



Diocese of Shrewsbury

Department of Education



RE and CATHOLIC LIFE

NEWSLETTER

Spring Term 2023 No.2

Dear Colleague

1. INTRODUCTION

I hope you have enjoyed a restful half term break, whether you're just back in or you've already done a week. Now that the days are longer, the evenings brighter and flowers begin to bloom, this second term of spring always seem to pass more quickly – more so than the seemingly never-ending January!

We began the season of Lent last week and as always, we are never short of excellent spiritual guidance to see us through from this desert of Lent to the garden of the Resurrection. For example, Ignatian Solidarity Network are offering daily reflections on the readings for Mass entitled '*Finding God in the chaos*'. You can sign up for a daily email here <https://ignatiansolidarity.net/lent-2023/>. The CES (Catholic Education Service) has teamed up with the National Office for Vocation to collaborate on prayers during Lent entitled *Called to Holiness*. You can search for the social media posts on Twitter via [@CathEdService](#) and [@ukvocation](#) or via [#CalledToHoliness](#).

In his Message for Lent 2023, Pope Francis highlights the relationship between the Lenten journey and the synodal journey, which are both rooted in tradition and open to newness. Personal and ecclesial 'transfiguration' is the goal of the ascetical journey of Lent, and similarly of the synodal process. Pope Francis takes his inspiration from the Gospel account of the Transfiguration, proclaimed each year on the Second Sunday of Lent. As with the chosen disciples at the Transfiguration, Jesus "takes us with Him to a place apart" during the season of Lent. "Lenten penance," he writes, "is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross. "This requires effort, sacrifice, and concentration, which are also requirements for the Synodal Journey; and therefore we can say that "our Lenten journey is 'synodal' since we make it together along the same path, as disciples of the one Master."
(from CBCEW.org.uk)

MISSIO have produced a prayer resource on Pope Francis's sermon that explores in more detail the two pathways through Lent that he outlines. You can find the resource here [Pathways for Lent: the Holy Father's guide - Missio](#)

2. 'GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD - LITURGICAL PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR HOLY WEEK

This year our liturgical prayer will focus on the journey Jesus made carrying his cross to Calvary, and the people who encountered him on the way. This journey to his crucifixion is a journey he makes in pain and suffering, but out of great love for all humanity. This time of prayer reminds us of God's great love for us, that he sent his only Son to die so that we might live. It is this love we are called to share with others not only during Lent through our prayer, fasting and almsgiving, but at all times.

Instead of our usual livestream, it is hoped that a recording of the liturgical prayer will be shared with schools before the end of term, so you have the option of sharing it with staff and/or pupils.

We will of course be asking schools to contribute their gifts and talents in recordings of the various prayers, reflections and hymns planned. However, there is a tight turnaround for recordings in order to share the link with the liturgical prayer in good time for schools to use it.

3. THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTORY (RED)

I am very pleased to announce that the long-awaited RED – ‘*To know You more clearly*’ - is with us at last. You can download the pdf of the RED [HERE here](#) however, if you wish to purchase a hard copy of the RED you can pre-order it for £19.95 by following this link <https://www.ypdbooks.com/coming-soon/2134-to-know-you-more-clearly.html>

CPDF will be available to accompany the release of the RED - more details to follow soon.

4. ‘IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD’

Racial Justice Sunday was celebrated on 12th February in churches across England and Wales. To mark this date the CBCEW (Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales) have *‘produced a series of A4 PDF posters, that individuals or parishes can download, featuring Our Lady and the Child Jesus from a diverse cross-section of countries and cultures. Although by no means exhaustive, we hope this series highlights the rich diversity of our Catholic community and encourages reflection on how we are all made in the image of God. The posters also carry a prayer taken from Pope Francis’ document Fratelli Tutti. The posters are produced in English but, in some cases, where we have been able to, we have added a suitable translation.’* You can find the posters for download [here](#).

In addition, Westminster Diocese Education Department has shared their resources with diocese across the country to celebrate racial justice, diversity and equality. Explore their resources [here](#).

5. THE GOOD SHEPHERD APPEAL

CARITAS Shrewsbury have launched their Good Shepherd Appeal for Lent. Schools have received a letter, posters and fundraising ideas from CARITAS to support them in fundraising for this important appeal.

CARITAS says, *‘Caritas Family Support Service works with children, families and those in communities who are experiencing difficulties or disadvantage. Through home school and community visits, they work with clients to identify and address needs. This may result in working in targeted groups, on a one-to-one basis or in partnership with other agencies to ensure the client gets the best help possible at a time when their self-esteem is very low and life is challenging.*

To do this Caritas relies on funding, and schools have helped raise some of these funds from our early days and remain one of our most important sources of income especially in our annual Good Shepherd Appeal, enabling us to continue our work helping those in need.’

6. CAFOD ‘THE BIG LENT WALK’

It has been lovely to see on Twitter those schools who have signed up for CAFOD’s Big Lent Walk.

To sign up, or for further resources for use during Lent see [CAFOD primary teaching resources](#) or [CAFOD secondary and youth resources](#)

7. MUSTARD SEEDS

Mustard Seeds is a new platform online offering resources to support schools with the teaching of RE. They offer a LENT video series to purchase for pupils from Y5 to Y9, though currently Episode 1 is available for free download. Find out more at <https://mustard-seeds.co.uk/>

8. INCLUSIVE JUDAISM

What does it actually mean to be Jewish? Is Judaism a religion, culture or ethnicity? How do I teach Judaism holistically, whilst giving space to the different intersectional communities?

The Jewish Museum are offering a virtual CPD for teachers that *explores what it really means to be Jewish and how best to teach an authentic and inclusive Judaism in your classrooms. This CPD is open to both **Primary and Secondary** School Teachers.*

Date: 23 March 2023

Where: on Zoom (the link will be sent once booked) [Book here](#)

Timings: 4-5:30pm

Tickets: £10

PRIMARY

9. MISSION TOGETHER

Mission Together are continually reviewing and improving their available resources. new to the site is a KS1 lesson plan idea for teaching about the Parish family. Included on the page are two videos focussing on vocations – ‘Called to the Priesthood’ and ‘Called to Religious Life’. keep checking in for more lesson plan ideas and videos as this is an area they are looking to grow over the next few months. <https://missiontogether.org.uk/lesson-plan-ideas/>

10. SVP MINI VINNIES

The SVP Youth Development Officers have been in touch to say ‘*Our SVP Lenten project this year is called "What we have we share". The focus is the cost of living crisis that many of our families, friends, colleagues and neighbours are struggling with.*

The beautiful resources take the parable of the feeding of the 5000 to demonstrate that from the smallest of offerings many were provided for. This year our MV and Youth SVP groups are encouraged to prayer together, and to come together to tell their MP what they are doing and ask their MPs what they are doing to help struggling families.

We are confident that their actions and prayers will make a difference.’

I know that many of our schools have Mini Vinnies groups who contribute hugely to the Catholic life and mission of the school. It is wonderful to read all about their actions and prayers in the Mini Vinnies [Newsletter Issue 16](#)

11. MUSLIM LEARNER SERVICES

With Ramadan starting around 22nd March, Imran Kotwal will be running two webinars to support primary schools in developing their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching about Ramadan/Eid & Muslims in Britain. The booking link is at the bottom of this email.

Webinar Title: Teaching and Learning about Ramadan & Eid

Content: Purpose and Rules of Fasting, Teachings from Qur'an & Hadeeth, key Ramadan vocabulary & pronunciation, how Eid is celebrated and Q&A session.

Date: **Wed 22nd March 2023**

Time: **4.00-5.00 pm**

Cost: **FREE (One place per school)** £45 for each additional place

Can't attend the live session: Video Recording & Training materials: £45

Webinar Title: What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today?

Content: Census 2021, History of Muslims in Britain, 5 Pillars & challenges, diet, dress, funerals, Islamophobia and 30 minutes Q&A.

Date: **Mon 27th February 2023**

Time: **4.00-5.30 pm**

Cost: **£45 per staff member** / £200 for 5 or more staff (Training Materials: Full PPT & Resources included.)

Can't attend the live session: Video Recording & Training materials: £45

To book your place: Copy & paste this link <https://zfrmz.com/5iRfoNFUbrEmHV56pRDw> or email CPD@Muslimlearnerservices.org

SECONDARY

12. BEYOND BELIEF - UNFORGIVENESS

An interesting episode of the Radio 4 programme, *Beyond Belief*, that I caught the end of on one of my car journeys home, centred on the challenges of forgiveness. It may be a further resource to be used with students when exploring the notion of forgiveness and our call as Christians to forgive.

The BBC blurb states: *Julie Nicholson's daughter, Jenny, was killed in the 7/7 London Bombings. Julie has not forgiven Jenny's killer which has led to conflict with what was expected of her in her role as a parish priest. She tells Aleem Maqbool about the difficulties in reconciling her faith's teachings on forgiveness with her Christian ministry and the response she received after being dubbed "the vicar who couldn't forgive".*

Julie's story sparks a discussion on the place of forgiveness from different religious perspectives. Aleem is joined by New Testament scholar, Professor Anthony Bash, who has written extensively on the theology of forgiveness, Rabbi Elchonon Feldman, Senior Rabbi at Bushey United Synagogue and author Marian Partington.

They discuss what is meant by forgiveness in different religious contexts. Whether it is essential to forgive others for the hurt they have caused us or is there a limit. Can we forgive the unforgiveable?

You can access the programme here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001j3k8>

RSE

13. RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION, RSE AND HEALTH EDUCATION WITHIN PSHE

A reminder to schools that for the teaching of the statutory element of PSHE, i.e. relationships and health education or relationships, sex and health education, schools must use the schemes as directed by Bishop Mark, namely, Life to the Full, A Journey in Love or Fertile Heart. It is therefore not permissible for schools to use secular published schemes, in part or whole, as these have not been written through the Catholic lens. It is very much the view of the Catholic Education Service that if schools are identifying gaps in the current approved schemes, the Diocese should be made aware of these, so that we can work with the authors to supplement the published scheme.

In addition, we have been made aware that an organisation, *Just Like Us*, has been approaching schools with a view to them using their published resources. Again, schools should not be using these materials as they are not part of the prescribed scheme.

Please also note, the non-statutory elements of PSHE should be delivered through a Catholic lens. This means that resources, including the use of external speakers, should be carefully vetted to

ensure that they promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. I refer schools to the checklist produced by the CES in relation to visiting speakers in schools, which should be completed at the planning stage.

[CES Check list](#)

CPDF

14. CPDF OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SPRING TERM

2/3	SHORE
8/3	Secondary DADAH Catholic Life and Mission
9/3	ECT Year 2 - The Mass - virtual session 3.45-5pm
14/3	Christ at the Centre – A Course for Primary Practitioners: Session 4 of 4
20/3	COAST (new date to be confirmed)
21/3	Primary Heads and RE Coordinators Briefing – RED and implementation.
23/3	Secondary RSE Leads

The courses in the Spring term are bookable through the Diocesan website by following the link [Book course](#)

Please register by using your school email address

And finally...

Our prayer, fasting and almsgiving is a call to a change of heart. Pope Francis offers us different and challenging ways to fast to the usual giving up of chocolate or alcohol, for example.

God bless,

Julia

LENT

Do you want to fast this Lent?

Suggestions from Pope Francis:

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.**
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.**
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.**
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.**
- Fast from worries and trust in God.**
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.**
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.**
- Fast from bitterness and fill your heart with joy.**