

# **Diocese of Shrewsbury**

## **Department of Education**



# **RE and CATHOLIC LIFE**

## **NEWSLETTER**

**Autumn Term 2024 No.2**

Dear Colleague

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome back after the half term holiday. Whether you returned last week or this week, I hope it proved a welcome opportunity to rest and recharge.

Just as many of you were preparing to finish for the mid-term break, Pope Francis published his fourth encyclical, *Dilexit Nos*. Encyclicals are named for the opening words of the first sentence. In this case, *Dilexit Nos*, is so named as the encyclical begins, “He loved us”. This encyclical is for us, the Church, an encyclical letter on the human and divine love of the heart of Jesus Christ. The opening paragraph states:

“He loved us”, Saint Paul says of Christ (cf. Rom 8:37), in order to make us realize that nothing can ever “separate us” from that love (Rom 8:39). Paul could say this with certainty because Jesus himself had told his disciples, “I have loved you” (Jn 15:9, 12). Even now, the Lord says to us, “I have called you friends” (Jn 15:15). His open heart has gone before us and waits for us, unconditionally, asking only to offer us his love and friendship. For “he loved us first” (cf. 1 Jn 4:10). Because of Jesus, “we have come to know and believe in the love that God has for us” (1 Jn 4:16).

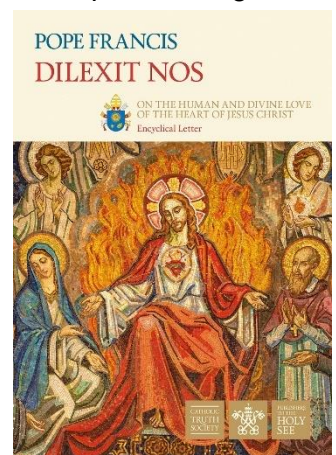


In a world in the midst of significant global crises – grappling with conflicts, deep social and economic inequalities, unchecked consumerism, and technologies that pose risks to human dignity, Pope Francis, in this encyclical, seeks to inspire a shift in perspective, encouraging humanity to reconnect with what truly matters – the heart.

The document is part of ongoing celebrations marking the 350th anniversary of the first apparition of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. The celebrations began on 27 December 2023, the anniversary, and are scheduled to end on the feast of the Sacred Heart, 27 June 2025.

Bishop Mark, has welcomed *Dilexit nos* as a “great gift” saying that, as the Church seeks to grow in communion, participation and mission, “an authentic path of renewal must pass through the Heart of Jesus.” <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishop-davies-dilexit-nos/>

In this encyclical, Pope Francis is reminding us of how devotion to the Sacred Heart is a profound expression of faith; and an encounter with the unending love of God. Pope Francis has frequently talked about the importance of encounter. In *Dilexit Nos*, he explains how our lifestyle today, with its frenetic pace and its emphasis on consumerism means that we are not paying enough attention to the heart. He returns to his theme of the dangers of individualism, telling us that this stops us from having a true encounter with our neighbour. This leads to the realisation that an authentic personal relationship to Christ, strengthened by devotion to the Sacred Heart cannot be separated from loving our



neighbour. As Pope Benedict XVI says, 'love of neighbour is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and... closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God.' (Deus Caritas Est, 16)

Pope Francis particularly mentions the need for us to work for unity and peace in our world - a unity and peace that can only be brought about by love. He condemns the complicity, tolerance or indifference of other countries during the outbreak of new wars and speaks powerfully of the effect of conflict on the human person, evoking the image of elderly women who have lost their homes and are forced to mourn for their children and grandchildren.

Pope Francis also reiterates his call for us to care for our common home, saying: "For it is by drinking of [Christ's] love that we become capable of forging bonds of fraternity, of recognizing the dignity of each human being and, of working together to care for our common home." (#217)

We are reminded that God's love for us is never-ending, and that filled with this love, we are also called to share it with others, when he says: "We need once more to take up the word of God and to realise, in doing so, that our best response to the love of Christ's heart is to love our brothers and sisters." (#167) <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/dilexit-nos-explained>

May we daily share in the mission of the Church to bring the Good News of God's love for each and every one of us, building a kingdom on the "gratuitous love of God that liberates, enlivens, brings joy to the heart and builds communities" (#219).

You can download the full encyclical here: [Dilexit Nos](#). In addition, CNA (Catholic News Agency) published an article, 'Wisdom from 20 saints on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which you may find interesting: ['Dilexit Nos': wisdom from 20 saints on the Sacred Heart of Jesus](#)

## 2. SEASON OF REMEMBRANCE

November is a special month dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. The Church commemorates all her faithful children who have departed from this life but have not yet attained the joys of heaven. St. Paul warns us that we must not be ignorant concerning the dead, nor sorrowful, "even as others who have no hope ... For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven ... and the dead who are in Christ shall rise."

The Church has always taught us to pray for those who have gone into eternity. Even in the Old Testament prayers and alms were offered for the souls of the dead by those who thought "well and religiously concerning the resurrection." It was believed that "they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them" and that "it is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." We know that a defiled soul cannot enter into heaven. (Excerpted from *Liturgical Meditations*, The Sisters of St. Dominic)

May the month of November be an opportunity to especially remember all those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. It is a wonderful opportunity to open a book of remembrance in school and offer an Eternal Rest daily for the Church Suffering.



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



Pope Francis's intention for the month of November is for anyone who has lost a child. Let us pray that all parents who mourn the loss of a son or daughter find

support in their community. May they also receive peace of heart from the Spirit of Consolation. You can find the Pope's video for the month here [Pope Video - November](#)

## 3. PILGRIMS OF HOPE

As you know, CAFOD is working in partnership with the Catholic Education Service, CSAN and CYMFed to plan a framework of events and resources for schools to celebrate the 2025 Jubilee,

Pilgrims of Hope. Visit [jubilee-schools.org.uk](http://jubilee-schools.org.uk) to find resources to support your school. These include an explanatory animation, [slides for staff training](#), and prayers, and will be updated throughout the year.

CAFOD say, ‘We are really looking forward to the year ahead, particularly as we approach the Jubilee year; this could be a wonderful year full of opportunities for schools to put their faith into action as children and young people explore the vital role they have in making change and bringing hope in an unfair world. Schools will be able to respond to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching as they commit to stand with the poorest communities locally and globally, sharing hope and challenging injustice. The Jubilee will be a significant moment in the life of the Church, and we hope in the lives of schools, as part of the contribution to the mission of the Church. We are invited to celebrate the Jubilee year with “deep faith, lively hope and active charity”.’

Bishop Marcus, Chair of the Department of Catholic Education and Formation, has written to all schools inviting you to take part in this Jubilee year, and he has outlined the framework of resources and events that will be offered to support schools to make this a really memorable year. Please [read this letter from Bishop Marcus Stock](#) to find out more.

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.

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 your role as pilgrims of hope in building a better world.

Ahead of the 2025 Jubilee, the Vatican has launched a cartoon mascot unveiled on 28<sup>th</sup> October as the cheerful face of the upcoming holy year.

The mascot, named Luce, which means “*light*” in Italian, is intended to engage a younger audience and guide visitors through the holy year. Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the Vatican’s chief organizer for the jubilee, described the mascot as part of the Vatican’s goal to engage with “the pop culture so beloved by our young people.”



Clad in a yellow raincoat, mud-stained boots, and a pilgrim’s cross, Luce’s mission is to guide young pilgrims toward hope and faith with her trusty dog Santino at her side. Shells glimmer in her eyes, recalling the scallop shell of the Camino de Santiago, an emblem of the pilgrimage journey. Read more about the symbolism of the mascot here: [CNA - meet-luce-the-Vatican’s-cartoon-mascot-for-jubilee-2025](https://www.cna.com/stories/story.asp?si=CNA-meet-luce-the-Vatican’s-cartoon-mascot-for-jubilee-2025)

OneLife Music are also preparing for the Year of Jubilee. They have shared two free songs for the Jubilee Year. *'Give us hope, O Lord'* and *'Song of Hope'* have been inspired by Pope Francis's message to be Pilgrims of Hope in our world and are written for primary schools. The songs, and information about two retreats that accompany the songs can be found here: [Jubilee Year - Pilgrims of Hope](https://www.onelife.org.uk/jubilee-year-pilgrims-of-hope).

Please do share with us how you are celebrating the Jubilee Year in school via X @EducationShrew or by emailing [education@dioceseofsewsbury.org](mailto:education@dioceseofsewsbury.org).

#### 4. RED WEDNESDAY: ACN AND MUSTARD SEEDS



Chris Noonan at Mustard Seeds has created a free download in collaboration with Aid to the Church in Need ahead of this year’s **Red Wednesday** campaign (20th November). Looking at the theme of Christian persecution, he has put together a special episode of "Big Questions" that looks at the questions "What does Christian persecution have to do with me?"



This 16 minute video is produced in 3 sections, with a discussion point between each section for classes to discuss. Viewers will learn a little bit about the priest hides at Harvington Hall, hear the views of pupils from across the country, and then hear a first-hand account from Fr Stephen Ojapah - a Nigerian priest who was kidnapped and beaten by Boko Haram. His testimony is incredibly powerful and he talks about the importance of young people rising up to support those persecuted for their faith in Christ. We hope schools will utilise this resource ahead of Red Wednesday to help their pupils understand the importance of supporting the persecuted Church.

Red Wednesday resource taster: <https://vimeo.com/1024923716>

Even if you aren't taking part in Red Wednesday, this resource covers plenty of areas connected to Catholic Social Teaching, so could be a valuable resource for you. Any school can download the full video resource by visiting [www.mustard-seeds.co.uk](http://www.mustard-seeds.co.uk) and clicking on the SHOP page. No purchase is necessary.

If you enjoy this resource you could explore the first series of Big Questions - created in the same style - which costs just £80 at [www.mustard-seeds.co.uk](http://www.mustard-seeds.co.uk) and asks "Does Praying Achieve Anything?", "Do Miracles Still Happen?" and "Do I need to go to Confession?"

Aside from this freebie, they still have their resources covering First Holy Communion and Confirmation, as well as the seasonal series for Lent and Advent. With Advent approaching, Chris is offering a discount on the 4-part Advent series. Schools can use the code ADV25 to receive a 25% discount on Season of Advent - reducing the series from £100 to £75.

If any RE Leads/Coordinators would like to chat about Mustard Seeds resources Chris is very happy for you to send him an email at [info@mustard-seeds.co.uk](mailto:info@mustard-seeds.co.uk) or you can call him on 07851 605852.

## 5. DAY OF RENEWAL FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Join us for a day of renewal, of prayer and reflection on **6<sup>th</sup> December at The Park Royal, Warrington.**

The day will be led by Fr Roger Dawson SJ, Jesuit priest and clinical psychologist who will explore the spirituality of struggle.

Too often when we think of spirituality we think of candles and calm and long periods for prayer and reflection. The demands of schools and school leadership means that this is almost impossible for those with senior positions. The reality of the spiritual life is that, while it is sometimes calm and peaceful, often it is a real struggle –and staying in the struggle is the challenge.

Fr Roger says, “In the first session I will use the Bible story of Jacob wrestling with the angel. Jacob is a flawed character, but he is visited by God and wrestles with him, staying in the fight even though he is wounded. From this we can see a spirituality involving tenacity and courage, darkness and hope, and confidence that God is at work.

In the second session we will focus on ‘finding your True North’ –to identify your strengths, qualities and virtues that inspire you. Not only do these help you to stay in the struggle, they also give you a sense of direction and help you to be the person –and the leader –that God wants you to be.”

The sessions will be interactive, with time for questions and exercises. The day will conclude with Mass.

You can book via this link [Book on Day of Renewal](#)

We very much look forward to seeing you there.

## 6. CARITAS AT CHRISTMAS: Appeal 2023

Bishop Mark has once again written to schools asking you to consider supporting *Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury* this Advent and Christmas. Fundraising efforts last year have had a real impact on those who have benefited from the support of Caritas since then.

You can access the [letter](#), the Caritas at [Christmas poster](#), [donation form](#) and [fundraising ideas](#) here.

## 7. ‘To love You more dearly’: PLD (Prayer and Liturgy Directory)

We held the first of our six sessions of CPDF in support of the new PLD before half term with a focus on the Liturgical Year. The directory frequently underscores the importance of inviting our children and young people to engage with the very rich tradition of prayer we have in the Church. Prayer and ways of praying that speak to the liturgical season offers a way to explore this rich tradition.

If you were unable to attend the online session, you can access the presentation by contacting [maggie.kowalska@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:maggie.kowalska@dioceseofshrewsbury.org). If you wish to view my recording of the session, you can view the full list of recordings and the booking form to request a link to the recording here: [CPDF recordings 2024-25](#)

We look forward to welcoming you to our forthcoming CPDF sessions on prayer and liturgy with our next session focussing on **prayer** on **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November at St Columba's** parish centre in Chester. I do commend these sessions to you as they will be invaluable in implementing the PLD. It would be wonderful if each school could send a representative.

In person sessions begin at 12.30pm, however lunch is provided from 12.00pm.

27/11/2024	1pm-4pm	<b>Prayer and Liturgy Directory 2 - Prayer</b>	<b>St Columba's Parish Hall, Plas Newton Lane Chester, CH2 1PL</b>
11/02/2025	1pm-4pm	<b>Prayer and Liturgy Directory 3 - Mass- Liturgy and rubric</b>	<b>Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4GZ</b>
13/03/2025	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Prayer and Liturgy Directory 4 - Mass - practicalities</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
21/05/2025	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Prayer and Liturgy Directory 5 - Celebration of the Word</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
01/07/2025	1pm-4pm	<b>Prayer and Liturgy Directory 6 - Formation, progression and ministry</b>	<b>Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4GZ</b>

Bookings from [Education website](#)

A polite reminder that Section 9 of the PLD houses a model policy for prayer and liturgy. This is the template that should be used by schools, but it must speak to your particular context. The provision for prayer and liturgy will look different depending on the context of the school.

## 8. GOD WHO SPEAKS

God who Speaks November focus is on **All Saints and All Souls** - [www.godwhospeaks.uk/all-saints-and-all-souls/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/all-saints-and-all-souls/)

*Join us as we remember our loved ones and all those who have gone before us in the service of the church.*

**Our Top Ten Saints** - [www.godwhospeaks.uk/our-top-10-saints/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/our-top-10-saints/)

**What are the origins of All Saints' Day** - [www.godwhospeaks.uk/origins-of-all-saints-day/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/origins-of-all-saints-day/)

**Why do we remember and pray for the dead?** - [www.godwhospeaks.uk/the-feasts-of-all-saints-and-all-souls/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/the-feasts-of-all-saints-and-all-souls/)

**Healing Tree Activity** for remembering your loved ones - [www.godwhospeaks.uk/healing-tree-activity/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/healing-tree-activity/)

**Five New Bible Timeline Posters** - [www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#bibletimeline](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/posters-for-schools/#bibletimeline) and here:

[Poster 1](#), [Poster 2](#), [Poster 3](#), [Poster 4](#), [Poster 5](#)

**Cloud of Witnesses Art Competition** – final call for artists - [www.godwhospeaks.uk/cloud-of-witnesses-art-exhibition/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/cloud-of-witnesses-art-exhibition/)



**Sunday Reflections for November** – [www.godwhospeaks.uk/november-year-b/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/november-year-b/)

**Psalms for November** from the national Spirituality Committee, click [here](#).

## 9. ICONOGRAPHY

Kelly Latimore is an American artist who has been painting icons since 2010. He says, *'I do not wish to approach Iconography as an art form that simply follows an inherited tradition, knowledge, and practice. I want it to be a 'holy pondering', meditation, and process that potentially brings about a new way of seeing for the viewer and me. What is the artwork in our churches and communities for? Who are the saints that are among us here and now? Where is Christ present right in our own backyards?'*

There are a number of his icons that are downloadable as digital images, which may be good for use in school for RE and/or prayer and liturgy. [Downloadables – Kelly Latimore Icons](#)

## 10. FARMINGTON SCHOLARSHIP

Farmington Scholarships are again open to colleagues in schools. The applications don't have to be in until January, but this year there have been some changes. The Farmington Scholarships now are

- up to 30 days for individual/ pairs relating to RE/Personal Development /SMSC etc (this is the original type)
- group Farmington scholarships to work on a particular area with each member having between 8-10 days. Again, these can be related to RE/Personal Development/SMSC etc e.g. oracy/ curriculum design/ using sacred texts .

If you are interested, or want to put a group together, please do get in touch as I can facilitate the application and bid.

Please see the [flyer](#) and [application form](#) for more information

[Farmington Scholarships and Temple Grove Scholarships](#)

## PRIMARY

### 11. MUSLIM LEARNER SERVICES

To support primary schools with national inter-faith week next week, Imran at Muslim Learner Services is offering schools an assembly on Islam over Zoom:

**Friday 15th November** - Islam assembly over Zoom for Primary Schools - This will be a shared assembly - find out more [here](#)

They also have **20% off** all their Islam Artefacts Resource Boxes **until 17th November** - use code IFW-2024 - order your resource box [here](#)

## SECONDARY

### 12. RE ONLINE

A reminder that RE Online with Culham St Gabriel's have a wealth of resources for the teaching of RE, particularly around the teaching of worldviews, which may be helpful for Branch 6, Dialogue and Encounter. <https://www.reonline.org.uk/teaching-resources/>

## RSHE

### 13. GUIDANCE FOR GENDER QUESTIONING CHILDREN

The government have delayed the publication of the 'Gender Questioning Children's Guidance'. The page initially stated guidance would be shared in 2024, but this has now been updated with an expected date of publish as 2025.

## CPDF

To attend any of our CPDF sessions, please follow this link: [Book a CPDF course](#)

### Upcoming RE CPDF:

Date	Time	Course Title	Venue
05/11/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>SHORE Meeting</b>	St Nicholas Catholic High School, Hartford, CW8 1JW
11/11/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Primary Curriculum Working Party</b>	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Warrington, WA4 1JE
12/11/2024	9.30am-12pm	<b>Secondary Deputy &amp; Assistant Headteacher Forum Catholic Life and Mission</b>	Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Ellesmere Port CH65 7AQ
18/11/2024	1.00pm-3.30pm	<b>RSE Lead Meeting</b>	Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Ellesmere Port CH65 7AQ
20/11/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>RE Lead Meeting - Primary</b>	Holy Angels Parish Hall, Hale Barns, WA15 0HF
21/11/2024	9.30am-3pm	<b>EYFS Galilee to Jerusalem and Desert to Garden</b>	Holy Angels Parish Hall, Hale Barns, WA15 0HF
25/11/2024	1.30pm-3pm	<b>COAST HUB 2 (Cheshire, Shropshire, Telford &amp; Wrekin)</b>	St Nicholas Catholic High School, Hartford, CW8 1JW
26/11/2024	1.30pm-3pm	<b>COAST HUB 1 (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)</b>	All Saints Catholic College, Dukinfield, SK16 5AP
27/11/2024	1pm-4pm	<b>Prayer and Liturgy Directory 2 - Prayer</b>	St Columba's Parish Hall, Plas Newton Lane Chester, CH2 1PL
28/11/2024	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y1 preparation for Galilee to Jerusalem</b>	Virtual
29/11/2024	1.30pm-3pm	<b>COAST HUB 3 (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)</b>	St Anselm's College, Birkenhead, CH43 1UQ
02/12/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Christ at the Centre- A Course for Primary Practitioners - Module 2</b>	Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish Centre, 2a Enfield Road, Ellesmere Port, CH65 8BY
03/12/2024	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y2 preparation for Galilee to Jerusalem</b>	Virtual
04/12/2024	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y3 preparation for Galilee to Jerusalem</b>	Virtual

06/12/2024	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Day of Renewal</b>	The Park Royal Hotel, Warrington, WA4 4NS
09/12/2024	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y4 preparation for Galilee to Jerusalem</b>	Virtual

And finally,



“THE SOULS IN HEAVEN  
ASSIST US WITH THEIR  
PRAYERS, WHILE WE  
ASSIST THE SOULS IN  
PURGATORY THROUGH  
OUR GOOD WORKS,  
PRAYER AND  
PARTICIPATION IN  
THE EUCHARIST.”  
-POPE FRANCIS

I leave you as I began, with the words of Pope Francis. These words are very pertinent for the current season.

God bless, Julia