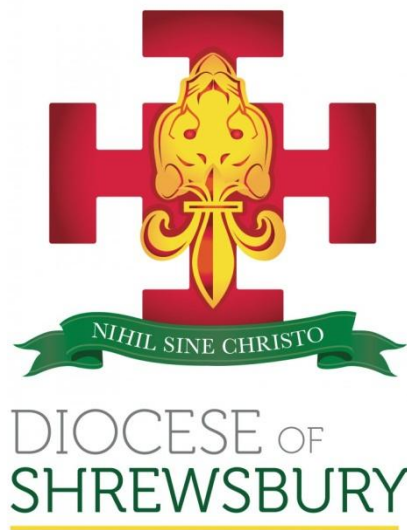


**Diocese of Shrewsbury**  
**Department of Education**



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

**Spring Term 2026 No.2**

## Contents

Introduction	3
1. To Love You More Dearly: Prayer and Liturgy Directory Update	4
2. Caritas Shrewsbury – Lent Appeal	5
3. Mustard Seeds videos	5
4. ATCRE Annual Conference – <i>Online</i>	5
5. Oscar Romero Award Trust resources for Year of St Francis	6
6. CAFOD Big Lent Walk	6
7. God Who Speaks	7
<b>Primary</b>	
8. <i>Footprints of Faith</i> Book series	7
9. Open for Lent – One Life Music	7
<b>Secondary</b>	
10. Forming Catholic Student Leaders – Course for Y12 & Y13	8
<b>RSHE</b>	
11. RSHE Revised Guidance	8
<b>CPDF</b>	9

Dear Colleague

I trust that you have enjoyed a pleasant half term break despite the weather and that the return to work has gone smoothly.

We are once more making that ‘slow ascent to the holy mountain of Easter’ (PLD p32) through our Lenten observance, responding to the invitation to place the mystery of God back into the centre of our lives.

Pope Leo XIV in his message for Lent 2026, his first as head of the Church, encourages us on our path to conversion, to a change of heart, to respond to God’s call to “**Come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning**” (Joel 2:12).

He reminds us that Lent is an opportunity to listen to the Lord and answer him. In our **listening**, he urges us to hear as God hears and listen to his word in the liturgy as it is here that “*he shares with us what is in his heart (for) Sacred Scripture helps us to recognize and respond to the cry of those who are anguished and suffering*”.

One way we can prepare ourselves to receive God’s word, says Pope Leo, is through **fasting** – an essential practice on the road to conversion. However, he encourages us to look deeper than simply abstaining from food. He invites us to “*a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbour. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.*”

Finally, in a spirit of **togetherness**, Pope Leo calls us “*to undertake a shared journey during Lent, in which listening to the word of God, as well as to the cry of the poor and of the earth, becomes part of our community life, and fasting a foundation for sincere repentance...*”

And so, “*let us ask for the grace of a Lent that leads us to greater attentiveness to God and to the least among us. Let us ask for the strength that comes from the type of fasting that also extends to our use of language, so that hurtful words may diminish and give way to a greater space for the voice of others. Let us strive to make our communities places where the cry of those who suffer finds welcome, and listening opens paths towards liberation, making us ready and eager to contribute to building a civilization of love.*”

([Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV for Lent 2026](#) from the Vatican, 5 February 2026, Memorial of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr).

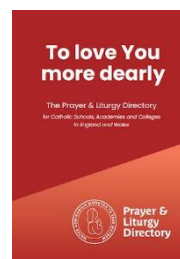
## 1. TO LOVE YOU MORE DEARLY – The Prayer and Liturgy Directory

It was wonderful to see so many colleagues online at the launch of our most recent set of companion documents to To love You more dearly.

[To Love you more dearly – the Mass](#)

[Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament Guidance for schools and colleges](#)

[Sacred Spaces in schools](#)



It is hoped that that these documents will support leaders, governors and prayer and liturgy coordinators, and be a key reference point when considering sacred spaces in schools and colleges, when planning the celebration of holy Mass and if reserving the Blessed Sacrament.

We will relaunch the companion document, *To love You more dearly* – PRAYER, which explores prayer in our schools and colleges on **12<sup>th</sup> March at 3.30pm**.

In addition, this term I host our inaugural ‘**Ask the Expert**’ online meeting where colleagues are encouraged to ‘drop in’ using the links below to ask our expert, Canon Chris Matthews, Diocesan Episcopal Vicar for Worship, any questions they may have about prayer and/or liturgy in their context, or any points of clarification needed. These events are open to any colleagues who may have queries about prayer and liturgy in our schools and colleges.

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

12/03/2026	3.30pm	Exemplars and guidance on prayer in schools and colleges	Online launch
19/03/2026	3.30-4.30pm	Ask the Expert	<a href="#">Zoom link</a>
10/06/2026	3.30-4.30pm	Ask the Expert	<a href="#">Zoom link</a>
24/06/2026	1pm-4pm	How to use music to enhance prayer and liturgy	Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4GZ

**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](#)

## 2. CARITAS SHREWSBURY LENT APPEAL



Caritas wrote to all schools prior to the half-term break with details and ideas for their annual Good Shepherd Appeal.

Once again, we would encourage schools to support our Diocesan charity which works alongside schools, health and social care agencies, and the voluntary sector to support families, children and adults of all ages experiencing mental health challenges, financial hardship, bereavement, and social isolation.

To help schools with their fundraising, a range of resources and ideas are available on the [Caritas Shrewsbury website](#), along with their Impact Report, which highlights the difference your support can make.

## 3. MUSTARD SEEDS VIDEOS



Mustard Seeds offer RE Video resources that engage, educate & inspire. They say they offer *‘Thoughtful and thought-provoking videos, creatively and imaginatively produced to support the RE curriculum within Catholic Primary and Secondary schools. Timeless content that can be used year after year. Engage and inspire young minds, unpacking complex themes in a relaxed and enjoyable manner. Created in line with the Religious Education Directory.*

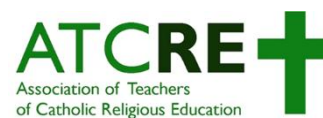
Mustard Seeds are currently having a flash sale on the *Season of Lent* video series until **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March**. Usually priced at £180, schools can download the resource for **just £75** using the code **SHREW75** at checkout. The first episode is also available on our SHOP page as a free download. [Mustard Seeds - Season of Lent](#)

## 4. ATCRE (Association of Teachers of Catholic RE) CONFERENCE – Online

ATCRE are hosting their annual conference *online* this year.

From **Mon 2nd March to Thurs 5th March 2026**

On the theme of ***A Seed of Hope***



ATCRE are offering Four fantastic seminars over four days delivered by experienced educators. Each session starts at **4.30pm and last 45 minutes**.

For more details of the conference including seminar titles and speakers and the QR code to sign up, click [here](#).

For the full brochure click [here](#)

## 5. OSCAR ROMERO AWARD TRUST RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR OF ST FRANCIS



The Oscar Romero Award Trust has created NEW resources for all primary and secondary schools for **THE YEAR OF ST FRANCIS (2026)** including:

- Amendable Word and PPTs to enhance pupil or teacher-led Celebrations of the Word or RE lessons. These include links to CST and Mission.
- A Resource Pack to enhance prayer sessions, prayer environment and spirituality days from EYFS provision to KS4.
- Posters
- Videos

See: <https://www.romeroaward.co.uk/resources>

## 6. CAFOD BIG LENT WALK

### Love grows this Lent – explore CAFOD’s Lent resources for schools

Explore CAFOD’s range of resources to mark the season of Lent with your pupils and learn how CAFOD supports communities in Bangladesh. Resources include:

- Lent calendars for children and young people – with daily reflections and activities.
- Lent Celebration of the Word – use on Ash Wednesday or any day during Lent.
- Love grows this Lent: Films for children and young people.

From Dudley to Bangladesh, children and young people are learning about each other. Through learning, love grows. Watch CAFOD’s Lent 2026 films for children and young people and find out how your Big Lent Walk fundraising will help build floating gardens in Bangladesh!

All CAFOD’s Lent resources can be found at [cafod.org.uk/blwschools](https://cafod.org.uk/blwschools)

**Save the date: Join CAFOD’s Lent national assembly for primary schools on 26 February!** Meet communities in Bangladesh and find out how children like Zunayed are helping grow floating gardens. Find out more on [CAFOD’s website](https://cafod.org.uk).

### CAFOD’s Big Lent Walk

There’s still time to sign up to CAFOD’s Big Lent Walk. Sign up today to receive your welcome pack and help love grow this Lent – [cafod.org.uk/blwschools](https://cafod.org.uk/blwschools).



## 7. GOD WHO SPEAKS

**A Different Perspective: Poems to make you think and pray -**



[www.godwhospeaks.uk/different-perspective-poems-to-make-you-think-and-pray/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/different-perspective-poems-to-make-you-think-and-pray/)

Fr Mark Skelton has written 5 beautiful poems inspired by the gospels for Lent.

**Lent Express: Short Reflections in Busy Times -** [www.godwhospeaks.uk/lent-express-short-reflections-in-busy-times/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/lent-express-short-reflections-in-busy-times/)

*Fleur offers simple meditations on the seven Sundays of Lent with prayers and images.*

**Jubilee Year of St Francis - On Love for the Poor**

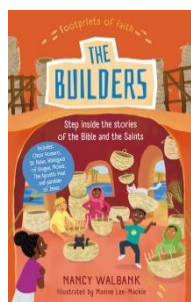
Use our 'Dilexi Te' Bible Resource in parishes this Lent - [www.godwhospeaks.uk/dilexi-te-parish-bible-resource/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/dilexi-te-parish-bible-resource/)

**All our Lent resources, posters, videos and reflections -** [www.godwhospeaks.uk/lent-and-eastertide-resources/](http://www.godwhospeaks.uk/lent-and-eastertide-resources/)

### PRIMARY

## 8. FOOTPRINTS OF FAITH SERIES

Two books written by Dr Nancy Wallbank, formerly of the CES, the Change Makers and now, The Builders, offer children the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the saints or walk around the places of the stories of the Bible.



In Footprints of Faith: The Changemakers – you'll encounter people whose choices made a big difference to those around them and sometimes changed the course of history.



In Footprints of Faith: The Builders – you'll encounter people whose work created things that impact us even today and who made a difference all around the world.

The books can be purchased directly from Hachette for £9.99

<https://www.hachette.co.uk/titles/nancy-walbank/footprints-of-faith-the-builders/9781399818117/>

## 9. OPEN FOR LENT



**OPEN. for Lent** is ready and set for the first Monday back on the 23rd February. Films are uploaded and ready for you to start using with your class each day, for a short time on

Lent prayer, sharing and music and there's still time to sign up and join us for these special moments of prayer.

## **SECONDARY**

### **10. FORMING CATHOLIC STUDENT LEADERS – Course for Y12 and Y13 students**

The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst is delighted to announce its 2026 Leadership programme for sixth form students.

Two separate courses are being offered this year: one for **Year 12 students on the theme of The Common Good**, and one for **Year 13 students on the theme of The Human Ecology**. Each course will consist of a 6-day residential on the beautiful Stonyhurst estate, complemented by preparatory and debriefing online sessions.

The two courses are standalone but are intended as part of an eventual sequence of courses that will accompany young people from year 11 through to their early working lives.

There is no financial prerequisite for the programme.

A fantastic opportunity to meet like-minded peers, to learn from Catholic academics, professionals and public figures, to consider their faith and its public impact, to develop skills, personal virtue and their spiritual lives in a close-knit, fun atmosphere.

For more information and to request an application form:

[www.christianleadershipformation.com](http://www.christianleadershipformation.com)

[Click here to download the flier](#)

## **RSHE**

### **11. RSHE – REVISED GUIDANCE**

A reminder to schools that the DfE published [revised guidance on 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education'](#) in July 2025 which schools must implement from 1 September 2026.

Dioceses remain in dialogue with Ten:Ten who have confirmed that new updated schemes of work will be available to schools just after the Easter break.

We also anticipate an updated template policy from the CES and would therefore advise schools to consult in the Summer Term, when hopefully these resources will be ready for you to access and use as part of your consultation with stakeholders.

## 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
24/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>RE Lead Hub Meeting</b>	Christ the King Catholic Primary School, Allport Road, Bromborough, CH62 6AE
26/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>RE Lead Hub Meeting</b>	Shrewsbury Cathedral Chapter House, 12 Belmont, Shrewsbury, SY1 1TE
27/02/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>SHORE Hub 3 Meeting (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)</b>	St John Plessington Catholic College, Old Chester Road, Bebington, CH63 7LF
02/03/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>SHORE Hub 2 Meeting (Cheshire, Telford&amp; Wrekin)</b>	St Nicholas Catholic High School, Greenbank Lane, Hartford, CW8 1JW
09/03/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>SHORE Hub 1 Meeting (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)</b>	St James' Catholic High School, St James' Way, Cheadle Hulme, SK8 6PZ
09/03/2026	1.30pm-3pm	<b>COAST HUB 3 (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)</b>	Cardinal Newman Catholic High School, Bridgewater Avenue, Latchford, WA4 1RX
10/03/2026	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y5 preparation for To the Ends of the Earth</b>	Virtual
11/03/2026	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Vine and Branches Y6 preparation for To the Ends of the Earth</b>	Virtual
12/03/2026	1.30pm-3pm	<b>COAST HUB 2 (Cheshire, Shropshire, Telford&amp; Wrekin)</b>	Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Capenhurst Lane, Ellesmere Port CH65 7AQ
12/03/2026	3.30pm-5pm	<b>Exemplars and guidance on prayer in school*</b>	Virtual
13/03/2026	1.30pm-3pm	<b>COAST HUB 1 (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)</b>	Aquinas College, Nangreave Road, SK2 6TH, Stockport

13/03/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Christ at the Centre- A Course for Primary Practitioners - Module 4</b>	St Mary's Caritas Centre, 65 Delamere Street, Crewe, CW1 2JX
16/03/2026	9.30am-12pm	<b>Secondary Deputy &amp; Assistant Headteacher Forum Catholic Life and Mission</b>	St Paul's Catholic High School, Firbank Road, Wythenshawe, M23 2YS
16/03/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	<b>Primary Deputy &amp; Assistant Headteacher Forum HUB1 (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)</b>	Our Lady and St Christopher Parish Hall, 52 Barrack Hill, Romiley, SK6 3BA
18/03/2026	1pm-3.30pm	<b>Secondary RSE Lead Meeting</b>	St Thomas More Catholic High School, Dane Bank Avenue, Crewe, CW2 8AE
19/03/2026	3.30pm-4.30pm	<b>'Ask the Expert' - Support with <i>To love you more dearly</i> (The PLD) - Drop in*</b>	Virtual
20/03/2026	9.30am-12pm	<b>Mixed-age classes Working Party</b>	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1JE
23/03/2026	9.15am-3.30pm	<b>Primary Deputy &amp; Assistant Headteacher Forum HUB3 (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)</b>	Our Lady of Pity Parish Hall, 24 Mill Lane, Greasby, CH49 3NN

And finally,

Fasting is one of the three essential practices for a conversion of heart that we give particular focus to during Lent. The feasting we generally leave until the Easter season!

Here though is a reflection on fasting and feasting in Lent. It offers pause for thought on how we can view this practice during Lent with a focus on the positive, as opposed to the negative connotations often associated with fasting.

Fast from judging others;  
 Feast on Christ dwelling in them.  
 Fast from fear of illness;  
 Feast on the healing power of God.  
 Fast from words that pollute;  
 Feast on speech that purifies.

Fast from discontent;  
Feast on gratitude.  
Fast from anger;  
Feast on patience.  
Fast from pessimism;  
Feast on hope.  
Fast from negatives;  
Feast on encouragement.  
Fast from bitterness;  
Feast on forgiveness.  
Fast from self-concern;  
Feast on compassion.  
Fast from suspicion;  
Feast on truth.  
Fast from gossip;  
Feast on purposeful silence.  
Fast from problems that overwhelm;  
Feast on prayer that sustains.  
Fast from anxiety;  
Feast on faith

God bless,

Julia