



Diocese of Shrewsbury

Department of Education



RE and CATHOLIC LIFE

NEWSLETTER

Spring Term 2022 No.2

Dear Colleague

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome back after your half term break. We recognise it has been once again a challenging half term on several fronts, but we hope that as restrictions continue to ease there will be less disruption than in the previous couple of years.

One hope for this year is that we will be able to celebrate the great Easter season in full. Now that churches are fully open and singing is encouraged, may we celebrate the Easter season, especially the Triduum, with all our senses!

Before then we celebrate Ash Wednesday to mark the beginning of the Lenten season. This is perhaps the only day of the year when we can be easily marked out as Christians as we wear our cross of ashes on our foreheads. As a time of prayer, repentance, sacrifice and almsgiving, what is it that you are planning to do to grow spiritually this Lent? How will others know you are Christian the rest of the six weeks?

Perhaps you have already signed up to CAFOD's *Walk against Hunger* challenge or committed to a daily or weekly prayer retreat through Lent. Whatever you do, may God's grace be upon you, may it transform you and may it help you transform the lives of those around you by your love.

2. CPDF FOR THE SPRING TERM

A reminder that the majority of CPDF for this term continues to be virtual with some opportunities for a blended approach.

RE and Catholic life: a course for primary practitioners: this course will begin in the summer term with Sessions 1 and 2 delivered on the dates already calendared for 3 and 4. The course will complete in the autumn term with the final two sessions.

Session 1 13th May 9.30-3.30 St Hugh's, Timperley

Session 2 1st July 9.30-3.30 St Hugh's, Timperley

This course is open to all primary colleagues, though as ECTs already have a full programme of induction for the first two years of their teaching, it is not recommended they attend at this time. A series of twilights has been organised for ECTs.

Support for Primary ECTs

Schools have already been informed about this series of twilights, but in case your ECTs haven't seen the email, please do encourage them to book on:

Session 1 1st March 3.30-5.00pm **Liturgical Prayer and the season of Lent**

Session 2 28th April **Quality First Teaching in RE**

Session 3 15th June **Supporting Catholic Life in school**

Prayer and Liturgy Twilight Sessions: Unfortunately, as already indicated via email, these sessions have been cancelled to allow us to discern the best way forward in response to the release of the draft directory. Further information will be shared with schools as we have it.

School support for inspection under the new CSI (Catholic Schools Inspectorate) framework

Thursday 24th March 3.30-5.00: this is an abridged *extra* opportunity to explore the key messages of the new framework virtually.

Friday 6th May 9.30-12.00: this will be an in-person session to support schools who will be inspected under the new framework, especially those due to be inspected in 2022-23.

COAST is a virtual meeting on Thursday **10th March 9.30am -12.00pm**.

RE Coordinator hub meetings will be half day virtual meetings this half term. Hopefully we will have the RECD3 Draft by then to explore in depth during our time together. For this reason, we sincerely hope all RE Coordinators are able to attend. If you are unable to attend your hub meeting date, feel free to sign up to one of the others.

The **SHORE** meeting on **30th March** will still run as an in-person meeting at St John Henry Newman Parish Centre in Latchford, though we are looking to offer a hybrid approach for those unable to attend in person so you can join virtually.

To book onto any of the above courses please click on the link below:

<https://www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/education/courses/book-a-cpdf-course>

3. 'WALKING WITH JESUS' - LITURGICAL PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR HOLY WEEK

This year our liturgical prayer will focus on the days of the week we remember and celebrate during Holy Week, from Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, to his crucifixion, and his glorious resurrection.

We recognise that some of you may already be on your Easter holidays when our prayer time together is livestreamed on **7th April 4.00-5.00pm**, but we hope you may still be able to join us virtually from wherever you are or catch up later via the link. For those of you still in school, we hope you may continue to use the time to gather as a staff in prayer and contemplation on the events of Holy Week.

As always, we would love you and your children and young people to share your gifts and talents with us as a diocesan community whether through the recording of hymns, proclaiming of scripture or reading of prayers, or by sharing artwork to enhance our time of prayer together.

4. LENTEN PRAYER

One of the great positives to come out of the last two years is the number of opportunities for prayer and retreat that are now available online as opposed to in-person. As teachers with busy schedules and set holidays, such opportunities are a real blessing in deepening your relationship with God.

There are many opportunities for individual and collective prayer as you journey through Lent. Here are just a few:

Lent with Padre Pio, from **Franciscan Media**. They say "*St. Pio of Pietrelcina, or Padre Pio as he's widely known, personified the season of Lent perhaps better than any other saint. In 1918, he had a vision of Jesus. When the vision ended, he had the stigmata in his hands, feet, and side. Yet this holy and humble Capuchin Franciscan understood that earthly pain is temporary; Christ's death meant his salvation—and ours.*

Join us this Lent with meditations, prayers, and words of comfort from Padre Pio himself, delivered right to your inbox!"

You can sign up here [Lent with Padre Pio \(hs-sites.com\)](https://hs-sites.com)

St Bueno's, St Asaph, have a number of guided retreats for individuals. They say, *"An online individually guided retreat offers you the time and opportunity to pay attention to God and to be more aware of God's work in your life. It also gives the space to pray and to reflect on your life, to consider the decisions you have to make, and the priorities you want to set. Each retreatant has their own retreat guide or 'spiritual director' with whom you meet each day via Zoom, and who will help you to reflect on your experience and discern. The online retreats will run in parallel with retreats which are taking place at St Beuno's and are based on the Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian tradition."*

Click [Online Individually Guided Retreats at St Beuno's | Pathways to God](#) for more information

The **Divine Office**, or Liturgy of the Hours, is a way of praying throughout each day. Sacrosanctum Concilium, the constitution on the sacred liturgy from Vatican II states, *"The Divine Office is devised so that the whole course of day and night is made holy by the praises of God."* It hopes that by praying the Divine Office those participating will be drawn to enter that *"prayer without ceasing"* which St. Paul commands all Christians (1 Thess 5:17).

Perhaps this Lent, if you haven't prayed the Divine Office before, you could commit to praying it, even if it was solely Morning and Evening Prayer. For example, as the draft of the Prayer and Liturgy suggests, the Divine Office is a simple way to pray with staff, for example at the start of the school day.

It is possible to have a physical copy of the Divine Office, though many people use the **Universalis** app on their smart devices which can be downloaded for a fee for both Apple and android devices.

5. THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

The God Who Speaks initiative continues to produce a variety of resources that could be used in school both in RE lessons and in prayer.

They have created new posters for schools on the themes: **Ash Wednesday, Lent and Easter** - godwhospeaks.uk/lent-and-eastertide-resources/posters and a new *In-Between Times* poster and resources for **Easter to Pentecost** - biblesociety.org.uk/resources/the-in-between-time

For primary children they have a new Easter Donkey Detective resource and activity - godwhospeaks.uk/the-easter-donkey

They say, *"Travel with our young donkey detective (the grandson of our [Christmas Donkey](#)) from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday as he seeks to unravel the special mission Jesus was carrying out. Pick up clues along the way and store them on his saddle."*

You can find more Lent and Eastertide resources, including a visual journey through Eastertide here - godwhospeaks.uk/lent-and-eastertide-resources

Fr Michael Hall opens our eyes with **Luke and the Open Heaven** - godwhospeaks.uk/between-the-testaments/luke-and-the-open-heaven

Bishop David Evans launches a new series on **The Meaning of Life** using the Bible and modern philosophy to help explore some big questions - godwhospeaks.uk/the-meaning-of-life-part-1-identity

Events and workshops

The Society of St. Gregory is offering this Scripture workshop:

Wednesday 27 April 2022 at 7.30-9pm: **Scriptures for Eastertime** (Mgr Kevin McGinnell)

This is an online interactive session, with lots of practical help and tips. £10 per person, Bookings, together with all the details, are available on their website [here](#) .

On **11th May**, Mgr Kevin McGinnell will lead a bonus session, '**Shadows in the Gospel**', for which there is no charge. You can reserve your place when booking for the other sessions online.

In addition, the God Who Speaks commissioned **Bible artwork by Peter Codling**, produced as part of the Year of the Word celebrations, can now be seen in the new **Mosaic Experience** giving you a 360°tour of this stunning **Little Bits of God** artwork - art.godwhospeaks.uk. The site allows you to view the mosaic in detail and shares the many images and symbolism presented on each panel. As it is an interactive site it is one that children and young people could access.

6. CARITAS SHREWSBURY

By now, schools in the diocese should have received letters from **Caritas Shrewsbury** inviting them to support the **Good Shepherd Appeal** during Lent. Caritas Family Support Service works with children, families and those in communities who are experiencing difficulties or disadvantage. To do this Caritas relies on funding.

Schools have helped raise some of these funds from their early days and remain one of their most important sources of income especially in their annual Good Shepherd Appeal, enabling them to continue their work helping those in need. Suggestions for fundraising and posters can be found on their website <https://www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk/get-involved/good-shepherd-collection/> You may also like to read their Impact Report <https://www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk/about/impact-reports/> to give you a better insight into their services.

7. AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED (ACN)

Aid to the Church in Need provides educational and prayerful tools for pupils and teachers to use together during Lent.

<https://acnuk.org/resource/lent-2022-primary/> Here you will find ACN's **The Way of the Cross – Children's Stations of the Cross** for the Suffering Church – and their **Child's Bible Project** for Lent.

<https://acnuk.org/resource/lent-2022-secondary/> Here you will find all the resources you need to organise ACN's **Lent Mobile Phone Challenge** in your school, including videos, presentations and activities. Learn more about how ACN helps refugees, orphans, the elderly, the sick and the hungry, and join them this Lent in prayer, fasting and almsgiving to sustain the Body of Christ.

8. POST-GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS) in the Dept of Theology and Religion at Durham University is currently advertising **Postgraduate Scholarships and Bursaries in Catholic Theology /Catholic Studies for 2022/23**. A summary of the awards available is below.

We would especially like to draw your attention to the two Louis Lafosse PhD Scholarships, including full-fees (at UK level), plus a maintenance allowance at the UK Research Council's national rate (full-time rate £15,609 in 2021-22). Applications are open to both full-time candidates (3 year awards) and part-time candidates (6 year awards).

Full details including eligibility criteria and an application form are available at Funding - Durham University

The closing date for applications for the Louis Lafosse PhD Scholarships is Sunday 27 February 2022. All other applications are open until 22 May 2022.

9. IF 100 CHRISTIANS REPRESENTED ALL OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

This is an interesting infographic from the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity that can be found on the Bible Gateway website. It looks at the current picture of Christianity across the globe, which may be of interest to teachers and pupils alike. [If 100 Christians Represented All of Global Christianity - Bible Gateway Blog](#)

PRIMARY

10. CAFOD

CAFOD's campaign this year is *Walk Against Hunger*. CAFOD are encouraging schools, groups or individuals to *walk, roll, skip or stroll* to 200k. This could be 5k per day over the 40 days of Lent or 200k all at once as a team. 200 represents the 200 million children in the world who are at risk from malnutrition. Sign up to the campaign [here](#). Schools can sign up to receive a totaliser to help with counting the kilometres and fundraising.

CAFOD also have a number of resources available for primary children. Click [here](#) to find out more about what they offer.

11. MISSION TOGETHER

Mission Together have produced liturgical prayers for each week of Lent plus a downloadable calendar that invites children to reflect on Jesus' words and actions. They also have workbooks for Lent that are suitable for online platforms and various activities for Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Find their resources [here](#).

Many of our schools have the little red Missio boxes to fill throughout the year to support Missio's overseas children's projects. However, Mission Together recognise that many schools now are cashless, so they have set up a JustGiving page, which may be less onerous. Find out more about their Little Red Box scheme [here](#).

12. MUSLIM LEARNER SERVICES

With Ramadan starting around the 2nd of April, Imran Kotwal from Muslim Learner Services (www.muslimlearnerservices.org) is offering a **FREE virtual Teaching & Learning about Ramadan & Eid CPD session for Primary School RE Leads/Teachers/Headteachers**

15th March 2022 4-5pm & **29th March 2022** 4-5 pm.

In this session, we will explore questions like; What is Ramadan? Why do Muslims fast? Why do some Muslims in Britain start Ramadan on different dates? Do all Muslims need to fast? What is Suhoor & Iftar? What is the Night of Power? What is I'tikaf? How do Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr?

Places are limited to **one free place per school**.

To book your place please complete the booking form [HERE](#) or copy and paste the link into your browser [Teaching and learning about Ramadan and Eid](#)

SECONDARY

13. FINDING SILENCE

In the busy, hectic messiness of our lives it is important to find silence, an opportunity to switch off from the distractions and really spend time in quiet, listening to God. However, for our young people, so bombarded with noise and constant social media updates this can be difficult. Finding silence is a habit that needs to be learnt and practised. This short video from Fr Christopher Jamison offers young people a guide to finding silence that you could easily implement in your own school community. [Finding Silence with Fr Christopher Jamison - YouTube](#)

14. CAFOD

CAFOD's campaign this year is Walk Against Hunger. CAFOD are encouraging schools, groups or individuals to *walk, roll, skip or stroll* to 200k. This could be 5k per day over the 40 days of Lent or 200k all at once as a team. 200 represents the 200 million children in the world who are at risk from malnutrition. Sign up to the campaign here. Schools can sign up to receive a totaliser to help with counting the kilometres and fundraising.

CAFOD also have revision resources for GCSE to support knowledge and understanding of poverty, sustainability and the work of CAFOD. The resources can be found here cafod.org.uk/homework

The CAFOD **LiveSimply Award** is being refreshed to make it more relevant to schools, and simpler to follow. They are developing new support resources, including animations and CPD. To sign up or for more information click [here](#).

For further information on CAFOD updates click [here](#)

A hybrid Young Leadership programme is currently being offered for 2021-2022 and at present schools in nine dioceses are enrolled. Promotional materials will be available early summer (May/June) to recruit for September 2022. Further information to follow!

15. THE COMMON GOOD

The Common Good is a phrase often used by Catholics, particularly in connection with Catholic Social Teaching and Catholic Social Thought, but what does it mean? Dr Anna Rowlands has written a book entitled, *Towards a Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times* exploring this theme. Theos Think Tank interviewed Dr Rowlands to explain further in this accessible podcast, which may be of interest for older students: [Reading Our Times: What actually is the Common Good? In conversation with Anna Rowlands on Apple Podcasts](#)

RSE

16. RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, RSE AND HEALTH EDUCATION WITHIN PSHE

A reminder with regards to the provision of statutory Relationships Education, RSE and Health education. The PSHE Association notes:

Statutory content is covered by learning opportunities for each key stage across the Programme's three core themes: 'Health and Wellbeing', 'Relationships', and 'Living in the Wider World',

A high quality PSHE programme will also cover economic wellbeing, careers and enterprise education, as well as education for personal safety, including assessing and managing risk. These areas are mainly covered with the 'Living in the Wider World' core theme – and though not yet statutory, are vital parts of any school's PSHE curriculum.

These three core themes outlined by the PSHE Association have a resonance with the three core themes of the CES Model Curriculum for Primary and Secondary: 'Created and loved by God', 'Created to love others' and 'Created to live in community – local, national, global'.

Thus, by delivering the statutory elements of PSHE you are delivering the majority of PSHE education.

17. TEN:TEN Life to the Full

For those schools and colleges using **Life to the Full from Ten:Ten** for their RSE provision a few points to note:

- At Primary, Life to the Full is a full RHE programme with options to include sex education. This scheme covers the majority of the PSHE curriculum.
- At Secondary, officially Life to the Full is a full RSHE programme, though Ten Ten recognise some areas need further development, for example FGM is covered, but needs to be covered in more depth. Once developed, this too would mean the course will cover the majority of the PSHE curriculum.
- Ten Ten is interested to know what other aspects of Health education schools think need further development within the scheme. Contact them directly.
- It is intentional that the guidance on the protected characteristics is not downloadable as this guidance is potentially subject to change. However, it is possible to request a copy
- Feedback is welcomed on the new Y11 content. You can feedback directly by using the Contact page.
- Home learning was put in place before Christmas in case schools reverted to online lessons. This is free content, but subscribers need to *opt in* to access it. The content is currently available for up to three months, though it will cease to be accessible in the near future.
- From this half term, the prayer for use at home will no longer be produced.
- The prayer content for EYFS on the Collective Worship subscription is now available on presentations minus the text.
- There are a number of CPDF opportunities offered by Ten Ten for different audiences. Contact them directly if you think there is a helpful area of focus, or perhaps a needed area of focus they haven't covered for future CPDF.
- In response to the updates on KCSiE, there is already a report on The Hub where the relevant content can be found for Primary. The Secondary report will be accessible after half term.

- On that – Hub updates are regular features that are often in response to queries from schools – don't forget to ask the question if you have one!
- Subtitles will be available on all Primary content by September 2022 with most of the Secondary subtitled content available by that date.
- Ten Ten are looking at providing a Collective Worship subscription model for Secondary schools. They would welcome responses from schools as to what would be helpful.

And finally...

From May 2021 until July 2022, the Society of Jesus celebrates an Ignatian Year. What is an Ignatian Year? May 20, 2021 marked the 500th anniversary of St. Ignatius' conversion — that fateful day when Ignatius the soldier, struck by a cannonball, began his transformation into Ignatius the pilgrim. During this Ignatian Year the Society of Jesus is asking, how might we grow in our relationship with God and our love for one another by meditating on this important moment in Ignatius' life?

God continues to invite each of us into a deepening relationship, to ongoing conversion. By embracing this invitation, we embrace our God who calls us to act in new, bold ways that reconcile our world, bringing about justice, peace and compassion.

Many events, retreats and opportunities for prayer have been offered during this Ignatian Year, including reflections to encourage us to pause and to reflect. For example, Eric Clayton, Deputy Director of Communications for the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, has been emailing regular reflections since the year began to all those who sign up ([Jesuits.org/Weekly](https://www.jesuits.org/Weekly)).

Here's a recent reflection that gives us a moment to stop and think, and challenges us, with Lent just around the corner, to try a new habit with regards to our prayer life.

A literal layer of dust has piled up on the dress shoes in my closet as a result of the many months of pandemic casual, and my hangers are full of clothing I don't remember buying. Aside from the half dozen flannel shirts I've been dutifully rotating through, I've had very few opportunities to wear anything with a collar for nearly two years.

That's why the shirt was just a *little* tighter and a *little* shorter than I remembered – a by-product of the pandemic, no doubt. And a less-than-meticulous observing of the wash instructions, too.

But it was too late. My youngest daughter and I were accompanying my parents to a baby shower, and we were several states away from our Baltimore home. We were staying at a relative's house. My luggage was filled with diapers and dresses, milk bottles and Daniel Tiger books. I'd committed most of my mental energy to remembering the giraffe pacifier and well-worn, not-quite-white-anymore stuffed bunny rather than worry about trying on my own clothes.

"What do you think?" I pulled at the tails of my shirt, trying to get them past my belt. "Look alright?" One eye on my daughter running around the kitchen, the other assessing my mother's reaction to my not-quite-perfectly-fitted outfit.

"You look nice," she said.

"Shirt's not too small?"

“It’s a little short,” she replied, not missing a beat.

I scowled, tugging at the shirt again, grabbing the toddler before the chair fell on top of her. “I think it’s fine.”

“It’s fine,” my mom agreed. “Just a little short.” Then, a shrug: “You asked.”

But that’s not the answer I wanted.

At the risk of comparing my mother to God, how often do we approach our prayer life in this same way? We know the things that are weighing us down, distracting us, tempting us to take up habits and practices we’d do well to avoid. Like an ill-fitting shirt, we tug and pull and pretend it’s all okay – even when we know it’s not.

And we turn to God in prayer, hoping to get an answer we know we don’t deserve, justification for something we know we should change. Remember: Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” ([Jn 14:6](#)). He doesn’t say, “Come to me, all you who desire easy answers.”

What is it about your life that’s ill-fitting and causing you spiritual discomfort? Perhaps it’s time to try on a new way of living: a new habit, spiritual practice or renewed self-discipline. Lent is just around the corner – and the Holy Spirit will keep nudging until you do.

But there’s one more thing that’s particularly illustrative here, and I don’t want us to miss it. At the risk of comparing my mother to God again, you’ll note my parents didn’t send me home or force me to sit the baby shower out. My mom said, “You look nice” – and she’d meant it.

No matter our spiritually ill-fitting shirt, God still delights in us, still loves us, still gazes upon us and says, “You look great.” But God doesn’t leave us there. God sees the person we may yet become and invites us to take up that challenge.

Leave those old clothes behind, God says. I’ve got something that will fit you perfectly.

God bless, Julia and Cath