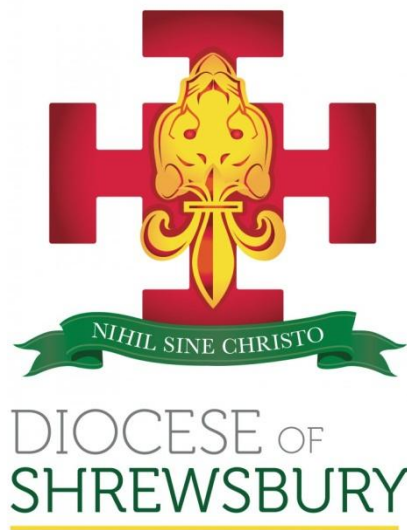


Diocese of Shrewsbury
Department of Education



RE and CATHOLIC LIFE
NEWSLETTER

Summer Term 2026 No.1

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues

Wishing you every joy and blessing in this Easter season. May these fifty days of Eastertide be jubilant and joyful as we celebrate Christ's triumph over darkness, his victory over death and his resurrection to new life. There is so much darkness in the world at present that it may seem overwhelming at times to be Easter people, children of light. However, I hope that we may find hope, strength and courage in Christ's resurrection, "which is the beginning of a new humanity; it is the entrance into the true promised land, where justice, freedom, and peace reign, where all recognise one another as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father who is Love, Life, and Light." ([Urbi et Orbi Message](#), 20 April 2025).

In these troubled times Pope Leo has called us to pray most fervently for peace. To choose love over hate, selflessness over selfishness and peace over war. He says, "In the light of Easter, let us allow ourselves to be amazed by Christ! Let us allow our hearts to be transformed by his immense love for us! Let those who have weapons lay them down! Let those who have the power to unleash wars choose peace! Not a peace imposed by force, but through dialogue! Not with the desire to dominate others, but to encounter them!"

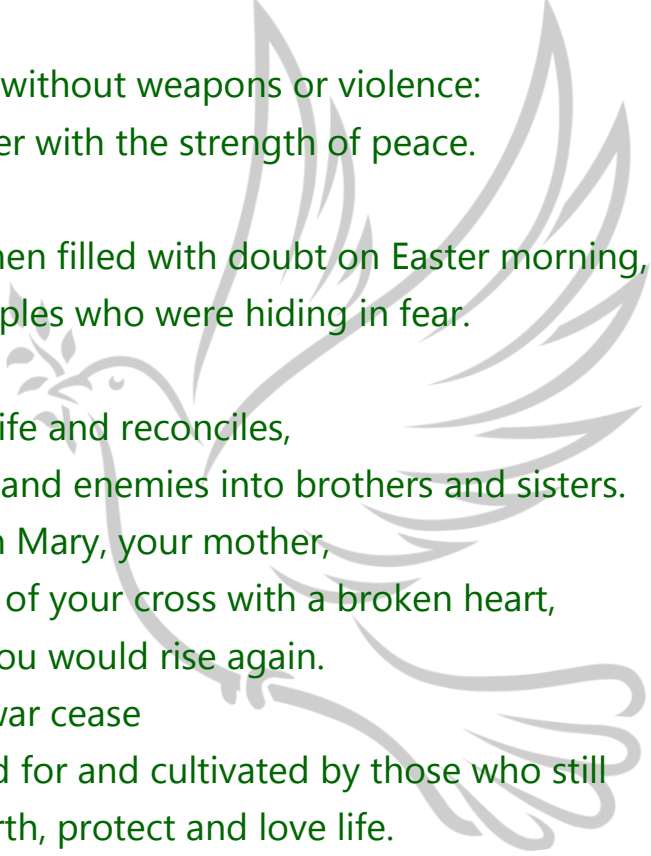
Pope Leo says that Jesus "passed through death to give us life and peace: "I leave you peace; I give you my peace. Not as the world gives it, I give it to you" (Jn 14:27). The peace that Jesus gives us is not merely the silence of weapons, but the peace that touches and transforms the heart of each one of us! Let us allow ourselves to be transformed by the peace of Christ! Let us make heard the cry for peace that springs from our hearts!" ([Urbi et Orbi Message](#), 20 April 2025).

It was during his 'Urbi et Orbi' message that Pope Leo invited the Faithful to join him in a prayer vigil, a Holy Rosary for peace the following Saturday (Easter Saturday, 11th April). For prayer, he said, "is the most selfless, universal and transformative response to death: we are a people who are already risen! Within each of us, within every human being, the interior Teacher teaches peace, urges us toward encounter and inspires us to make supplication...

Prayer teaches us how to act. In prayer, our limited human possibilities are joined to the infinite possibilities of God. Thoughts, words and deeds then break the demonic cycle of evil and are placed at the service of the Kingdom of God. A Kingdom in which there is no sword, no drone, no vengeance, no trivialization of evil, no unjust profit, but only dignity, understanding and forgiveness... Brothers and sisters, those who pray are aware of their own limitations; they do not kill or threaten with death..." (Pope Leo's Reflection for the Prayer Vigil for Peace, Easter Saturday.)

During the vigil, Pope Leo urged us to commit to pray without ceasing for a conversion of heart so that every community becomes a 'house of peace'. Particularly throughout this Easter season may we pray daily for peace in our hearts, peace in our communities and peace in our world.

Perhaps this prayer shared by Pope Leo could become a daily prayer in your school community:



Lord Jesus,
you conquered death without weapons or violence:
you shattered its power with the strength of peace.
Grant us your peace,
as you did to the women filled with doubt on Easter morning,
as you did to the disciples who were hiding in fear.
Send forth your Spirit,
the breath that gives life and reconciles,
that turns adversaries and enemies into brothers and sisters.
Inspire in us to trust in Mary, your mother,
who stood at the foot of your cross with a broken heart,
firm in the faith that you would rise again.
May the madness of war cease
and the Earth be cared for and cultivated by those who still
know how to bring forth, protect and love life.
Hear us, Lord of life!

Read the full 'Urbi et Orbi' Message here <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/urbi/documents/20260405-urbi-et-orbi-pasqua.html>

Read the Reflection of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV at the Prayer Vigil for Peace [here](#).

2. THE WAY OF LIGHT – GOD WHO SPEAKS

You will all be very familiar with the Via Crucis (the Way of the Cross), a popular Catholic devotion, particularly during Holy Week. This is a devotion that mirrors the Easter season, the Via Lucis (the Way of Light).

'God who speaks' has published a version of this with reflections and some lovely artwork to accompany each station.

[The God Who Speaks - The Way of Light](#)

3. HOW TO READ THE BIBLE – GOD WHO SPEAKS

Fleur Dorrell from ‘God who speaks’ has published a lovely guide to reading the Bible, which will be a great support for teachers of RE in their understanding of the hermeneutic approach to RE on which the model curriculum is based. Elements of the guide can be shared with children and young people where age and stage appropriate.



Access the guide [here](#)

4. THE CATHOLIC MASS EXPLAINED – ASCENSION PRESS



Ascension Press has shared a new resource on the Mass, ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’, that may be helpful for schools in the formation of staff and pupils. Fr Mike Schmitz presents the video in an engaging way that could be helpful for the participation of school communities in the celebration of Mass. You can access the resource here: <https://ascensionpress.com/pages/Mass>

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

I hosted our inaugural ‘Ask the Expert’ session with Canon Chris Matthews before Easter. This was an excellent opportunity for colleagues to jump online and ask questions about prayer and liturgy that were specific to their context or seek answers to more general points of clarification.

Our next ‘Ask the Expert’ session will be held online on 10th June 3.30-4.30pm and is open to all colleagues.

Please join via this [Zoom link](#) with your questions and queries.

Our final formation session for schools for this academic year will be held on 24th June

24/06/2026	1pm-4pm	How to use music to enhance prayer and liturgy	Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4GZ
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NB: For this 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](#)

6. ACCE CHAPLAINCY SURVEY

The Bishops’ Conference Department for Catholic Education & Formation has commissioned the Association of Catholic Chaplains in Education (ACCE) to conduct a review of the current landscape of Chaplaincy, to report back to them in Summer 2026.



To this end, they have devised a survey, accessible via the link below, which we would ask schools to complete, so that there is a full picture of the landscape of Chaplaincy within our Diocese.

[Survey of Chaplaincy Provision in England and Wales – Fill in form](#)

Key Details:

- **Time to complete:** Approx. 15 minutes
- **Deadline:** 24th April 2026
- **Purpose:** To inform strategy and support for school chaplains across England and Wales

All responses will be handled confidentially.

Thank you for your support.

About the ACCE:

The ACCE represents those involved in the ministry of Chaplaincy in Catholic schools across England and Wales. Whether your school has a dedicated Chaplain, a Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator, or a member of staff with specific responsibility for Chaplaincy or ethos, ACCE exists to ensure they have the professional support, resources, and community they need to thrive. <https://catholicchaplains.co.uk/>

7. MA IN CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

MA in Catholic School Leadership at St Mary's University



This unique and highly regarded postgraduate degree will be of interest to all who hold or are aiming for leadership positions in Catholic schools and colleges as it focuses on Catholic school distinctiveness. This part-time degree programme has been offered in person or online since 1997. It includes taught structured modules combining education and theology in the areas of Catholic Education, Spiritual and Theological Foundations, Leadership and Management and Leadership for Learning. A service-learning portfolio can be submitted in lieu of a dissertation. Accredited Prior Learning is considered for module exemptions and a 20% alumni reduction in fees is also available for former St Mary's students.

Applications are now open for October 2026 entry via the online portal with an application deadline of **15th August 2026**.

Further information can be found here:

[Catholic School Leadership: Principles & Practice | St Mary's University, Twickenham, London](#)

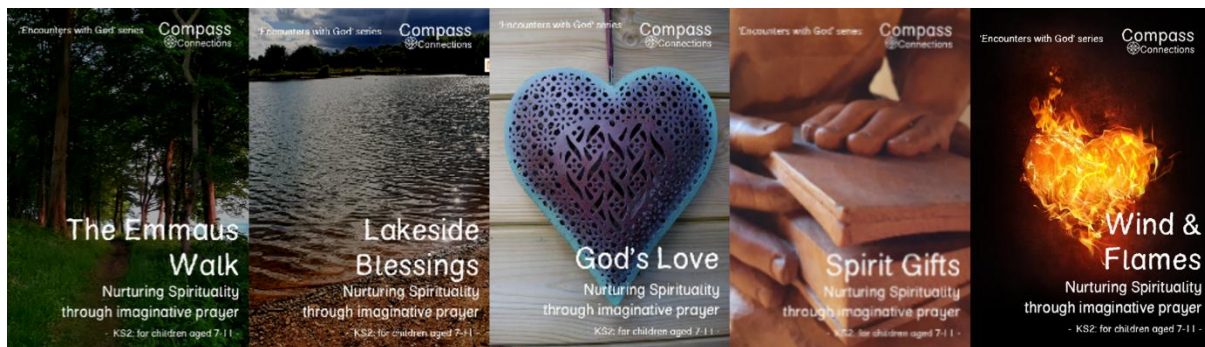
PRIMARY

8. COMPASS CONNECTIONS – ‘ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD’ AND ‘IMAGINATIVE PRAYER’

‘Encounters with God’ series (supporting the RED Curriculum)



* **EYFS & KS1 – Branches 5 & 6** - An example selection of our sessions: *links with the RE Curriculum.*



* **KS2 – Branches 5 & 6** - An example selection of our sessions: *links with the RE Curriculum.*

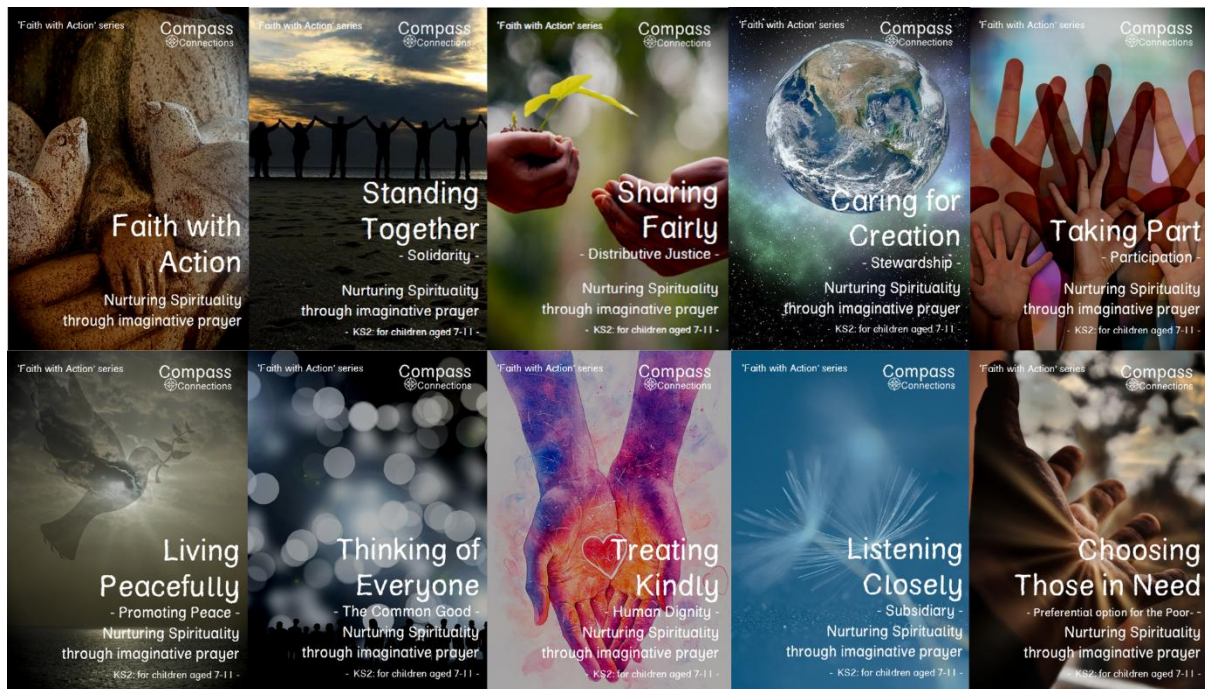
IMAGINATIVE PRAYER SESSIONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Each session takes 90-minutes for KS1 / KS2 children and is a completely immersive experience for each class group. 60-minutes for EYFS.

The sessions include a guided imaginative prayer experience and opportunities for contemplative explorations to allow processing time for the experience. It concludes with a guided stillness practice.

All sessions are delivered in person, and all creative resources are provided. Schools receive a resource pack for use in the classroom, as well as online accessible activities for further exploration.

Booking your enquiry call <https://calendly.com/maria-compassconnections/30min>
 Once you have a quick 30-minute virtual meeting to find the direction you are looking for, we can arrange a date for the sessions to take place.



For the [full list of formation on offer and for costing](#) please see link.

9. OPEN. with Mary 2026

Join Dan and Emily each weekday in school, for these short times of prayer and song in devotion to Our Lady throughout the month of May. This popular resource is used in primary schools across the country each day of May, to celebrate Our Lady.

Each film is approximately five minutes of prayer, scripture, reflection and song.

This particular series includes a new song from OneLife Music! *Mary, Morning Star* is very easy to follow and the BSL signing accompanies it beautifully.



OPEN. with Mary 2026 begins on Friday 1st May through to Friday 22nd May.

Please do get in touch if you would like more information!

Dan & Emily (OneLife Music)

01902 327288

info@onelifemusic.co.uk

<https://www.onelifemusic.co.uk>

SECONDARY

10. RISE THEATRE – RETREATS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Rise Theatre currently offer three full-day retreats: The Happiness Show (suitable for Years 7–9), The Room (suitable for Years 9–11), The Masterpiece (suitable for Years 11–13).

Each retreat can also be delivered as a **90-minute session**, making them ideal for mission weeks, special school events or catering to multiple year groups in a day.

Every session is engaging and interactive, combining **original drama, discussion, prayer, and creative activities**, all rooted in the Catholic faith. As schools begin to look ahead to the 2026/27 academic year, we hope a RISE Retreat Day might form part of their pastoral provision, spiritual development or retreat programme.

We are also currently developing a **new 90-minute Catholic Social Teaching session**, and we encourage schools to get in touch to register their interest. We will share further details as soon as bookings open.

Please see the [flyer](#) for more information.

RSHE

11. UPDATED STAUTORY GUIDANCE FOR RHE AND RSHE

In July last year the DfE shared revised guidance on 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education' which will come into force 1 September 2026. [RSHE from Sept 2026](#)

The revised guidance highlights new and enhanced/updated content that needs to be taught in schools at both the Primary and Secondary phase.

As a consequence of the new and updated content RSE policies will need to be reviewed and updated. The DfE guidance states:

12. All schools must have an up-to-date written policy for relationships education or, where they teach sex education, for RSE.

55....Schools must consult parents when developing and reviewing their RSE policies

56. Schools should show parents a representative sample of the resources that they plan to use, enabling parents to continue conversations started in class, and should ensure that parents are able to view all curriculum materials used to teach RSHE on request.

The CES have provided a new template RSE Policy for schools to use which can be accessed [here](#) via our Diocesan website.

12. TEN TEN 'LIFE TO THE FULL' UPDATE

Ten Ten recognise the need for schools to have oversight of *all* new materials for consultation purposes and for ratification of the updated R(S)E policy. They are committed to supporting schools with this transition and have offered the following timeline:

- By May half term: resources to support the consultation process and to support the training of staff will be shared
- After half term: new lesson plans and resources will be available. However, where video content is included the lesson plans will have a place holder. Video content will be uploaded to lesson plans as post-production is completed on each
- End of June: Ten Ten are working towards having all video content uploaded for this point, though with the complexities of post-production processes they cannot confirm that deadline

It is advised that schools prepare for the consultation process in the second half of the summer term, so they are ready to consult at the start of the autumn term in September. Revision and ratification of the new policy can then take place before the October autumn half term.

At our request, we have asked Ten Ten to produce for us an alternative condensed pathway to support schools in ensuring that all year groups cover the required statutory RHE and RSHE content beginning after the October half-term and by the end of the academic year. This should allow adequate time for a meaningful consultation to take place in the first half of the Autumn term, with teaching the scheme commencing from November.

For primary schools, flexibility with the timetabling of RHE/RSHE lessons may be required for full coverage of content by the end of the academic year.

For secondary schools, this may require careful consideration of provision between September and October half term to include wider PSHE curriculum content that does not fall under the RSHE statutory content guidance, to enable consultation and ratification to take place.

The pathway from Ten Ten will be shared in due course

13. DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

A reminder that our annual **Mass of Thanksgiving** for this academic year takes place at **Holy Angels Parish Church Wicker Ln, Hale Barns, Altrincham WA15 0HG** on **Thursday 9th July at 4.30pm**. All colleagues are invited to join us as we give thanks to God for all that this year has gifted us. Please complete the following form if you are able to join us: [Mass of Thanksgiving 9 July 2026](#)

Our **Mass for Secondary Schools** will take place at **St Columba's, Chester**, on **Friday 3rd July**. Detailed information will be sent to our secondary schools via DASH in due course.

14. 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:

20/04/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	Primary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum HUB2 (Cheshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin)	St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, Greenbank Lane, Hartford, CW8 1JW
23/04/2026-24/4/2026	4.30pm Thursday-2.30pm Friday	COAST Retreat	St Joseph's Prayer Centre, Blundell Avenue, Formby, Liverpool, L37 1PH
01/05/2026	9.30am-12pm	School support under the CSI Framework*	Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4GZ
6/05/2026	12.30pm-3.30pm	Mixed age classes Working Party	St Columba's Newman Room, Plas Newton Lane, Chester, CH2 1PL
08/05/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	Primary Curriculum Working Party	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1JE
19/05/2026	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y5 preparation for Dialogue & Encounter	Virtual
20/05/2026	9.30pm-3.30pm	RE Lead Hub Meeting: Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin	Shrewsbury Cathedral Chapter House, 12 Belmont, Shrewsbury, SY1 1TE
20/05/2026	3.30pm-5pm	Vine and Branches Y6 preparation for Dialogue & Encounter	Virtual
22/05/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Lead Hub Meeting: Trafford & Manchester	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Floatshall Road, Baguley, M23 1HP
03/06/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Lead Hub Meeting: Cheshire E	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Belgrave Avenue, Congleton, CW12 1HT
09/06/2026	1pm-3.30pm	Secondary RSE Lead Meeting	St Paul's Catholic High School, Firbank Road, Wythenshawe, M23 2YS

11/06/2026	9.30am-12pm	Secondary Deputy & Assistant Headteacher Forum Catholic Life and Mission	All Saints Catholic College, Birch Lane, Dukinfield, SK16 5AP
12/06/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Lead Hub Meeting: Warrington & Halton	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1JE
15/06/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Lead Hub Meeting: Cheshire W and Chester	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Woodford Lane, Winsford, CW7 2JS
16/06/2026	1.30pm-3pm	COAST HUB 1 (Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester)	Loreto Grammar School, Dunham Road, WA14 4AH
16/06/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Lead Hub Meeting: Stockport & Tameside	Cheadle Catholic Junior School, Conway Road Cheadle Hulme, SK8 6DB
17/06/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	RE Lead Hub Meeting: Wirral	St John's Catholic Junior School, Old Chester Road, New Ferry, CH63 7LH
18/06/2026	1.30pm-3pm	COAST HUB 3 (Warrington, Halton, Wirral)	Cardinal Newman Catholic High School, Bridgewater Avenue, WA4 1RX
19/06/2026	1.30pm-3pm	COAST HUB 2 (Cheshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin)	The Catholic High School, Old Wrexham Road, CH4 7HS
24/06/2026	1pm-4pm	How to use music to enhance prayer and liturgy: Prayer and Liturgy formation*	Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4GZ

And finally,

As we near the month of May, the month of Mary, I leave you with these words from Pope Leo about the beautiful prayer of the Holy Rosary from his reflection during the vigil for peace on Easter Saturday, “The Rosary, like other ancient forms of prayer, has united us this evening in its steady rhythm built on repetition. Peace gains ground in the same way: word by word, deed by deed, just as a rock is hollowed out drop by drop, or fabric woven stitch by stitch. These are the slow rhythms of life, a sign of God’s patience. We must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the pace of a world that does not know what it is chasing. Rather, we must return to serving the rhythm of life, the harmony of creation and healing its wounds.”

In our devotion to Our Lady and our praying of the Holy Rosary throughout the month of May and beyond may we repeat our prayer for peace in our thoughts, our words and our actions.



“Continue the Rosary, my children. Say it every day that the war may end”

- Our Lady at Fatima, Sept. 13, 1917

God bless,
Julia