

# Fr Timothy Radcliffe to speak launch of Positive Faith

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CAPS, HIV, Kip Loades, Timothy Radcliffe, Archbishop Peter Smith, Vincent Manning, Bishop Christopher Chessun

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The Catholic Archbishop Peter Smith of Southwark and his Anglican counterpart, Bishop Christopher Chessun will welcome people living with HIV, other Christians, theologians and public health sector professionals to Romero House in London on Wednesday, 11 October for the launch of a new video series and website from Catholics for AIDS Prevention and Support (CAPS), Positive Faith. Timothy Radcliffe will give the address. There will also be a question and answer session.



CAPS worked with film maker Kip Loades, to produce this unique resource. Offering advice and pastoral support for anyone concerned about or diagnosed with HIV, the series includes tools for churches and schools to raise awareness of HIV and promote action locally, in a faith sensitive way. CAPS was one of only 13 agencies awarded a grant by Public Health England (PHE) as part of their HIV Prevention Innovation Fund, with partner sponsorship Hertfordshire Public Health.

Chair of CAPS Vincent Manning said: "This is not a project that wags its finger at the individual and sends them off to get tested for HIV, neither is it about blaming the church for lacking compassion. Positive Faith is about looking forward and offering practical help that empowers Christian people. As the lead provider of faith based peer support in the UK, CAPS has extensive knowledge and experience to address the issues at the intersection of Christian ministry and HIV with depth and nuance – we intend to save lives."

The resource enables HIV prevention efforts within a church to begin, by providing short videos and training guides for small groups. For those living with HIV, adherence to treatment and medical support is promoted. Christian narratives around healing and God's loving acceptance of everyone encourage churches to become more aware and welcoming, and those worried about HIV to access testing. In the language of faith Positive Faith will reduce stigma in churches and be of pastoral support for Christians living with HIV.

Positive Faith will be the 'go to' resource for health and social care professionals whose clients need support and encouragement around these issues. Where the concerns of Christians living with HIV are taken seriously, and are reflected upon in ways that are pastorally sensitive, medically accurate and theologically responsible.

Jim McManus Director of Hertfordshire Public Health, and project sponsor, said: "If churches are sometimes uncomfortable about HIV, health services still feel uncomfortable about faith. This resource seeks to bridge that gap."

In his address at the launch of Positive Faith, Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP will speak about the example of Jesus who so often embraced people on the margins of society and restored them to community. As he says in one of the Positive Faith videos, at our best, we in the Church do the same. Do we witness to God's mercy and Christ's radical inclusiveness?

*Inside the Diocese of Southwark are Lambeth and Southwark, the boroughs with the highest prevalence of HIV in the country: 14.6 and 12.7 respectively, per 1000 adults aged 15-59 years, compared to 1.6 per 1,000 nationally (source: HIV in the UK 2016 report: PHE)*

**For further information, or if you would like to attend, please email: Victoria Morris 07788 675 482 [vicks@neovista.net](mailto:vicks@neovista.net)**

**For more information see: CAPS website [www.caps-uk.org/](http://www.caps-uk.org/)**

**Positive Faith on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Positive-Faith-CAPS-UK-411183222572382/](https://www.facebook.com/Positive-Faith-CAPS-UK-411183222572382/)**

**Positive Faith website: [www.positivefaith.net](http://www.positivefaith.net)**