

Diocese of Shrewsbury

Department of Education



RE and CATHOLIC LIFE NEWSLETTER

Summer Term 2024 No.1

Dear Colleague

1. INTRODUCTION

He is risen. Alleluia!

Wishing you every blessing of the Easter season – remember, Easter is celebrated right up to Pentecost, so we have plenty of opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus' triumph over death. As Pope St John Paul II said, "We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song!"



2. PLANS FOR CELEBRATING THE 2025 JUBILEE: PILGRIMS OF HOPE

The CES (Catholic Education Service) is working in partnership with CAFOD, CSAN and CYMFed to plan a programme of events for schools to celebrate the 2025 Jubilee, Pilgrims of Hope.

They say, 'Pope Francis has called the Church to celebrate the 2025 Jubilee year with "deep faith, lively hope and active charity." Rooted in the Old Testament, Jubilee has always been a time of renewal, where equality was restored to all God's children, slaves were set free, debts were cancelled, and the land was allowed to rest and recover. In the New Testament, Jesus refers to the same hope at the beginning of his public ministry when he proclaims "the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:19).

In offering us this opportunity to re-set, Pope Francis writes "The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire."

As a Catholic community, we are called to join together in the celebration of this Jubilee tradition, "which is meant to restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone" and we are inviting all Catholic schools to engage in this year. In this landmark moment in the life of the global church, there will be opportunities for the whole school community to experience the joy of taking action together, seeing their role as pilgrims of hope in building a better world.

We will be sharing more information about this next term to ensure that schools are supported in the celebration of a memorable and joyous Jubilee year.'

Please note these key dates for your diaries:

Friday 24 Jan 2025 - Jubilee Launch Day for Schools

June or July 2025 - Jubilee Pledge Day: Schools are invited to reflect on their mission and choose a date to commit to stand in solidarity with the poorest communities, sharing hope and challenging injustice by pledging to take concrete actions to make their community, country and world a better place.

Friday 21 November 2025 - Jubilee Finale: Celebrating the end of the Jubilee year and looking ahead with hope.

3. THE CHOSEN

I appreciate that as we await the UK release of Season 4 many of you will already be aware of The Chosen and will likely have seen all three seasons already. However, if you haven't yet caught the show, it is an intriguing watch as it shares the life of Jesus through the eyes of those who encountered him in a dramatic and engaging way, whilst giving an insight into life in First Century Palestine.

It is possible to watch the first two seasons on Netflix, but you can also view for free on <https://watch.thechosen.tv/#carousels> or the Angel Studios app.

4. EXPLORING THE RED

We recognise that there were a number of schools who were unable to attend the day on 1st March and so we are offering an abridged version of the day for leaders and governors on Thursday 25th April 3.30-5.00, which will be a virtual session via Zoom.

If you wish to join us on the day please book via this link: [Book onto Exploring the RED virtual session](#)


5. 'DIGNITAS INFINITA'

On 25th March 2024 'Dignitas Infinita', a declaration on human dignity, was published by the Vatican. The opening words state: "*This dignity of every human being can be understood as "infinite" (dignitas infinita), as Pope St. John Paul II affirmed in a meeting for people living with various limitations or disabilities. He said this to show how human dignity transcends all outward appearances and specific aspects of people's lives.*

In Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis wanted to underscore that this dignity exists "beyond all circumstances." With this, he summoned all people to defend human dignity in every cultural context and every moment of human existence, regardless of physical, psychological, social, or even moral deficiencies. The Declaration strives to show that this is a universal truth that we are all called to recognize as a fundamental condition for our societies to be truly just, peaceful, healthy, and authentically human. You can read the full document [here](#).

6. MASS OF UNITY: ONE HOPE PROJECT

Over the last 12 years, One Hope Project have seen again and again how powerful music and worship is in helping people to engage with God. This new album and creative project shares music and information about the Catholic Mass intended to help people to worship God more deeply every time they attend. They have produced something that is both liturgically appropriate and contemporary, while also being playable and singable for worshippers and congregations. View the feature film here: [Mass Of Unity | Feature Film | One Hope Project \(youtube.com\)](#)

One Hope Project say, 'Whether you're a Catholic who is looking for new music and Mass resources for your church or a member of another church family interested in liturgy and worship, we know you will find this project uplifting, prayerful and insightful. To find out more and purchase the Mass Of Unity resources, visit our website':  <https://www.onehopeproject.co.uk/mass...>

7. CAFOD

A message from CAFOD:

Firstly, a huge thank you to all of you who took part in the Big Lent Walk this year or did any fundraising for CAFOD during Lent. We'd love to hear from you! You can download a thank you certificate or slide for an assembly [download a thank you certificate or slide for an assembly from our website](#).

As you know, we love to get feedback from you, and to pilot our resources with young people as we develop them. Many of you have helped us with this in the past - thank you! In order to streamline this, and to better acknowledge your contribution, we have set up a CAFOD resource partners list. [Please register here](#), and you can receive a digital badge for website and newsletters that you can use to highlight your input.

Our new online CST module for teachers is now live! [Visit our CPD page](#) for both our staff-led whole school CPD pack, and our new one-hour module that individual teachers can work through at their own rate.

There will be an election at some point this year. Keep an eye out for our new General Election resources. And we also have our ["Young people demand change" workshop](#) that looks at the importance of speaking up for justice. This could be a great retreat workshop!

8. THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY – A CALL TO ACTION

As a Social Justice Society, the aim of the SVP is to be a voice for the voiceless, to challenge the conditions that cause poverty, to campaign to always make poverty a priority on every political agenda, and particularly during this election year.

Free resources for the SVP 2024 campaign, "Make Poverty a Priority" can be downloaded here for Mini Vinnies. They are challenged to see, think, and do to make sure poverty is made a priority, and make a difference.

[SVP Make Poverty a Priority Campaign](#)

And for Youth SVP, this resource is also centred around the Stations of the Cross, which can be used as a whole school, in a classroom setting or in Youth SVP meetings. As the young people go on this journey with Jesus, they are challenged to see, think, and do. The SVP aims to provide agency for young people to identify those in power in their community to whom they can raise their voices and make poverty a priority.

[Click here to have access to everything you will need for this year's campaign.](#) **NB:** All resources can be used whenever appropriate throughout the year.

Since September, in Shrewsbury Diocese, the Stockport & Hyde and Chester & Ellesmere Port Mini-Vinnie and Youth SVP schools have gathered with adult SVP, parishioners, beneficiaries, and guests to celebrate the work and fellowship of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

SVP District Presidents have planned Masses and events for their young Vincentian groups in their Primary schools, (Mini Vinnies, 7-11) and High Schools/Colleges. (Youth SVP, 11-18) The first at Our Lady and the Apostles, Stockport. The second hosted by Chester Catholic High School.



The purpose of these Masses is to gather the Vincentian family, young, older, and even older, to pray together and to recognise all as one family with a shared mission of seeking out need and offering help through a commitment to service and social justice. Together they reinforce their commitment to the Common Good.

As with all families, to socialise and have fun together is also a priority. So, these two occasions were followed by an “after-party!” Very special memories, and new friends were made. These events will hopefully be repeated many times across the Diocese. All are welcome!

9. GOD WHO SPEAKS: Resources from Bible Society

Fleur at Bible Society continues 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:

For all your Easter resources - [The God Who Speaks](#)

Between the Times: Easter to Pentecost Poster - [The God Who Speaks](#)
Our April Focus is on **The Meaning of Life** with the Bible and philosophy - [The God Who Speaks](#)
We complete this series with **Community Building** - [The God Who Speaks](#)
Scripture and Dignity: What does it mean? - [The God Who Speaks](#)
Scripture and Human Rights: Do we need then? - [The God Who Speaks](#)

Science and Scripture – To Know or Not to Know - [The God Who Speaks](#)

Our April Sunday Reflections – [The God Who Speaks](#)

Scripture Brochure – take a look at all our Bible products [here](#)

10. CARJ (CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE)

CARJ is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. CARJ was established 40 years ago on 16 June 1984 at a meeting of approximately 25 ‘founding members’ from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. To mark this important anniversary, we are launching a new Racial Justice Agenda for Change.

To mark the Anniversary, we will hold two national events – Sat 25 May 2024 in London and Sat 21 September 2024 in Oldham. For more information regarding these events and how to take part in our 40th Anniversary celebration day events, please visit the CARJ website www.carj.org.uk

Be part of the day's events, email your interest to info@carj.org.uk

PRIMARY

11. THE RED (Religious Education Directory) ROADMAP FOR PRIMARY

To help clarify the position for primary schools in implementing the new RE scheme, The Vine and the Branches, please see the roadmap, which outlines Bishop Mark's expectation for transition to the model curriculum as presented in the RED. You can find the roadmap [here](#)

12. UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE

A reminder that we welcome Dr Margaret Carswell back to the Diocese to share her many years of expertise working in Biblical scholarship and teacher training. Colleagues who attended the day in the autumn term were hugely impressed and left the course feeling enthused and inspired having begun to explore the Catholic understanding of Scripture.

I encourage RE leads who were unable to attend the last day to sign up for this, plus headteachers and any teachers who may have an interest in furthering their understanding of Scripture – all are most welcome. Join us at **Holy Angels Parish Centre, Hale Barns**, on **28th June 9.30-3.30**. Please book on to the day [here](#)

13. LORD'S PRAYER FLASH CARDS

Redemptorist Publications have for sale a set of flash cards exploring the Lord's Prayer. As this is the Year of Prayer in which we have been called to have a renewed focus on praying the Our Father, these cards may be helpful for use with EYFS and KS1 children.

'Made to be accessible for non-readers - one side shows a colourful image depicting a phrase of the prayer. The other side contains the actual phrase, along with a simplified explanation in language which they will understand. These cards are for learning through play, the pack contains four suggested games, but can be used in as many ways as the imagination allows. Designed and illustrated by a mum of two young children and produced in the UK. For ages 2-6.' [LORDS PRAYER FLASH CARDS \(rpbooks.co.uk\)](http://LORDS PRAYER FLASH CARDS (rpbooks.co.uk))

14. ONELIFE MUSIC

Celebrate the Joy of the Resurrection, with Dan and Emily and over 10,000 children LIVE, for a time of Music, Pray and Sharing. Friday 19th April @11am. [Sign up here](#)

'In honour and Celebration of Our Lady': These short moments of daily prayer and music for the classroom are a wonderful way of pausing for a moment, throughout the month of May with prayer and songs to Mary. [Sign up here](#)

15. MARY'S MEALS - PRAY IN MAY AND ETHIOPIA CRISIS APPEAL

A huge thank you to those schools who have invited us in to lead assemblies so far this year and to share the story of Mary's Meals, who provide school meals to over 2.4 million children every day. This May we invite you to join our Pray in May campaign. During the month of May, dedicated to Our Lady, we invite you to join us in praying for the hungry children who rely on our

life-changing school meals, and for all the children and families around the world who live in poverty. We pray particularly for families facing extreme food insecurity and hunger in [Ethiopia](#).

All schools will be sent an email with links to the [Pray in May resources](#) which include assemblies that can be led by staff and pupils, a prayer calendar and prayers for children to use. You can also sign up for our Prayer Pledge at the bottom of the page [here](#).

Please do get in touch if you have any questions, do not receive the email, or would like to book an assembly or class talk. Many thanks for your continued support.

Prayers and best wishes, Anna Houghton anna.houghton@marysmeals.org

16. RISE THEATRE

RISE Theatre are thrilled to announce our final God's Planet primary school tour of 2024/25

God's Planet will be blasting off for its final tour this autumn and bookings are now open for **1st October - 29th November**. After multiple tours around the country and performing to over 150 schools this will be the final opportunity to book in 2024/25. God's Planet is suitable for the whole school and explores themes of climate change, the environment and God's love for each of us through performance, music, and creative activities.

You can check out our website at www.risetheatre.co.uk/godsplanet.

SECONDARY

17. FLAME 2025

Booking is open for next year's Flame event, titled Unstoppable: Fan The Flame Of Hope, which will be held at the OVO Arena, Wembley, on 15 March 2025, and is being sponsored by the Catenians, Salesians of Don Bosco, and Cymfed. Discounts for early booking are currently available. [Book your place](#).

18. FACULTY OF DIVINITY OUTREACH, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Please see below for details of forthcoming events:

[Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion Open Day](#) – 23rd April 2024

For Year 11 and 12 students considering studying theology, religion or philosophy of religion at University.

[Theology Subject Masterclass](#) – 27th April 2024

An in person theology-specific event offering high-achieving students in Year 12 (S5 for Scotland, Year 13 for NI, or equivalent) the chance to experience typical undergraduate teaching at the University of Cambridge, and to get a flavour of what it's like to be a student here.

[Islam Enrichment Day](#) – 8th July 2024

Join us at the Cambridge Central Mosque (Europe's first eco-mosque) and at the Faculty of Divinity for a day filled with insightful sessions and engaging discussions about Islam. Whether you're a student looking to deepen your understanding or a teacher seeking fresh perspectives, this event is perfect for you. Featuring a talk and tour led by Dr Tim Winter (founder of the mosque) and other taster lectures.

19. AI, NEURO-TECHNOLOGIES AND THE CHURCH: CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY PODCAST RETURNS

The Catholic Church's response to AI and neuro-technologies is among topics in a new season of podcasts and lectures hosted by Leeds Trinity University.

Launched on 29 March, the Beyond The Dark Clouds series returns for its second year, titled Prophetic Voices From Around The World, and features a range of international Catholic university leaders and academics. The series runs over several months with the final episode on 27th September.

All live streams take place at 7pm, with questions and discussion taking place after the speaker's presentation. To see the full list of podcasts and lectures and to sign up click [here](#).

You can also [Listen to previous Beyond The Dark Clouds episodes](#) on Spotify and other platforms

20. DADAH RETREAT

A reminder about our day of retreat for deputy and assistant headteachers in our secondary schools. We have an excellent speaker to lead this day, Fr Roger Dawson SJ, who will hopefully provide inspiration, and rejuvenation for senior leaders. The retreat is open to all deputy and assistant headteachers and the [flyer](#) contains a live link to the booking form.

St Joseph's Prayer Centre, Formby Wednesday 12th June 9.30-3.30

We very much look forward to seeing you there.

RSHE

21. USE OF SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES IN RSHE AND PSHCE

A reminder of the directive from Bishop Mark that RSHE should be taught through the approved schemes, namely Ten Ten's *Life to the Full*, or *Journey in Love*. Any supplementary resources used for RSHE and indeed the wider PSHCE curriculum must be supportive of the teachings and traditions of the Catholic and not, for example, promote a lifestyle that is contrary to Church teachings. The CES proforma '*Checklist for External Speakers*' (you can access the proforma [here](#)) has several bullets for checking an external speaker's content, which can be applied to supplementary resources that are outside of the approved schemes, particularly the expectation that material should:

- Be respectful towards Catholic teachings
- Not be prejudicial or detrimental to the Catholic character of the school

Schools should therefore not be using story books signposted by the No Outsiders scheme that do not support Catholic teaching.

22. THE CASS REPORT

Dr Hilary Cass has submitted her final report and recommendations to NHS England in her role as Chair of the Independent Review of gender identity services for children and young people. It is hoped that the DfE's *final* guidance on gender questioning children for schools will be published soon as perhaps the DfE were awaiting the publication of this report before publishing updates to the draft guidance previously shared. You can read the full report here: [Final Report – Cass Review](#)

23. DATES FOR THE DIARY

A reminder that our **Mass of Thanksgiving** for this academic year takes place at **All Saints', Sale**, on **Wednesday 17th 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 **St Columba's, Chester**, on **Friday 5th July**. Detailed information will be sent to our secondary schools in due course.

24. 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:

25 th April	Exploring RED Twilight session for Headteachers, Governors and Clergy- virtual
26 th April	School Support for CSI
1 st May	The Prayer and Liturgy Directory- Day for Headteachers, COG, RE Leads and Clergy
1 st May	Year 1 ECTs, Primary Phase: Catholic Life & Mission- virtual
3 rd May	COAST Summer Retreat
20 th May	Primary, Deputy and Assistant Headteacher Forum - virtual
22 nd May	EYFS and the New Model Curriculum in the RED Session 2
23 rd May	RE Co-ordinator Twilight Briefing - virtual
10 th June	Support for Implementing and Teaching The Vine and The Branches Y3 Teachers
11 th June	Primary Curriculum Working Party
12 th June	Secondary DADAH Catholic Life and Mission Day of Retreat
13 th June	Support for Implementing and Teaching The Vine and The Branches Y2 Teachers
17 th June	COAST Hub meeting- Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Manchester
17 th June	Secondary RSE Lead Meeting
19 th June	COAST Hub meeting- Cheshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
19 th June	SHORE Northern RE Heads' Conference
20 th June	Year 2 ECTs, Primary Phase: Catholic Social Teaching- virtual
21 st June	Support for Implementing and Teaching The Vine and The Branches Y1 Teachers
21 st June	COAST Hub meeting- Warrington, Halton, Wirral
26 th June	Support for Implementing and Teaching The Vine and The Branches Y4 Teachers
28 th June	Understanding Scripture with Margaret Carswell

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

And finally...

Throughout Eastertide – starting on Easter Sunday and ending on the Seventh Sunday after Easter, Pentecost Sunday – the Regina Caeli is the Marian antiphon that is prayed during Night Prayer of the Divine Office. It is also said in place of the Angelus at Noon.

In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI said that the Regina Caeli “*is like a ‘new Annunciation’ to Mary, this time not made by an angel but by us Christians who invite the Mother to rejoice because her Son, whom she carried in her womb, is risen as he promised.*”

Perhaps you could pray this beautiful Marian prayer in your school communities this Eastertide:

REGINA COELI, LAETARE,
ALLELUIA.

QUIA QUEM
MERUISTI PORTARE,
ALLELUIA.

RESURREXIT, SICUT DIXIT,
ALLELUIA.

ORA PRO NOBIS DEUM.
ALLELUIA.

Be A heart

'Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
alleluia!

For he whom you were worthy to
bear, alleluia!

Has risen as he said, alleluia!

Pray for us to God, alleluia!

God bless, Julia