

Diocese of Shrewsbury

Department of Education



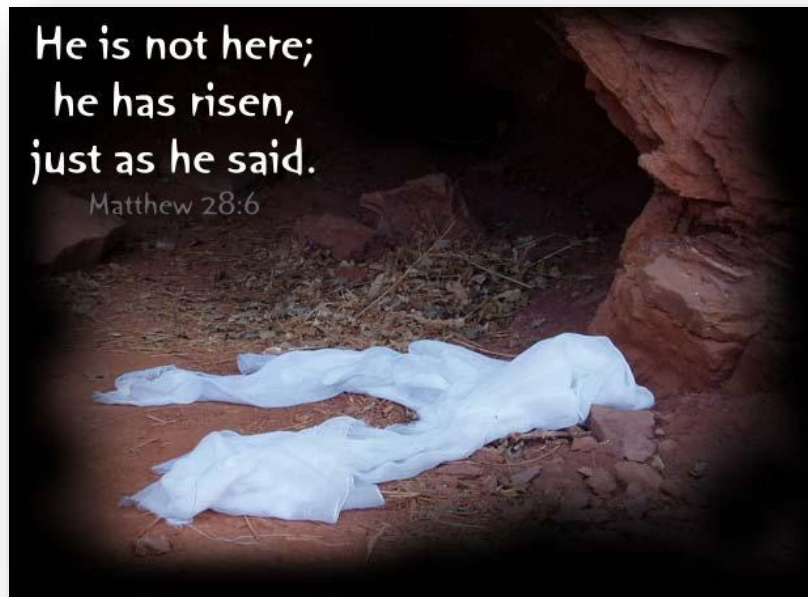
RE and CATHOLIC LIFE NEWSLETTER

Summer Term 2023 No.1

Dear Colleague

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome back after the Easter holiday. Although we may be back in school, and the chocolate eggs may be long gone, don't forget that the Easter season continues for 50 days (right up to Pentecost). After the fasting and sacrifice of Lent we can rejoice in the joy of the Resurrection as we proclaim, 'Jesus is alive!'



2. VIA LUCIS: The Way of Light

Much is discussed about the harm caused by social media; however, it can at times prove to be an excellent source of information especially for those in education. It was on Twitter this Easter that I was introduced to the *Via Lucis*, the Way of Light. You will be familiar with the Via Crucis, the Way of the Cross, more commonly known as the Stations of the Cross, to pray and meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ. However, the Via Lucis is a more recent addition to our popular piety that originated with the Salesians of Don Bosco. The *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments states that '*the Via Lucis is potentially an excellent pedagogy of the faith, since "per crucem ad lucem"* (through the cross to the light). *Using the metaphor of a journey, the Via Lucis moves from the experience of suffering, which in God's plan is part of life, to the hope of arriving at man's true end: liberation, joy and peace which are essentially paschal values*' (Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy 153).

Perhaps the Via Lucis might be a prayer tradition you introduce in your school community to celebrate the joy of the Easter season. You can find out more about the Via Lucis [here](#). There are several books on offer online to help pray the Via Lucis and the Salesians have produced a picture book for young children that can be purchased for £3.50 [Via Lucis: The Way of Light from Easter to Pentecost](#).



3. “FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD’: A LITURGICAL PRAYER FOR LENT

Thank you once again to the pupils, students, and staff in our schools for your wonderful contributions to our liturgical prayer for Lent. Thank you to St Mary’s, Wallasey, St Thomas More, Crewe, St Patrick’s, Wellington, St Nicholas’s, Hartford, St Luke’s, Trench, St Winefride’s, Neston, St Ambrose Prep, Hale Barns, Ss John Fisher and Thomas More, Wythenshawe, St Bede’s, Weaverham, The Holy Spirit, Runcorn, St Paul’s, Wythenshawe, All Saints, Dukinfield and Our Lady’s, Edgeley, for sharing your gifts and talents with our whole diocesan family.

We will look to review how we support schools during Advent and Lent through discussions with DAPH and DASH later this term.

4. INTRODUCING THE RED (Religious Education Directory)

Primary

Following the online briefing for Headteachers and RE Coordinators, schools are invited to join a pilot to introduce *The Vine and The Branches* to Year 1 and Year 3 from September 2023. I will work with these schools this term and over the next year to support them with implementation.

For those schools considering joining the pilot group, please read carefully the proposal for pilot schools noting the dates of scheduled meetings this summer term. [Proposal](#)

If you wish your school to be part of the pilot, please sign up using this [link](#).

A reminder that the scheduled RE Coordinator meeting on **Wednesday 28th June, 9.30-3.30**, at St Columba’s, Plas Newton Lane, Chester, is open to Headteachers and RE Coordinators. The morning will be led by representatives from CAFOD and will focus on CST (Catholic Social Teaching) and other CAFOD resources that can support schools. The afternoon will be given over to the RED offering Headteachers and RE Coordinators more opportunity to engage with the new directory, its significance, structural elements and the model curriculum.

To book onto the day, please click [here](#). It may be that Headteachers wish to join for the afternoon session only. Please indicate this on the booking form.

Secondary

The RED Working Party met online for the inaugural meeting on Wednesday 29th March. It was agreed that for the next meeting schools would look to sequence lessons from September to December i.e. Branches 1 and 2, to share with the group for discussion. This next meeting is set for **Thursday 11th May at 3.45pm** and will be online.

The fruits of these working party meetings will be shared with colleagues at SHORE meetings. The next SHORE meeting is scheduled for **5th July, 9.30-3.30** at All Saints, Dukinfield.

5. GOD WHO SPEAKS: Resources from Bible Society

Fleur and Jonathan at Bible Society continue to share resources to help unpack sacred scripture and enable us to hear God speaking to us through the Bible. See below for links to some of their newest resources, including a poetry challenge for our primary schools:

Art and Bible video for **Eastertide** on Doubting Thomas - <https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/video-doubting-thomas/>

Queens in the Bible: Were they good or bad and what did they do? Neil Rees gives us a royal tour - <https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/chat-echesis/>

Primary School Poetry Challenge: Let the Scriptures Speak for World Poetry Day - www.godwhospeaks.uk/poetry-challenge-let-the-scriptures-speak/

Sunday Reflections continue with David Jackson – <https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/april-year-a/>

6. SACRED SCRIPTURE: Understanding the Literal Sense of Scripture

Recognising the rightful emphasis within the RED of the study of sacred scripture, it is perhaps timely to remind you about this resource from the University of Nottingham, which offers short videos on each of the books in the Bible. They may be helpful in understanding the Literal Sense of Scripture. [BibleDEX - Expert videos about every book in the Bible](#)

7. FREE ROSARIES FOR SCHOOLS: FROM THE CATENIAN ROSARY GROUP

The Catenian Rosary Group offers free sets of Rosary beads, plus cards on how to pray the Rosary, for pupils and students in schools. The Catenian Rosary Groups states, '*there is no obligation on you or the school other than we ask you to use them to encourage the children and young people to pray the Rosary regularly.*' To access these free Rosaries, please write or email direct with the number of Rosaries you think will be used, and please include the school address in the email to prevent confusion with other schools' requests:

Kevin Prendergast, Hawarden House, 12 B Lache Lane, Chester, CH4 7LR, Tel: 01244 681816 or 07881 204432. E-mail : kevpren@gmail.com

8. 'BUILDING CATHOLIC CULTURE IN EDUCATION': A NEW COURSE FROM THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE CENTRE

This is a new course aimed at anyone with immediate responsibility for leading or governing a Catholic school or multi-academy trust, specifically with the objective of considering the underlying principles that define a Catholic ethos in today's educational milieu. There are limited residential places available, and we are also able to offer subsidies to assist those wanting to participate. Further information is at the following link:

Building Catholic Culture in Education course, 12th – 14th May 2023, for leaders of Catholic schools and MATS:

<https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/building-catholic-culture-in-education/>

PRIMARY

9. 'GOOD' RE

I have collated the responses from all seven of the hub meetings. You can access the tables for each year group on the website in the Primary RE meetings area in the Spring 2023 drop down <https://educationshrewsbury.org/religious-education-catholic-life/primary-re/primary-re-meetings/>

10. 'RISE' THEATRE: GOD'S PLANET

RISE Theatre - a Christian theatre company is taking their interactive primary school day - '**God's Planet**' - on tour for the sixth time throughout October and November 2023. For a quick look at what the day involves click on this link https://youtu.be/mrJgK_0htug

To find out more about the production and for booking information click [here](#)

11. ONELIFE MUSIC

Dan and Emily from OneLife Music have opened bookings for the next academic year and are offering bundles to schools on their OPEN and STREAMS series for 20% off. Schools within our

MATs can contact dan@onelifemusic.co.uk for further discounts provided all schools within the MAT opt in.

OPEN <https://onelifemusic.thinkific.com/bundles/open-bundle-saving-23-24>

STREAMS <https://onelifemusic.thinkific.com/bundles/open-bundle-saving-23-24>

SECONDARY

12. SHAREPOINT

Hopefully all Heads of RE received an invitation to SharePoint last term from Rahul, our IT Support at the Curial Offices. As requested at SHORE, this has been provided as a space for messaging, and uploading and downloading resources, in a spirit of support and collaboration. Many of you are well used to using SharePoint and Teams because of online learning during lockdowns, though for those who may need a refresher or use a different platform in school, Rahul has provided a handy video which can be accessed [here](#).

13. 'THE POPE ANSWERS'

For those of you with a subscription to Disney Plus, a new documentary dropped in time for Easter Sunday entitled, *'The Pope Answers'*. The documentary is an original Spanish special featuring Pope Francis and directed by Jordi Évole and Màrius Sanchez. It was filmed in Rome and focuses on the meeting between Pope Francis and ten young adults of different ages and backgrounds with different lives and experiences. The special features upfront and honest conversations between the Pope and Spanish-speaking young adults between 20 and 25 years old who raise questions and concerns on a wide variety of topics.

14. VOCATIONS: A CONTEMPLATIVE COMMUNITY

To supplement your resources on vocations and religious orders, you might like to include this lovely video offering a glimpse into the life of the Benedictine Nuns of Minster Abbey

[Benedictine Nuns of Minster Abbey- Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also - YouTube](#)

RSHE

15. EXTERNAL SPEAKERS IN SCHOOLS

The CES (Catholic Education Service) has updated its proforma, which should be used when planning to invite external speakers into schools to talk about RSHE, but also with any aspect of the curriculum.

The CES states, 'As an integral part of its educational vision for the holistic formation of children and young people, the Catholic Church expects Catholic schools to promote and uphold high standards throughout their activities and this includes visits from external speakers.'

All external speakers invited to schools should be of the highest quality and school leaders are responsible for ensuring that they have enough information about the content to be delivered by any external speaker to enable them to determine whether the content will be pitched at the right level for the age and level of maturity of the children and young people to whom the external speakers will present. All schools should have clear policies for the booking of external speakers which includes sign-off of the booking at an appropriately senior level and compliance with safeguarding checks.'

The proforma has been updated to reflect updated guidance from the DfE on political impartiality and acts as a reminder that any external visitor and their resources should be respectful towards Catholic teachings and not be prejudicial or detrimental to the Catholic character of the school.

The proforma is a checklist that encourages schools to amongst other things, review other resources produced by the planned speaker (and by any organisation the speaker represents) even if they will not form part of the speaker's activities at the school. The CES proforma also requests that schools conduct a general internet search using the speaker's name (e.g. a google search) so that if parents or children and young people conduct a similar search no concerns are likely to arise.

Schools should have a clear procedure for all external speakers that are invited into schools and the CES proforma should be completed at the planning stage and signed off by a named person at senior leadership level.

You can access the updated proforma [here](#)

16. DATES FOR THE DIARY

A reminder that our Mass of Thanksgiving for this academic year takes place at Holy Angels Church, Hale Barns, on Wednesday 12th July at 4.30pm. All colleagues are invited to join us as we thank God for all that this year has given us.

Our Mass of Thanksgiving for secondary schools takes place at Shrewsbury Cathedral on Friday 30th June. Detailed information will be sent to schools in due course.

17. CPDF OPPORTUNITIES THIS TERM

Please see below for the CPDF opportunities offered this term.

All are bookable through the Diocesan website by following the link below:

28 th April	School Support for CSI
4 th May	Year 1 ECTs, Primary Phase: Catholic life & mission
5 th May	COAST Summer Retreat
16 th May	RE Co-ordinator Briefing
18 th May	Primary DADAH Forum
12 th June	Secondary DADAH Catholic life and mission
13 th June	Primary Curriculum Working Party
14 th June	Year 2 ECTs, Primary Phase: Catholic Social Teaching (CST)
27 th June	Secondary RSE Lead Meeting
28 th June	RE Co-ordinator Meeting (all primary headteachers are most welcome)
5 th July	SHORE Meeting

<https://educationshrewsbury.org/formation-development/ed-cpdf-opportunities/book-a-cpdf-course/>

And finally...

As we commemorate 60 years since the publication of Pope John XXIII's encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* (*Peace on Earth*), the first encyclical written to *all* those of good will, not only the Catholic community, let us continue to pray for peace in our hearts, our lives and in our world.

Pope Francis in his Easter message, speaking from the central balcony of St Peter's Basilica, repeated the words of Jesus three times, "*Peace be with you. Peace be with you. Peace be with you.*"

Pope Francis urges us to continue to pray for our neighbours in Ukraine, but also urges us not to ignore "*other forgotten conflicts, other hotbeds of violence, the many 'pieces' of the Third World War that we are unfortunately living through.*"

I leave you with this prayer that concludes *Pacem in Terris*,

Let us, then, pray with all fervor for this peace which our divine Redeemer came to bring us. May He banish from the souls of men whatever might endanger peace. May He transform all men into witnesses of truth, justice and brotherly love. May He illumine with His light the minds of rulers, so that, besides caring for the proper material welfare of their peoples, they may also guarantee them the fairest gift of peace.

Finally, may Christ inflame the desires of all men to break through the barriers which divide them, to strengthen the bonds of mutual love, to learn to understand one another, and to pardon those who have done them wrong. Through His power and inspiration may all peoples welcome each other to their hearts as brothers and may the peace they long for ever flower and ever reign among them.

Amen.

God bless, Julia