

Diocese of Shrewsbury

Department of Education



RE and CATHOLIC LIFE

NEWSLETTER

Spring Term 2023 No.1

Dear Colleague

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome back after the Christmas holidays. Wishing you every good blessing for the new year ahead.

With every new year, the news and media platforms are always full of stories and feeds about resolutions and commitments for the next twelve months. Many people make resolutions to exercise more, eat healthily, improve their work/life balance, resolutions that focus on our physical and mental health, but what about our spiritual health?

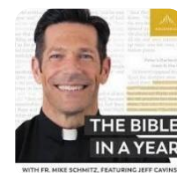
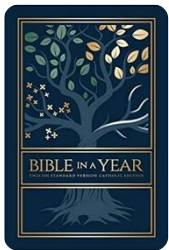
2023

Perhaps this new year is an opportunity to make a small resolution to grow in faith, to grow our prayer life, to grow our relationship with God.

Praying the Morning Offering to the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the start of each day is a way to offer our *'prayers, works, sufferings and joys'* to God. And for the close of the day, why not try *'Reimagining the Examen'*, from Loyola Press, which can be downloaded as an app. When Sr Gemma Simmonds CJ spoke to school leaders in the autumn term, she highlighted this short Ignatian examen for use at the end of the day, encouraging us to reflect on our day, give thanks to God for all the good things we have enjoyed and to ask for any advice, guidance, and healing we might need.



Another way to nurture our relationship with God is through scripture. Daily reading of scripture brings us closer to God and is a way to hear God speaking to us in our hearts. The Divine Office is the Church's way of praying the sacred scriptures throughout the year which can be accessed easily through the Universalis app. An alternative is to read the whole Bible throughout the year. You can do this for example with *'Bible in a Year – ESV Catholic Edition'* where each day is dated generally (Day 1, Day 2, etc.), so that you can start at any point in the year. Alternatively, you could subscribe to Fr Mike Schmitz's podcast, *'The Bible in a Year'* or download the *'Bible in One Year'* app with Nicky and Pippa Gumbel of Alpha.



2. POPE BENEDICT XVI

We said goodbye at the close of 2022 to Pope Benedict XVI, who died on 31st December. Tens of thousands of the Faithful were drawn to the Vatican to pay their respects and offer prayers for the repose of his soul.

One of our secondary heads of RE, Carl Fisher, travelled over to Rome last week and shares his experience with us:

"After the news broke of the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and the Vatican announced the funeral plans, I decided to go to Rome to attend this special event.

Arriving in Rome I went to St Peter's Basilica to pay my respects to this late pontiff who had a great influence on my faith in my teenage years and beyond. As I waited to see his remains laid in front of the altar of the Confession in St Peter's, I reflected on the various times I had seen him and listened to his words.

The atmosphere in St Peter's Basilica was one of intense prayer, many pilgrims praying the rosary and spending time in silent prayer and reflection.

The funeral Mass celebrated by Pope Francis was one of great solemnity. The Mass booklet had the translation of the Mass and helped all gathered to take part in the celebration. The second reading read by a woman from Donegal was a welcome sound that made me smile.

After Mass, Pope Francis had a moment of prayer with his hand on the coffin of Pope Emeritus Benedict. I could only imagine what his thoughts and prayers were for his dear brother and friend.

I took many things from my time in Rome but the words at the end of Pope Francis's homily were some I will remember forever. Pope Francis said 'Benedict, faithful friend of the Bridegroom, may your joy be complete as you hear his voice, now and forever!'

After the Mass, the faithful respectfully joined in a round of applause, and many voices shouted, 'Santo subito' (Make him a saint soon), I joined in with this petition of the crowds and now often ask Pope Benedict XVI for his intercession as he enjoys his eternal reward."

I myself remember fondly the visit Pope Benedict XVI made to the UK in 2010. His words to the children and young people who joined him in person and online at 'The Big Assembly' in St Mary's, Twickenham were inspirational:

"I hope that among those of you listening to me today there are some of the future saints of the twenty-first century. What God wants most of all for each one of you is that you should become holy. He loves you much more than you could ever begin to imagine, and he wants the very best for you. And by far the best thing for you is to grow in holiness.

...My question for you is this: what are the qualities you see in others that you would most like to have yourselves? What kind of person would you really like to be?

...true happiness is to be found in God. We need to have the courage to place our deepest hopes in God alone, not in money, in a career, in worldly success, or in our relationships with others, but in God. Only he can satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts."

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) has produced a prayer card on the death of Pope Benedict XVI that you may wish to use in school: <https://educationshrewsbury.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/BXVI-Papal-Prayer-Card-Long.pdf>

Pope Benedict's call in 2010 for children and young people to be saints has been echoed by Pope Francis and is the foundation of our mission for all in our school communities - to have life and have it to the full (John 10:10).

The papal prayer intention for January is for all educators. Pope Francis says,

'We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.'

You can find all of Pope Francis's monthly intentions for 2023 [here](#).

3. NEW WEBSITE

As you may have noticed, the Diocese of Shrewsbury has launched a new website. The Education pages of the new website were launched after the rest of the site, so apologies to anyone who was struggling to gain access to resources.

Hopefully you will find the new website easy to navigate and can find what you are looking for without difficulty. Please do contact Maggie though if you are unable to find something you know to have been on the old website.

We continue our plea for 'Good News' stories that we can upload to the website. Please ensure that the necessary permissions have been sought of the images depict children and young people. Please could we also ask that any pictures sent are of the highest resolution for uploading.

You can access the new Education website here: www.educationshrewsbury.org

If there are any issues, please email malgorzata.kowalska@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

4. 'MY SOUL IS WAITING FOR THE LORD': a Liturgical Prayer for Advent

Thank you again to all the schools and colleges who contributed to our Advent livestream: All Hallows Catholic College, Macclesfield; Aquinas College, Stockport; Christ the King, Bromborough; Loreto Grammar, Altrincham; Our Lady's, Latchford; St Alban's, Wallasey; St Ambrose College, Hale Barns; St Hugh's, Timperley; St James's, Cheadle; St James's, Hattersley; St Raphael's, Millbrook; The Catholic High School, Chester; The Holy Spirit, Runcorn.

We do not underestimate the time and preparation these recordings take at an already busy time of the year. With grateful thanks to all the children and young people involved, and to their teachers who rehearsed and recorded them.

Look out for our next livestream in Lent. We will once more be looking for input from across the diocese.

From this point onwards we hope to produce the livestreams early so they can be used as a prayer resource for schools should you wish to share them with staff and/or pupils during Lent and Advent.

5. PRAYER AND REFLECTION FOR SENIOR LEADERS

A gentle reminder that on **Thursday 16th February** we will be hosting an opportunity for senior leaders to pause in their busy schedules for a short period of prayer and reflection, joining with leaders from across the diocese, to sit with the Lord and rest awhile.

A link will be sent to schools nearer the time.

6. THE SYNOD

The Synod has now entered the Continental Stage. To read the working document for the Continental Stage (DCS) click [here](#).

Also, as part of the Church's ongoing synodal process, the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, invited several dozen people with disabilities from five continents to a special listening session, in response to Pope Francis' invitation in the Encyclical Fratelli Tutti: "We need to have «the courage to give a voice to those who are discriminated against due to their disability...»". (FT, 98).

Based on the synod questions "What is the Spirit asking of the Church? What paths are opening up for the Church and for the faithful with disabilities?" the participants wrote up a synthesis that was delivered to the General Secretariat of the Synod and to Pope Francis.

Four videos have been commissioned to explore this synthesis, which provide opportunities for challenge and reflection in our own communities. Perhaps we could ask of ourselves what paths we open up for the Church and for the faithful with disabilities.

Two of the videos are available now, with a further two planned for the 12th and 26th January. You can watch the videos online [here](#).

7. JUBILEE YEAR: 2025

The CBCEW (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales) has stated, *"We have two interesting years ahead of us in the life of the Catholic Church. 2025 is a Jubilee Year where the theme is 'Pilgrims of Hope'. In the lead-up, not only do we have a two-part Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome in 2023 and 2024, we also prepare for the Jubilee with two years of focus and formation."*



Following the extraordinary 2015 Holy Year of Mercy instigated by Pope Francis, the forthcoming Jubilee will take place in line with the norm of leaving a 25-year gap between each one. The most recent ordinary jubilee took place in the year 2000, as the world and the Catholic Church prepared to enter the new millennium.

The Jubilee Year is a special year of grace, in which the Church offers the faithful the possibility of obtaining a plenary indulgence. Traditionally, it begins just before Christmas and ends on the Epiphany of the following year.

The Pope inaugurates the Holy Year with the rite of the opening of the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica. After that, the Holy Doors of the other papal basilicas – St John Lateran, St Paul Outside the Walls, and St Mary Major – are opened and remain so until the end of the Jubilee Year.

To find out more about the origin and tradition of the Year of Jubilee, click [here](#) to access the Vatican website, which contains some interesting information.

8. CSI (Catholic Schools Inspectorate)

Schools have been reissued with a letter indicating the year in which they can expect their denominational inspection. Please note, inspection could take place at any point within that year. If you have not received a letter, please contact the diocese.

All denominational inspections are now undertaken against the national CSI (Catholic Schools Inspectorate) framework. The Inspection Handbook and CSED (Catholic Self-evaluation Document) template can be found on the [website](#). Also available are the parental and staff questionnaires. Feedback from pupils on the three areas of inspection can be given using the school's own pupil voice processes and procedures.

Please note, use of the CSED template is not mandatory, however self-evaluation is. It is possible to share with inspectors your own internal self-evaluation documentation of the three areas, Catholic life and mission, RE, and Collective Worship, with a focus on impact of actions taken, and further areas of development required.

Compliance is a limiting judgement in the new CSI framework. To check you are compliant with the expectations of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and with the directives of Bishop Mark, please click on this [link](#).

Support sessions are offered to all schools, particularly those in the inspection window, at Our Lady, Star of the Sea Parish Centre, Ellesmere Port on Friday January 27th, and Friday 28th April at 9.30am. Please book onto these sessions via the website [here](#).

9. FARMINGTON INSTITUTE: SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2023-2024

Applications are now open for the 2023-2024 cohort of Farmington scholars. The deadline for applications is **Sunday 29th January**.

The aim of the Farmington Institute is to support and encourage headteachers working in values and standards and teachers of Religious Education in schools.

The Institute awards Scholarships to UK based headteachers and teachers of Religious Education and associated subjects, publishes papers and reports, and arranges conferences.

What type of Scholarships are available?

Scholarships are divided into two types: university-based and school/home-based. Teachers who live within a reasonable distance of one of the selected universities or colleges may be awarded a university-based Scholarship, if they wish to apply for one.

University-based Scholarships may be taken in the form of day release for up to 30 days, with the Scholarships being taken within university terms. The academic facilities of the universities/colleges are available for University-based Scholars.

Teachers awarded school/home-based Scholarships will be assigned a Farmington Tutor. The Scholarship may be taken in the form of day release, for instance one day a week over a term or over the year, or for continuous periods up to a maximum of 30 days, depending on the operational needs of the school.

Headteachers and RE Leads who have undertaken a Farmington Scholarship have found the experience immensely helpful for their own formation, whilst supporting the school they are in. The time given for research is always the most valuable commodity.

Click [here](#) for the flyer and if you want any more information about undertaking a Farmington Scholarship, don't hesitate to contact me.

PRIMARY

10. GOD WHO SPEAKS

Bible Society, God Who Speaks have some great resources on the word of God including:

Posters for schools and parishes on Jesus and the Power of Place in the Gospels:
<https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/>

They also have new free ESV Gospel resources in schools –
www.biblesociety.org.uk/education/gospels-in-schools/

Take your pupils more deeply into the Gospel stories with this new resource for KS1 and KS2. Forty-two Gospel passages accompanied by background information and questions. Available in the Good News Bible translation (GNB) and the English Standard Version (ESV).

SECONDARY

11. KS5 Core RE

As there has been no move nationally as yet towards the KS4-KS5 section of the RED, we felt it prudent to postpone the KS5 meeting scheduled for 3rd February. We will review the situation for the summer term in due course.

12. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY BROADCAST FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS - The Jewish Museum London

Looking for Ways to Commemorate **Holocaust Memorial Day 2023?**

Join the Jewish Museum London's Learning Team this Holocaust Memorial Day for their free live streamed broadcast for secondary schools on **Thursday 26th January 2023 at 11am.**

In line with this year's HMD theme, 'Ordinary People/Ordinary Objects,' this object talk will look at an ordinary object from the museum's collection – a toothbrush. Through this object they will explore how the lives of ordinary people were changed forever through the events of the Holocaust. The broadcast will be followed by a live candle lighting and 1 minute of silence to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

This event is open to Secondary schools only and will be streamed live to zoom via a webinar broadcast link so students will not be able to see each other. Schools that register to attend this special live broadcast will receive the zoom link and a free Voice Over Power Point.

Click [here](#) to sign up.

13. RELIGION AND WORLD VIEWS: Promotional film collection

Culham St Gabriel's have commissioned this series of short films to promote an education in religion and worldviews across many areas of public life. Individuals from a range of different perspectives and from different walks of life explain why an education in religion and worldviews matters to them. The films are freely available for all to use to show the importance of religion and worldview literacy in a multi religious, multi secular world. These short films may be useful discussion points for students in KS4 and 5.

To access the films, click [here](#).

CPDF

To attend any of our CPDF sessions, please follow this link: <https://educationshrewsbury.org/formation-development/ed-cpdf-opportunities/book-a-cpdf-course/>

Upcoming CPDF:

11 th Jan	Primary ECT Part 1: Teaching RE in a Catholic school, online session
12 th Jan	Induction for new RE Coordinators, St John Henry Newman Parish Centre
17 th Jan	Christ at the Centre, Session 3, Our Lady, Star of the Sea Parish Centre
18 th Jan	Primary Curriculum Working Party, St John Henry Newman Parish Centre
27 th Jan	School support for CSI, Our Lady, Star of the Sea Parish Centre
2 nd Feb	RE Coordinator hub: Cheshire W & Chester, St Mary of the Angels Primary
<u>NOTE CHANGE OF DATE:</u>	
6 th Feb	RE Coordinator hub: Manchester and Trafford, Sacred Heart Primary
7 th Feb	DADAH Primary, am or pm, online session
8 th Feb	RE Coordinator hub: Cheshire East, St Joseph's Primary, Winsford
9 th Feb	RE Coordinator hub: Wirral, St Paul's Primary
13 th Feb	RE Coordinator hub: Runcorn and Warrington, St John Henry Newman
15 th Feb	RE Coordinator hub: Stockport and Tameside, St Peter's Parish Centre
16 th Feb	Prayer and reflection for senior leaders, online
17 th Feb	RE Coordinator hub: Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Cathedral Parish

And finally, I leave you with the words of Pope Benedict XVI in his address to teachers and religious on his visit to the UK in 2010:

“As you know, the task of a teacher is not simply to impart information or to provide training in skills intended to deliver some economic benefit to society; education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full – in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator, for “both we and our words are in his hand, as are all understanding and skill in crafts” (Wis 7:16).”

May God bless you daily in your task,

Julia