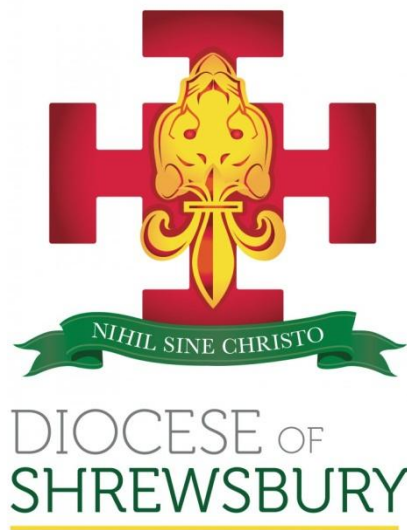


**Diocese of Shrewsbury**  
**Department of Education**



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

**Spring Term 2026 No.1**

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Dear Colleague

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A very happy new year to you! I hope the new term has begun smoothly and that the weather at the start hasn't caused too much disruption.



How wonderful to be in school to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, the revelation of Emmanuel, God with us, to the whole world. On this day we remembered the star that guided the magi on their journey to meet the Christ child. On the theme of stars for guidance and navigation, Pope Francis, after closing the holy doors of St Peter's Basilica at the end of the jubilee year urged us to continue to be pilgrims of hope, to be the generation of a new dawn, reminding us that 'Mary, Star of the Morning, will always walk before us! (For) In her Son, we will contemplate and serve an extraordinary humanity, transformed...by God who became flesh out of love.'

Pope Leo referenced stars also in his beautiful Apostolic Exhortation, '*Drawing New Maps of Hope*'. The letter published on 28 October 2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the Conciliar Declaration '*Gravissimum educationis*', on the extreme importance and current relevance of education in human life. Pope Leo said,

*'Since its origins, the Gospel has generated "educational constellations": experiences that are both humble and powerful, capable of interpreting the times, of preserving the unity between faith and reason, between thought and life, between knowledge and justice. In stormy weather, they have been a lifeline; in calm weather, they have been a sail unfurled. A beacon in the night to guide navigation.'* (Drawing New Maps of Hope).

The jubilee year may be over, but we continue to be pilgrims of hope, walking with our children and young people, sharing the good news of the Gospel and orienting ourselves towards Christ who is the Light of the world and hope for all nations.

Drawing New Maps of Hope is a beautiful reflection and celebration of Catholic education which I urge all to read if you haven't already. You can find the letter here [Drawing New Maps of Hope](#)

## 2. ANNIVERSARY YEAR

This year is an important year for our Diocese as it is 175 years since its founding. As we continue to journey as pilgrims of hope the words of Bishop Mark in his pastoral letter at the start of Advent offer a fitting context for our recognition of this milestone:

*The hope in which this Diocese was born, was well expressed by Saint John Henry Newman as being the "Second Spring" of the Catholic Church in our land. Addressing the*

*newly appointed bishops he declared, “One thing I know that according to our need, so will be our strength.” Newman specifically referred to this Diocese, prophesying that Shrewsbury, “If the world lasts, shall be name as musical to the ear, as stirring to the heart as the glories we have lost; and Saints shall arise ...”*

*As we celebrate this anniversary year, we are encouraged in the same supernatural hope to which John Henry Newman pointed us. It is the hope celebrated in the joy of Christ’s first coming in the poverty of Bethlehem; His coming now in His Word and Sacraments, supremely in His Eucharist; and in joyful expectation of His final coming in glory.*



It is fitting that our jubilee quilted banner of hope will be completed in this anniversary year as a symbol of the fruits of those tentative but hope-filled first steps by the first Bishop of Shrewsbury, James Brown, to establish the Church in this area. From humble beginnings Shrewsbury Diocese has flourished with the mission of the Church reaching countless children and young people over the generations. The banner will be a visible witness of this flourishing and to our continued commitment to Catholic education in the Diocese of Shrewsbury.

It may be an interesting project in school during this anniversary year to research the history of our Diocese and your own school history.

### **3. NEW ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER APPOINTED**

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, appointed the Right Reverend Richard Moth as Archbishop of Westminster on 19th December 2025.

Ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Southwark on 3 July 1982, Archbishop-elect Moth has served as Bishop of Arundel and Brighton since 2015. Prior to that, he was the Catholic Bishop of the Forces from 2009 to 2015.

Archbishop-elect Moth will become the 12th Archbishop of Westminster, succeeding Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who has served in the role since 2009. Cardinal Nichols will now become Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Westminster until Archbishop-elect Moth is Installed at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday, 14 February 2026.

On hearing of his appointment, Archbishop-elect Moth said: “I am moved greatly by the trust that Pope Leo has placed in me, in appointing me to the Diocese of Westminster. As I prepare to move to the Diocese, I am so grateful for the support being given to me by Cardinal Vincent Nichols at this time. He has given dedicated service to the Diocese and will be missed greatly.

#### 4. SALVATION HISTORY – THE BIG PICTURE – Resource from Lancaster Diocese

To celebrate their centenary, Lancaster Diocese commissioned a beautiful piece of art to depict our faith story, Salvation History. Lancaster Diocese have kindly shared this resource with us, which will be a very helpful and engaging way for our children and young people to keep their eye on the ‘big picture’ when working through the branches in RE.



Available resources contain various resolutions of the artwork, for example, for printing or for use on screen. Also included are the individual panels which focus on the themes of each branch and an accompanying booklet, which offers commentary, RED links for each year group, key motifs to be explored and a Visio Divina for each panel.

You can access all the resources on our website [here](#)

#### 5. ‘TO LOVE YOU MORE DEARLY’ – THE PRAYER AND LITURGY DIRECTORY

In our continued commitment to support schools attain the high ideals outlined in ‘*To love You more dearly*’, we have added further online CPDF opportunities in the Spring and Summer term to highlight companion documents to the directory and to offer a safe space for colleagues to ask any questions they may have about implementation. These opportunities will run alongside the in person formation offered.

##### **Companion documentation:**

This is a suite of documents entitled: ‘Considerations for the celebration of Mass’, ‘Sacred spaces in schools’ and ‘Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament – guidance for schools’

Online launch            10<sup>th</sup> February 3.30-5.00pm

Exemplars and guidance on prayer in school

Online launch            12<sup>th</sup> March    3.30-5.00pm

**‘Ask the expert’** – an online drop in where I will be joined by Canon Chris Matthews offering an opportunity for colleagues to ask any questions and clarify any uncertainties about prayer and liturgy in your particular contexts:

Spring term            19<sup>th</sup> March    3.30-4.30pm

Summer term            10<sup>th</sup> June      3.30-4.30pm

All the above can be booked through our website [Book a course](#)

## 6. HUB MEETINGS - ASSESSMENT

Hub meetings this term for primary and secondary will focus on assessment in RE. Overarching principles of assessment and accompanying resources from the national advisers working party will be shared with colleagues at these meetings. It is hoped that all schools will be represented to hear the current key messages regarding assessment of RE in our Catholic schools.

Book online for your geographical hub meeting though if you are unable to attend it for any reason, please do sign up for a hub meeting in a different area.

[Book a course](#)

## 7. DURHAM UNIVERSITY – EXPLORE CATHOLIC THEOLOGY BY DISTANCE LEARNING

The Distance Learning programmes in Catholic Theology, led by Durham University's Centre for Catholic Studies (CCS), are designed so that participants can work through material at their own pace, studying equally well in any time zone and in many different life situations, alongside work, ministry, family or caring obligations.

In addition to the [Postgraduate Certificate](#), the [Postgraduate Diploma](#), and the [MA](#), students can enrol for a single module: 'Catholic Theology: A Preliminary Tour', and **NEW FOR 2026/27** single modules in [Catholic Social Thought and Practice](#) and [High Medieval Franciscan Theology](#). Further details of all options are available at [Distance Learning - Durham University](#) including [videos from current students](#).

**Scholarships are available for 2026-27**, including the **Janet Erskine Stuart Scholarship Fund**, funded by the Society of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ), intended primarily to support teachers or chaplains. Applications are especially invited from:

- Teachers of RE wishing to pursue an MA to enhance the quality of their subject knowledge.
- Teachers of any discipline who wish to retrain to teach RE.

Other bursary funds are also available. Full information can be found at [Funding - Durham University](#)

If you have any questions about the Distance Learning programmes or scholarships, please contact the CCS Manager - [theresa.phillips@durham.ac.uk](mailto:theresa.phillips@durham.ac.uk) - 0191 334 3952.

## 8. CAFOD BIG LENT WALK 2026

CAFOD is the official relief and development agencies of the Catholic Church for England and Wales (CAFOD) and member of the global Caritas Internationalis family.



This annual event is CAFOD's biggest fundraiser in support of our sisters and brothers overseas. To register your school for this year's walk, click [here](#).

## 9. MISSIO VACANCIES



MISSIO (and Mission Together) are looking to grow their outreach team and have two exciting opportunities to join their team. Please do share with anyone who may be interested.

**Mission Coordinator for Children and Young People**, to help develop an understanding of mission in primary and secondary schools and nourish prayerful support for overseas mission.

**Community Engagement Coordinator**, to help Missio build effective relationships with Diocesan Directors, parish coordinators (Local Secretaries), volunteers, supporters, schools, religious and parish priests to help grow an understanding of the theology and impact of mission in the world.

Further information can be found via the link below:

[Work with Missio - Missio](#)

## PRIMARY

### 10. INCREASING THE LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY AND IMPACT ON CURRICULUM RE

A polite reminder that if you have or are planning to increase the length of your school day, if the newly extended day includes increased curriculum time, as RE must still be taught for at least 10% of the curriculum time, the amount of curriculum time spent on RE will need to be increased accordingly.

### 11. PCWP SUPPORT – completion of questionnaire

I am resharing the questionnaire formulated by the Primary Curriculum Working Party to ascertain key areas of foci for school support as we have as yet had few responses.

I understand that time is precious but do please complete the questionnaire as it will help to shape and guide the work of the PCWP, the fruits of which will hopefully save time in the future.

[RE Lead questionnaire](#)

### 12. MIXED-AGED CLASSES WORKING PARTY

Many apologies but due to unforeseeable circumstances it is necessary to postpone the working party meeting planned for 29<sup>th</sup> January.

This has been rescheduled to **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 9.30am to 12.00pm** – venue TBC.

Please click on [the link to book](#)

### 13. THE GOD WHO SPEAKS – INCLUSIVE CATECHETICAL RESOURCES

God who speaks continues to offer helpful resources for use in schools. Deacon Mark Paine has produced resources to support the formation of pupils with autism:



Called by Name: Guide for Religious Education for pupils with autism aged 5 – 11 years.  
Radical Belonging: Guide for Sacramental Preparation with young people with autism.  
[www.godwhospeaks.uk/autism-friendly-resources/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/autism-friendly-resources/)

### 14. COMPASS CONNECTIONS – IMAGINATIVE PRAYER

Booking is open for Lent 2026 and the ‘Walking with Jesus’ series



KS1 – ‘Follow the Way’ (The Transfiguration: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent)  
KS2 – ‘Follow the Path’ (The Transfiguration: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent)  
KS2 – ‘Follow the Well (The Woman at the Well: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent) NEW

Compass Connections also offers a ‘Faith in Action’ series for KS2 with new content available from April 2026

For more information click here: <https://www.compassconnections.co.uk/wellbeing-sessions/>

### 15. JEWISH MUSEUM LONDON FREE BROADCASTS – PASSOVER



Jewish Museum London are inviting you to join them for their next free 30-minute broadcast which will focus on Passover.

To book yourself and/or your class onto the broadcast click here [Events - The Jewish Museum London](#)

### 16. UNDERSTANDING ISLAM – A COURSE FROM MUSLIM LEARNER SERVICES

Imran Kotwal of Muslim Learner Services is offering a 6 session course entitled ‘Understanding Islam’, which includes a live session online plus a video recording and training materials for all delegates

Colleagues can attend the full course or specific modules -

1. The 5 pillars of Islam + stories (Tues 20 Jan 2026)
2. Ramadan in-depth + Eid ul Fitr (Wed 11 Feb 2026)
3. What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today + Islamophobia (Thu 26 Mar 2026)

4. Life of prophet Muhammad + stories (Mon 27 April 2026)
5. What do Muslims believe? (Allah, angels, holy books, prophets, life after death + destiny) (Tues 19 May 2026)
6. Diversity within Islam Sunni/Shi'a (Wed 17 June 2026)

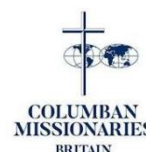
For more information, click [here](#)

Should any school wish to book an in person visit with Muslim Learner Services then can do so [here](#).

## SECONDARY

### 17. COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES: SCHOOL MEDIA COMPETITION

The Columban Missionaries have launched their Schools Media Competition 2026 with the theme: ***“Becoming a refugee is never a choice. But how we respond is.”***



WHO? **Students aged 13–18** in Britain

WHAT? Create an original piece of writing or an image to explore what it means to seek sanctuary, how we can show compassion, solidarity and respect.

WHEN? The **deadline** is Valentine's Day **14th February 2026**

PRIZE: First prize is £300 + entries published in Columban media

Especially at this time, let's use our voices to raise awareness, empathy and hope.

Find out more by visiting the competition website:

<https://www.columbancompetition.com/>

### 18. JEWISH MUSEUM LONDON FREE BROADCASTS – HMD (Holocaust Memorial Day)



Jewish Museum London are inviting you to join them for their next free broadcast which will focus on Holocaust Memorial Day.

*We will explore this year's theme Bridging Generations by looking at objects from our museum's collection. This broadcast will also include a live candle lighting in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, Nazi persecution, and subsequent genocides.*

To book yourself and/or your class onto the broadcast click here [HMD Secondary Schools Broadcast: Bridging Generations - The Jewish Museum London](#)

## RSHE

### 19. TEN TEN CURRICULUM UPDATES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Ten Ten have shared curriculum updates for primary and secondary schools that outline their current revisions of the scheme in line with the DfE guidance that comes into effect in September. To support planning and decision-making, they explore what is staying the same, what is developing, and what to expect next:

[Life to the Full Primary: What's Staying the Same, and What's Developing – Ten Ten Resources](#)

[Life to the Full Secondary: What's Staying the Same, and What's Developing – Ten Ten Resources](#)

## CPDF

To attend any of our CPDF sessions, please click [here](#)

### Upcoming CPDF:

Date	Time	Course Title	Venue
14/01/2026	1pm-4pm	<b>Prayer and Liturgy CPDF support* - Undertaking a ministry in liturgy and celebrations of the word</b>	Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4GZ
20/01/2026	1pm-3.30pm	<b>Induction for new RE Coordinators</b>	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1JE
21/01/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Exploring the Ways of Knowing in RE with Lat Blaylock</b>	St Columba's Parish Hall, Plas Newton Lane, Chester, CH2 1PL
22/01/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Exploring the Ways of Knowing in RE with Lat Blaylock</b>	St Columba's Parish Hall, Plas Newton Lane, Chester, CH2 1PL
23/01/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Christ at the Centre- A Course for Primary Practitioners - Module 3</b>	St Mary's Caritas Centre, 65 Delamere Street, Crewe, CW1 2JX
28/01/2026	10am-3pm	<b>COAST</b>	Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Capenhurst Lane, Ellesmere Port CH65 7AQ
28/01/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Primary Curriculum Working Party</b>	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1JE
30/01/2026	9.30am-12pm	<b>School support under the CSI Framework*</b>	Virtual
02/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>RE Lead Hub Meeting</b>	St Winefride's Catholic Primary School, Mellock Lane, Neston, CH64 9RW

03/02/2026	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y5 preparation Desert to Garden</b>	Virtual
04/02/2026	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y6 preparation for Desert to Garden</b>	Virtual
05/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>RE Lead Hub Meeting Manchester and Trafford</b>	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Floatshall Road, Baguley, M23 1HP
09/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>RE Lead Hub Meeting Warrington and Runcorn</b>	Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic Primary School, Lapwing Grove, Palacefields, Runcorn, WA7 2TP
10/02/2026	3.30pm-4.30pm	<b>Considerations for the celebration of Mass, Sacred spaces in schools and Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament</b>	Virtual
11/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>RE Lead Hub Meeting Cheshire East</b>	St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Wellington Road Nantwich, CW5 7DA
13/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>RE Lead Hub Meeting Stockport and Tameside</b>	Stockport and Tameside Hub: Venue TBC

And finally,

If you haven't made a resolution for 2026 yet it's not too late to make one.

In November, Pope Leo XIV spoke virtually to young Catholics during the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis.

During this encounter, several young people were chosen to ask the Holy Father questions. These questions ranged in topic from prayer and technology to friendships and the future of the Church. Pope Leo gave invaluable advice to all those gathered in the stadium and watching via digital media.

Inspired by his wisdom, NCR (National Catholic Register) offers 10 ideas for commitments and practices to implement in 2026:

1. Go to confession regularly.
2. Begin and end each day with Jesus.
3. Make Eucharistic Adoration a habit.
4. Commit to real friendship with Jesus in prayer.
5. Find and invest in one "faithful friend."
6. Pray the Rosary for help and protection.
7. Limit your screen time.

8. Choose one way to be more present in person.
9. Join something in your parish.
10. Teach the faith to someone else.

See the article from NCR to read a fuller response from Pope Leo on each commitment and practice.

[NCR New Year's resolutions inspired by Pope Leo](#)

Perhaps you'll be inspired to commit to one of these practices in 2026, or perhaps it might become a commitment with your class or form group.

God bless,

Julia