in English at the Chapel every Sunday morning at 10am.



TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS – 4th Sunday of Lent

(Joshua 5: 9, 10-12; Psalm 26(27); 2 Corinthians 5: 17-21; Luke 15:1-3,11-32)

In the book of **Joshua** Israel's conquest of Canaan, the promised land, starts with the miraculous crossing of the Jordan. The river waters were held back until all the people had crossed on dry ground. Then, before celebrating the Passover, all the men who had been born during the Exodus were circumcised to mark them now as Israelites, so removing the "shame of Egypt". The place where they crossed was named Gilgal, a pun on the word meaning "remove". The **Psalm** offers grateful praise to God for rescuing us from danger, and encourages fear of the Lord, keeping our tongues from evil. Paul insists to the **Corinthians** that as new creations in Christ they must forget their old ways of seeing the world. We have been given work to do, that of showing visibly in our lives that God has reconciled us to himself, just as Christ did by dying on the Cross. Although **Luke's** unique parable in today's gospel is usually called "The Prodigal Son", the behaviour of the other two people in the story is important. The father rushes out to meet his returning son – a marvellous image of God the Father. But are we sometimes tempted to imitate the other son's reactions to his father's reconciliation with "this son of yours"?

- Brought to you by: Chris Oliver. (www.bible-groups.info)

PSALM RESPONSE: Taste and see that the Lord is good.



TODAY'S HYMN MUSIC:

By: Larysa Makarova

Entry: "Awake, awake: fling off the night!..." - 51

Offertory: "Take our bread, we ask you..." - 528

Communion: "Amazing grace..." - 32

Final: "Colours of Day..." - 93





Anyone who has spent time in Madeira knows that the island offers far more than just beautiful views and rugged landscapes. The food is at the heart of the island's culture. Sharing food here isn't just about eating; it's about gathering, welcoming, and savouring life together. **It's a reminder that food has a way of connecting us to a place and its people.** For visitors and locals alike, these moments around the table become cherished memories.

In the Gospel, we hear a story that also revolves around a meal — the parable of the Prodigal Son. The younger son leaves home in search of a more exciting life, believing freedom and indulgence will bring him happiness. But he soon discovers that the world's pleasures leave him empty. Starving and desperate, **he recalls the goodness of his father's house**, where even the servants have more than enough. That memory stirs a longing within him - not just for food, but for the comfort and security he had abandoned.

When he returns, expecting anger and rejection, he is instead embraced by his father. The response isn't one of condemnation, but joy. The father orders a feast, not simply to provide food but to celebrate the son's return. It is an expression of mercy, love, and complete restoration. **The son, once lost and starving, now tastes the goodness of his father's love.** Yet the story doesn't end there. The elder son, who has stayed behind, refuses to join the feast. Despite living in his father's house, he has grown distant in spirit. Resentful and bitter, he is unable to rejoice in his brother's return. He has missed the true joy of living in his father's presence, blinded by his own sense of entitlement and self-righteousness.



How often do we find ourselves in a similar place? Sometimes we seek fulfilment in things that leave us empty, thinking we'll find happiness apart from God. Other times, we may stay close physically but keep our hearts distant, going through the motions without truly tasting the joy of God's love. **But the Father never stops waiting, longing for us to come home.**

Lent is an opportunity to accept that invitation. Through prayer, fasting, and acts of charity, we are called to step away from what leaves us hollow and return to the One who nourishes us. Here in Madeira, we know that a shared meal is about more than satisfying hunger - it is about community, celebration, and belonging. And so it is with God. **The Eucharist, the greatest feast of all, invites us to taste and see the goodness of the Lord.** Each time we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we are welcomed into the Father's embrace, reminded of His endless mercy and love.



So wherever we find ourselves on our spiritual journey - whether we relate more to the lost son or the elder brother - the Father invites us to the table. Let us set aside our pride and fears, enter the celebration, and truly taste the joy of belonging to God.

"Taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm 34:8)

*With prayers and love,
Dcn Tito.*

SURGERY APPEAL – An update!

Two week's ago there was a special appeal in our newsletter, asking for help to make a life-saving surgery possible. Today we have an update!

- Brought to you by Alexandre Silva

Dear members of the Penha de França Community (and visitors to our Chapel),

I will start with the big news: **Mrs. C had her life saving surgery on Wednesday!**

After the appeal we made two weeks ago, we gathered enough money to start preparations really early, so she scheduled her trip to Barcelona for last Monday. She went alone.

They were able to schedule all her pre-surgery exams for Tuesday, and late in the day on Wednesday, she had her surgery!

The doctors even discovered additional masses that had gone undetected, but they were able to remove those as well.

She will still need to stay under observation for some more time, but she is stable, and with good prospects.

So now, a mother of seven children, a wife, a friend of so many people, and a pillar of her extended family, is going to come back home, resume working, and more importantly, have a long life surrounded by loved ones, filled with love and purpose, **because of you!**

I've been thinking about Angels. We relate them with protection - "our guardian Angel". We ask them for help, protection from terrible events. They even help us just by making us know we are not alone in the world. And sometimes, when things work out, we wink at the sky and thank them for our good fortune. That is what you've done, when you answered Mrs. C's prayers with your generosity. You protected her. You made her know she was not alone. You lifted her and gave her hope. You won't believe the depth of gratitude she, and her family have for this gesture. I can tell you that these last few weeks involved a lot of tears. Not mine of course, it was just something that got into my eyes. But seriously, it was ridiculous the amount of crying and hugging involved in the preparation for her life-saving trip. Well, not ridiculous, but there was certainly a copious amount of emotions. Not all Angels have blinding white wings, and piercing blue eyes (well, some do), so really, really, really **thank you** for being your Sister's Guardian Angel.

We gathered 7.462€ to help Mrs. C. We have paid all the expenses up to now, so if there are no setbacks with her stay in the Hospital, we should be able to help her son with the debt he has from the first surgery. So, I guess he has a few more guardian Angels too!

Thank you with all my heart.

- Alexandre Silva (alex.lupus@gmail.com)

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE (PHP) – A special appeal

- Brought to you by Alexandre Silva

Dear members of the Penha de França Community (and visitors to our Chapel),

I am Alexandre, and I have been working with the charity "People Helping People" since I was first married. We are "VERY" thankful for the donations coming from your community, so we thought we could share with you some of the stories of the families you are helping to take care of.

Mrs. C is one of a lot. Of course, everyone in one of a lot, but some people seem to be more unique than others.

She is a lovely 40-year-old woman, with a positive, cheerful spirit, very spiritual and compassionate. She is also a hardworking wife and mother of 7 kids with a very tight budget. There is no much possibility in her that you would never know that she has Lupus and Hemiparesis (affecting her right side). So much hope that you would never realize one of her daughters has a chronic disease and has been on a waiting list for a kidney transplant since she was 4 years old, 15 years ago.

She has so much to say, you certainly wouldn't feel that she was diagnosed over a year ago with an incurable brain tumor. This tumor was deemed inoperable by all national hospitals, so she was unable to have other treatments like chemotherapy or radiotherapy because of her pre-existing conditions. But with the help of her family, she discovered that in Barcelona they are trying a laser procedure specifically aimed at these types of tumors.

Mrs. C has been on leave from her work since the diagnosis, but even though her husband and eldest son work, with the expenses of such a populated home, it was impossible to gather the amount needed to have the surgery, plus donations.

They always lived in a tight budget, others savings are impossible. So her eldest son asked for a loan from his boss, to make the operation possible. Although she has a good insurance, Mrs. C still had to pay 7.500€ for the surgery, travel and accommodation to one of the most expensive cities in Europe.

She was operated in December, but during the surgery she suffered a heart attack, so they had to stop everything, and reschedule her without finishing the procedure. She was actually dead for some time. So although they managed to save up some of the sum, it is now impossible in her head, giving her convulsions, and losing her sight on her right eye whenever she gets a bit anxious. And of course, without help, her condition will only deteriorate. So time is of the essence. PHP has never helped the family before, and we hope that in the future we won't need it.

But they need help now.

Last time since she ended up in intensive care for longer because of the heart attack, she actually ended up paying more than she expected from the hospital and accommodation for the family member that accompanied her. So we have agreed that as soon as we are reaching 8.000€ raised, she will schedule the surgery immediately. Mrs. C has been in contact with the surgeon, and he says that it could be achieved very fast. She is so happy that it would be able to make a bit more. And her eldest son is paying for the last surgery directly from his wages by his employer for the next few years, so if we can raise more money than needed for this, it would be used to make the loan that he took.

I think it's worth it, I really want to make this happen. Can we help?

If you wish to donate to help this family, please include any mention to "surgery" or "Mrs. C" or anything related to the bank transfer notes to PHP. We will be watching out for that and sending it back for them. Your donations at the end of these make it possible for us to help families like this one.

Thank you for taking the time to read this through to the end, and for doing 166020208 - Alexandre Silva (alex.lupus@gmail.com)

EASTER HAMPER COLLECTION

Please continue bringing in items to make up our **Easter hampers** for needy families.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us so far!

For further details, contact

Debbie by email:
deborahadajesus@yahoo.co.uk



SINGLE BED MATTRESS – Needed

If you, or anyone you know, has a single bed mattress in good condition that is no longer need, an elderly gentleman is in need of one urgently. Please get in touch with Carla Rodrigues if you are able to help: 967 214 835 e-mail: fcarla.mrodrigues@gmail.com Thank you in advance! ☺

