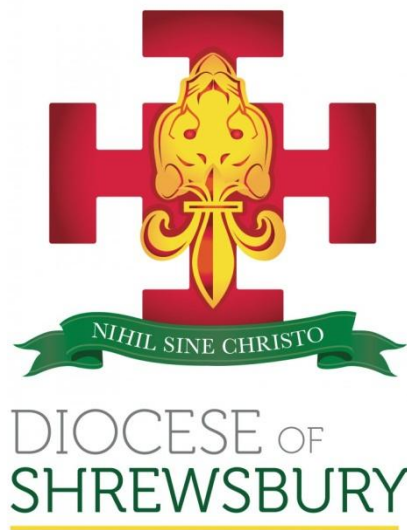
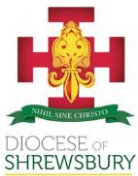


**Diocese of Shrewsbury**  
**Department of Education**



**RE and CATHOLIC LIFE**  
**NEWSLETTER**

**Spring Term 2025 No.2**



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Dear Colleague

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As we near the Lenten season, a late start this year, the Gospel reading for the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time is a timely reminder of what it means to live a Christian life. In Jesus' Sermon on the Plain in the Gospel of St Luke he entreats us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. In a time when persecution of Christians is at a height, and conflict and injustice in the world abound, Pope Francis underscores that this is a profound challenge we are given - to embrace those who treat us with disdain and scorn as the precious children of God that they are. This call to love, and forgive, is at the heart of the Christian message, and an annual focus for us during the season of Lent. We recognise our own sinfulness, and in supplication to God for his love and mercy, we are charged with sharing that love and mercy with others. How will you share the good news of the unconditional love and mercy of the Father within your school communities this Lent? And as Pope Francis prays for love, mercy, justice and peace in the world, may our prayers join his, and may we pray with him and for him, that he may continue to lead the Church.

## 2. MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS FOR LENT 2025

Despite his current health crisis, Pope Francis published his message to the Church for Lent 2025 entitled, *'Let us journey together in hope'*.

His opening paragraph is a beautiful summary of the Lenten season, which is, as the Prayer and Liturgy Directory notes, that slow ascent to the high point of our liturgical year, our Easter celebrations: *'We begin our annual pilgrimage of Lent in faith and hope with the penitential rite of the imposition of ashes. The Church, our mother and teacher, invites us to open our hearts to God's grace, so that we can celebrate with great joy the paschal victory of Christ the Lord over sin and death, which led Saint Paul to exclaim: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Cor15:54-55). Indeed, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is the heart of our faith and the pledge of our hope in the Father's great promise, already fulfilled in his beloved Son: life eternal (cf. Jn10:28; 17:3).'*

The message then goes on to offer some reflections on what it means to journey together in hope, reflections that will surely enrich our own celebrations of this Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope particularly during Lent. For example he invites us to compare our lives with those of migrants saying, *'It would be a good Lenten exercise for us to compare our daily life with that of some migrant or foreigner, to learn how to sympathize with their experiences and in this way discover what God is asking of us so that we can better advance on our journey to the house of the Father. This would be a good "examination of conscience" for all of us wayfarers.'* You can find the full text of his message here:

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2025/02/25/250225b.html>

There are, of course, lots of resources from providers for Lent, including calendars. Follow this link for one from Mission Together:

<https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/len/>

### 3. THE YEAR OF JUBILEE – CREATIVE COMPETITION FOR SCHOOLS

The Department of Education is launching an exciting opportunity for our Diocesan schools to share their thoughts on what it means to be a Pilgrim of Hope.

#### What does it mean to me to be a Pilgrim of Hope?

Individuals, groups, schools are invited to respond to the question above in a creative way, for example, through art, creative writing, music or song. As school communities are celebrating this Jubilee Year and engaging with the theme chosen by Pope Francis, we know there will be many opportunities for our children and young people to explore this question in depth.



Schools may wish to hold a competition internally and then share the top three entries with the Department of Education. The deadline for entries is **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September**.

Alternatively, schools may wish to enter the competition as a school, or as key stages. In these circumstances there is no need to hold a competition internally. Entries can be sent directly by the deadline.

NB: All entries must be submitted digitally (e.g. if the entry is a piece of art, please take a picture of it/scan it and send the digital image).

Please send all entries to [education@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:education@dioceseofshrewsbury.org)

Winners of this competition will be invited to our Mass for the close of the Year of Jubilee in November.

### 4. HYMNS FOR THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

To sing is to pray twice, St Augustine tells us. This Jubilee Year provides many opportunities for schools to expand their repertoire of hymns with hymns focussed on the jubilee theme, Pilgrims of Hope.

The official Jubilee Year hymn (available in different languages – perhaps if there is a significant culture/language used in your school community other than English, this could be incorporated: <https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/inno-giubileo-2025.html>

Jo Boyce (CJM) has prepared a version of the official Jubilee Year hymn that lends itself to guitar and keyboard: <https://www.cjmmusic.com/resources-ideas/pilgrims-of-hope-jubilee-2025-hymn-download/>

Dan and Emily from OneLife Music have prepared two hymns for schools for this Year of Jubilee: <https://onelifemusic.thinkific.com/courses/songsofhope>

Mission Together/Missio has a hymn for schools called Pilgrim Calypso: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/jubilee-2025-pilgrims-of-hope/>

CAFOD have a hymn for the Year of Jubilee for primary schools: <https://cafod.org.uk/jubilee-schools/jubilee-launch-day>

### 5. JUBILEE YEAR PLEDGE

CAFOD is part of a unique collaboration with CES, CSAN, and CYMFed, supporting schools as you embark on your journey. CAFOD has sent out pledge guides and posters to all Catholic schools in England and Wales, with inspiration and guidance for working towards making your Jubilee pledge. Many schools may feel this is a perfect opportunity to review and revisit their mission statement. Raymond Friel, CEO of CSAN, has produced resources for schools to help with this and these will be available from the CAFOD jubilee website from next week: <https://cafod.org.uk/jubilee-schools>

### 6. TO LOVE YOU MORE DEARLY – The PLD - Prayer

To support schools in keeping prayer central to the life of the school we have produced guidance notes referencing the PLD with exemplars that offer some signposting as to what that prayer might look like in a school context. This of course acknowledges that context is very important and that the prayer offered in school each day, week, term, liturgical season etc will be reflective of the community who gather to pray – something that will be clearly referenced in your prayer and liturgy policies and your annual plan of provision. You can access the guidance [here](#)

A reminder that the following CPDF sessions are planned for this term and year ahead:

<b>13/03/2025</b>	<b>3.30pm-5pm</b>	<b>Prayer and Liturgy Directory 4 - Mass - practicalities</b>	<b>How do we plan for the celebration of Holy Mass? What is required?</b>	<b>Virtual</b>
<b>21/05/2025</b>	<b>3.30pm-5pm</b>	<b>Prayer and Liturgy Directory 5 - Celebration of the Word</b>	<b>What is a celebration of the word? What does it look like in class? What does it look like with a larger group? Who can do what?</b>	<b>Virtual</b>

01/07/2025	1pm-4pm	Prayer and Liturgy Directory 6 - Formation, progression and ministry	An opportunity to explore engagement and participation in prayer and liturgy in school, including a focus on ministry. How can we form our school communities in their participation of prayer and liturgy? What does progression look like?	Loreto Education Centre, WA14 4GZ
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**NB:** For the in-person afternoon, lunch will be provided free of charge from 12.30pm. To book on to the sessions please follow this link [Book CPDF](#)

## 7. MUSTARD SEEDS VIDEOS

Schools can download a free 3m 30s reflection video about Bridges! Taking inspiration from the impressive Ironbridge in Shropshire, as well as a beautiful work of art from Radiant Light, this video explores the importance of bridges in our world, and shows that Jesus is our point of connection to the Father - our Bridge to Heaven.

Schools can also download a 7 minute video exploring Ash Wednesday - this is also available for free. It's the first episode from our Season of Lent series - which has 8 videos that discuss all the key dates and themes around Lent and Easter.

Finally, we now have 3 new "Bundle Deals" that give schools a significant discount for downloading multiple resources in a bundle. These downloads and deals can all be found at [www.mustard-seeds.co.uk/shop](http://www.mustard-seeds.co.uk/shop)

## PRIMARY

### 8. GOD'S PLANET

After several years of successfully touring God's Planet interactive day to almost 200 primary schools across the country with fantastic reviews, we have the **last remaining dates available** for schools to book **from May - July 2025** before we retire this production to make way for **something brand new this autumn!**

#### Summer Discount

We are offering schools a special summer discount - book by 4th April, and secure the day for **just £595\*** (normally £650).

Discounts are available for **academy and group bookings** too! When 3 or more schools from the same academy or local area book together, **the cost of the day is just £499!**

**God's Planet** is an exciting interactive day of performance and workshops for the whole school exploring themes around the **environment, climate change, God's love** for each of us and **how we can care** for God's amazing planet.

### School Testimonials

We have seen at first hand the incredible impact the God's Planet day and show has had on children and staff alike. With your help, we hope to reach as many primary schools as possible this year. Please do take a look at [40+ testimonials](#) from past schools who booked God's Planet, to demonstrate the value of this day.

Find out more [here](#)

### NEW DATE FOR EYFS – 12<sup>th</sup> JUNE

In response to requests from schools to support EYFS teachers who will be starting with the Vine and the Branches from September, but haven't already had the opportunity to attend CPDF, we have an extra date in the CPDF calendar, **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June**, with Julie Rourke, Diocesan Adviser for Liverpool Diocese, and drafter of the EYFS model curriculum in the RED. The day will be held at St Columba's in Chester and teachers can book the usual way via the website.

### SECONDARY

#### 9. CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP COURSE FOR SIXTH FORM

The CHC's Christian Leadership Formation programme is a fantastic opportunity for students in Year 12 / Lower VI, and is now open to applications for 2025. Offering media training, tools for personal development, philosophical and theological study, and a chance to meet like-minded peers and Catholic academics and public figures, the programme offers a certificate validated by St Mary's University, Twickenham.

For more information and to apply: <https://www.christianleadershipformation.com>

### 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:

Date	Time	Course Title	Venue
03/03/2025	9.30pm-3.30pm	<b>SHORE Hub Meeting</b>	St Thomas More Catholic High School, Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe, CW2 8AE

05/03/2025	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>SHORE Hub Meeting</b>	Harrytown Catholic High School, Harrytown Lane, Romiley, SK6 3BU
10/03/2025	1.30pm-3pm	<b>COAST HUB 3 (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)</b>	Our Lady's of Immaculate Conception Parish, Cavendish Street Birkenhead, CH41 8AQ
10/03/2025	9.30pm-3.30pm	<b>SHORE Hub Meeting</b>	St Anselm's College, Manor Hill, Birkenhead, CH43 1UQ
12/03/2025	1pm-3.30pm	<b>Secondary RSE Lead Meeting</b>	Cardinal Newman High School, Bridgewater Avenue Latchford, WA4 1RX
13/03/2025	1.30pm-3pm	<b>COAST HUB 2 (Cheshire, Shropshire, Telford &amp; Wrekin)</b>	Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Capenhurst Lane, Ellesmere Port, CH65 7AQ
13/03/2025	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Prayer and Liturgy Directory 4 - Mass - practicalities</b>	Virtual
14/03/2025	1.30pm-3pm	<b>COAST HUB 1 (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)</b>	St Bernadette's Catholic Church, Foliage Rd, Brinnington, SK5 8AH
17/03/2025	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y1 preparation for To the Ends of the Earth</b>	Virtual
17/03/2025	9.30am-12pm	<b>Secondary Deputy &amp; Assistant Headteacher Forum Catholic Life and Mission</b>	St Paul's High School, Firbank Road, Wythenshawe, M23 2YS
18/03/2025	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y2 preparation for To the Ends of the Earth</b>	Virtual
19/03/2025	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y3 preparation for To the Ends of the Earth</b>	Virtual
20/03/2025	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y4 prep for To the Ends of the Earth</b>	Virtual
21/03/2025	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Christ at the Centre- A Course for Primary Practitioners - Module 4</b>	Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish Centre, 2a Enfield Road, Ellesmere Port, CH65 8BY
26/03/2025	9.30am-3pm	<b>EYFS To the ends of the Earth and Dialogue &amp; Encounter</b>	Holy Angels Parish Hall, Wicker Lane, Hale Barns, WA15 0HF

And finally,

When asked what is needed in education, time is always high on the list. Here's some examples of short prayers we could say daily as our Lenten observance from Hallow.com:

### **Short Lent Prayers**

Short Lent prayers are an easy way to go from *desiring* to pray more during Lent to actually doing so.

After all, Lent includes (and prepares us for) some of the longest liturgies of the year.

[Palm Sunday](#) features the first reading of the Passion of Christ before we hear it again on [Good Friday](#). [Holy Week](#) also features Holy Thursday and the Easter Vigil, two liturgies that are unique and beautiful.

And longer than normal.

When we're not at Mass, sometimes we just need short, simple prayers to remain close to God during our busy days.

Lent is no different.

Here are some easy prayers you can say to feel connected to God during Lent this year:

- "God, may Your light guide my day, and your spirit bring me peace. Amen."
- "God, may my sacrifice of today of (state your Lenten sacrifice) remind me of my dependence on You for all the blessings I enjoy. Amen."
- "May I stand in solidarity today with all my brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering. May we be united in your love, and may I work to build your kingdom here on earth."
- "Heavenly Father, I'm truly sorry for the moments today where I missed the mark. I ask for your forgiveness and the [strength](#) to better follow Your call tomorrow. Amen."
- "God, I lift up (name of the person you'd like to pray for) today. I ask that you bless them abundantly today and throughout Lent. Amen."
- "Oh Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything. Amen."

God bless,

Julia