Diocese of Shrewsbury

Department of Education

RE and CATHOLIC LIFE

NEWSLETTER

Summer Term 2026 No.2

Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Celebrating Creativity – God who speaks 5
3. God who speaks – Biblical art competition 5
4. 'To love You more dearly' – the Prayer and liturgy Directory CPDF 6
5. All Saints Educational Trust Awards for RE teachers 6
6. Laudato Si Champions 6
7. Liturgical Calendar 26-27 7

PRIMARY

8. OneLife Music 7
9. *Treasure Within* – CST through Theatre with Rise Theatre 8

SECONDARY

10. Mass for Secondary schools 8

RSHE

11. Ten Ten 'Life to the Full' reminder 8
12. Journey in Love update 9

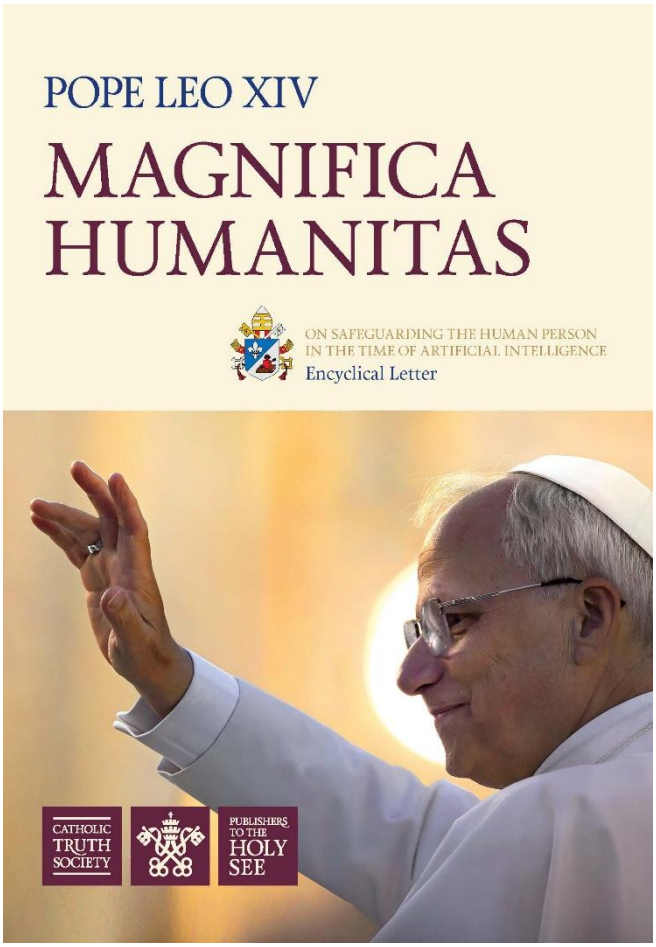
13. Mass of Thanksgiving 9
14. Mass to celebrate the start of the new academic year 9

CPDF

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues

Welcome back for the slow descent to the well-earned break that is the summer holidays. This will be the term of review, of revision and reset in preparation for the new academic year in September.



As you plan your staff CPDF, your schemes of work, your pastoral themes and assemblies and your whole school initiatives, I commend to you Pope Leo XVII's first encyclical *Magnifica humanitas*.

Published on 15th May, Pope Leo explores the magnificence of humanity and the importance of safeguarding the human person in a time of artificial intelligence. He reminds us all of our dignity as human persons, made in the image and likeness of God, that our diversity is a richness, and that we must seek the common good of all people, especially those who are poor, vulnerable or marginalised. The principles of Catholic Social Teaching, explored in the Social Doctrine of the Church, are rightly a key focus within our schools. Magnifica humanitas offers a beautiful reminder of why this doctrine is so important and necessary.

In Magnifica humanitas, Pope Leo addresses not only the Church, but all people of goodwill, and adds to the Social Doctrine of the Church by speaking to the challenges of our time in the light of the Gospel. Pope Leo clearly views AI as one of the key challenges of our times, but the encyclical is not all about technology. Rather it is about how we respond to the challenges that this technology brings to our world and how we live our lives, in the light of our faith, the Gospel and the history of Catholic teaching. It is a warning about allowing ourselves to build further inequality into our structures and systems, with economic and technological resources being concentrated in a few hands. This could lead to a widening of the gap between the included and excluded, those who can participate and those who do not have access. Pope Leo is clear that "Technology has the power to heal, connect, educate and protect our common home; but it can also divide, exclude and generate new forms of injustice." #9

Pope Leo speaks directly to schools too in Magnifica humanitas saying, "School is the place where new generations can learn to seek and love the truth, to reflect on the meaning of life and to recognize the dignity of every person. For this reason, many parents, who want their children to grow in the capacity to form relationships, develop critical thinking skills and embrace solid values, place great expectations on schools as valuable partners in their children's education." #143.

However, he recognises the significant challenges we face, for example an intellectual challenge as "Without careful attention, an educational system lacking in a love for truth may emerge, in which an incessant flow of information replaces the essential exercise of research, reflection and discernment. As knowledge becomes increasingly fragmented, it becomes difficult to grasp reality as a whole, to ask profound questions about meaning, or to develop authentic, critical and creative thought." #146

Instead, Pope Leo calls for a renewed educational alliance that will allow fundamental principles to be translated into educational goals, for example by:

- teaching students a sense of moderation and limits
- recognition of the rights of others and of future generations to enjoy the goods that are either provided for us or made available by human ingenuity
- freedom and responsibility
- a sense of transcendence and the common good.

"Schools are not called to follow the pace of the digital world, but to offer that which the digital sphere by itself cannot provide, namely a shared time for learning and developing trustworthy relationships." #147

Magnifica humanitas teaches us that where technology is concerned, we cannot sit on the sidelines and hope for the best. Instead, we must actively participate in the creation of a better world, where no one is excluded and all are able to flourish. Pope Leo asks us to consider how we can move forward together and make the world better for everyone. How can we share this important and timely message with the children and young people in our schools?

The Holy See has provided a video about the encyclical and a series of infographics to guide you to a deeper understanding of 'Magnifica humanitas'. You can find them on the Bishops' Conference website here www.cbcew.org.uk/magnifica-humanitas-overview/

There are also already a number of commentaries on Magnifica humanitas that you may find interesting e.g. Magnifica humanitas is "a gift to the world," says Professor Anna Rowlands - Catholic Bishops' Conference. Also, Eric Clayton, Deputy Director of Communications for the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, has shared a lovely mini retreat on some of the themes of the encyclical which may be a lovely way to introduce the letter to your colleagues in school.

You can find the text for the mini retreat here

2. CELEBRATING CREATIVITY – *GOD WHO SPEAKS*

Celebrating Creativity is the theme for June for God who speaks. They have curated all their art and culture resources onto one webpage where you can '*find articles and videos on an incredible range of works of art that focus on biblical stories and themes. We also explore the relationship between Scripture, churches, music and poetry. We share information about our collaborations with artists, exhibitions and art projects in our dioceses.'* The God Who Speaks

Of particular note are the new **Art & Interfaith School Resources** inspired from our exhibition: 'Cloud of Witnesses'. These may be particularly welcome this term when teaching branch 6 but could be used at any time of the year across the curriculum.

God who speaks have lesson plans available for primary and secondary schools:

Primary schools

Searching for God: Art and RE - www.godwhospeaks.uk/searching-for-god-re-and-art-primary/

Four ready-to-use Primary RE lesson plans using art, different faiths and the imagination. Exploring big questions about faith and belief creatively.

Secondary schools

Searching for God: Art and RE – www.godwhospeaks.uk/searching-for-god-re-and-art-secondary/

Four ready-to-use Secondary RE lesson plans using art, different faiths and the imagination. Exploring big questions about faith and belief creatively.

3. GOD WHO SPEAKS – BIBLICAL ART COMPETITION

Divine Designs: Between the Covers: Celebrating the 73 books of the Bible - www.godwhospeaks.uk/divine-designs-art-exhibition/

Fleur Dorrel says*, From Genesis to Revelation – is the greatest story ever told. Our passion is to bring these stories alive through the medium of art.*

We invite artists, graphic designers and illustrators from across the UK to design the front covers of any of the 73 books of the Bible. With seven cash prizes, a catalogue and exhibition in Lent 2027, join us in celebrating the Scriptures anew.

REGISTRATION and further information:
https://stjohnswaterloo.org/arts/divinedesigns/

You can download a poster advertising the competition here
Partners: God who Speaks; St John's Waterloo and Art + Christianity.

4. *'TO LOVE YOU MORE* DEARLY' - PRAYER AND LITURGY DIRECTORY CPDF

Ask the Expert Online Drop-In

A reminder that 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.

CPDF

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

This afternoon of formation is open to all including school leaders, governors, prayer and liturgy coordinators and music leads.

24/06/2026	1pm-4pm	How to use music to enhance prayer and liturgy	Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4GZ

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

5. ALL SAINTS EDUCATIONAL TRUST (ASET) AWARDS FOR RE TEACHERS

Applications for ASET Awards opened on the 1 June 2026 for Religious Education teachers. If you're a dedicated teacher or trainee, this is your chance to gain support for your professional development.

The key criterion for the awards is to support trainee and practising Religious Education teachers, to encourage more people to become teachers, and/or for practising teachers to become better teachers and stay in the profession.

They support:

- Trainee teachers proposing to study and teach Religious Education or equivalent.
- Trainee teacher applications must lead to qualified teacher status, certification or equivalent qualification from a UK higher education institution or similar accrediting authority.
- Practising teacher applications must focus on continuing professional development, or postgraduate research that improves teaching and is supervised by a UK higher education institution or similar accrediting authority.

Further details can be found here

6. LAUDATO SI CHAMPIONS

St Mary's University, Twickenham is re-releasing its free Laudato Si' Champions toolkit for Laudato Si' Week (17–24 May).

Developed in response to research showing many Catholic students were unfamiliar with Laudato Si', Pope Francis's encyclical on ecology, the project helps educators explore Catholic teaching on sustainability and care for our common home.

Over the last year, the resources have been downloaded by almost 300 organisations across 37 countries. After using the materials, 98% of students said they had a firm understanding of Catholic teaching on ecology, while confidence in understanding climate change increased from 42% to 80%.

Designed for busy educators, the toolkit includes ready-to-use materials for six sessions and has been used in schools, prayer services, and youth programmes around the world.

The free toolkit is available at:

St Mary's Laudato Si' Champions toolkit

7. LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The liturgical calendar for the academic year 2026-2027 has been shared by Jane Porter, School Chaplain and Trust Leader of Chaplaincy at the St Thomas Catholic Academy Trust.

See links for the Word & Excel format, so that schools and colleges can amend it as they wish to include their own dates.

This can also be accessed via the link below:

Liturgy Office | Spirit of the Season

PRIMARY

8. ONELIFE MUSIC



Dan and Emily at OneLife Music have produced a short film giving a little insight into the OPEN. series being used in schools.
They hope this may allow schools that aren't currently using OPEN. to see it in action.

Bundles for the new academic year are available, but they are also very happy to discuss a bundle offer should schools wish to purchase as a collective.

9. RISE THEATRE – *TREASURE WITHIN* – CST THROUGH THEATRE

Treasure Within is a dynamic, all-day experience for primary schools that creatively **brings the 7 principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) to life** through live theatre, music, classroom activities, and immersive workshops. You can find out more and watch the trailer here! For their flyer, see here

Autumn Term 2026 – Book your day today!
Dates are already filling quickly, so early booking is encouraged. Schools can email or call us to reserve dates: admin@risetheatre.co.uk

Costs for the day (based on school size):
£549 – under 125 pupils
£599 – under 325 pupils
£649 – under 450 pupils
£699 – over 450 pupils
Group discounts are available when 3+ schools book together in the same area or within an academy trust.

SECONDARY

10. MASS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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.

RSHE

11. TEN TEN 'LIFE TO THE FULL' - REMINDER

A reminder that we have advised schools to prepare for the required 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.

12. JOURNEY IN LOVE UPDATE

We have been informed that the publishers of Journey in Love are now exploring a possible update to this resource to ensure compliance with the DfE guidance.

We shall provide further updates as soon as we receive any further information.

13. MASS OF THANKSGIVING

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: Annual Mass of Thanksgiving 9 July 2026

14. MASS TO CELEBRATE THE START OF THE 2026-27 ACADEMIC YEAR

As always, we have the opportunity to gather together for a celebration of Mass to mark the start of the academic year. These will take place on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of September at differing locations across the Diocese. All Masses will begin at 4.30pm.

22nd September: St Patrick's Catholic Church Wellington, Telford TF1 1ET
23rd September: St Peter's Catholic Church, Hazel Grove SK7 4EA
24th September: Christ the King Catholic Church, Bromborough CH62 6AT

Detailed car parking and hospitality arrangements will be emailed to all schools in September, and we very much hope that you are able to join us to celebrate Mass on one of these dates.

CPDF

We have now finalised our CPDF calendar for next academic year and details of courses and dates can be accessed via the Education Department website.

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:

09/06/2026	1pm-3.30pm	**Secondary RSE Lead Meeting**	St Paul's Catholic High School, Firbank Road, Wythenshawe, M23 2YS
10/06/2026	3.30-5.00pm	**Ask the Expert: ask any questions you may have about prayer and liturgy. Open to all**	Zoom link
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 (Warr, Halt, Runc)**	St John Henry Newman Parish Centre, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1JE
15/06/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	**RE Lead Hub Meeting (CW 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, Altrincham
16/06/2026	9.30am-3.30pm	**RE Lead Hub Meeting (Stock, Tames)**	Cheadle Catholic Junior School, Conway Road Cheadle Hulme, SK8 6DB
17/06/2026	9.30am-2.45pm	**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 CHS, Warrington
19/06/2026	1.30pm-3pm	**COAST HUB 2 (Cheshire,Shropshire, Telford&Wrekin)**	The Catholic High School, Chester
24/06/2026	1pm-4pm	**Prayer and Liturgy CPDF support***	Loreto Education Centre, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4GZ

And finally,



June is the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Pope St John Paul II said "*For evangelization today, the Heart of Christ must be recognized as the heart of the Church: It is He who calls us to conversion, to reconciliation. It is He who leads pure hearts and those hungering for justice along the way of the Beatitudes. It is He who achieves the warm communion of the members of the one Body. It is He who enables us to adhere to the Good News and to accept the promise of eternal life. It is He who sends us out on mission. The heart-to-heart with Jesus broadens the human heart on a global scale*."

This mission we are called to each and every day, for as Pope Leo XIV says in Magnifica humanites, '(the) plan for a civilization of love can be seen more clearly… thanks especially to the many living stones solidly united to Christ the cornerstone (cf. *1 Pet* 2:4-6). In this task, we are called to assume an active role, without taking refuge in spiritual sentimentality or retreating into our own little worlds. We must be faithful to the truth, invest in education, cultivate relationships and love justice and peace.'

May we continue to be living stones and help to build God's Kingdom here on earth.

God bless,
Julia