



NORES NEWS

JANUARY 2017 – The month dedicated to The Holy Name and Childhood of Jesus

Diocese of Northampton, Office for RE, Evangelisation, Catechesis & Schools

SUPPORTING CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND FORMATION

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From the Episcopal Vicar

Mgr Kevin

The Word Made Flesh and lived amongst us. [John 1:14]



With these words John the Evangelist tells us of the immense gift we have been given in the birth of Christ, true God and true man. But this is not something of the past. The same writer [we believe] continues

in his first letter : *Something which has existed since the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have watched and touched with our own hands, the Word of life -- this is our theme. That life was made visible; we saw it and are giving our testimony, declaring to you the eternal life, which was present to the Father and has been revealed to us. We are declaring to you what we have seen and heard, so that you too may share our life* [1 John 1:1-3]

As we mentioned in the last NORES NEWS Pope Francis wrote a letter at the end of the Jubilee Year of Mercy in which one of his main points was how we need to turn to the Scriptures. Here is what he has written to us: The *Bible* is the great story of the marvels of God's mercy. Every one of its pages is steeped in the love of the Father who from the moment of creation wished to impress the signs of his love on the universe. Through the words of the prophets and the wisdom writings, the Holy Spirit shaped the history of Israel as a recognition of God's closeness and love, despite the people's infidelity. Jesus' life and preaching decisively marked the history of the Christian community, which has viewed its mission in terms of Christ's command to be a permanent instrument of his mercy and forgiveness (cf. *Jn* 20:23). Through Sacred Scripture, kept alive by the faith of the Church, the Lord continues to speak to his Bride, showing her the path she must take to enable the Gospel of salvation to reach all mankind. I greatly desire that God's word be increasingly celebrated, known and disseminated, so that the mystery of love streaming from this font of mercy may be ever better understood. As the Apostle tells us clearly: "All Scripture is inspired

profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 *Tim* 3:16).....It would be beneficial if every Christian community, could renew its efforts to make the Sacred Scriptures better known and more widely diffused. so as to appreciate the inexhaustible riches contained in that constant dialogue between the Lord and his people. Creative initiatives can help make this an opportunity for the faithful to become living vessels for the transmission of God's word. Initiatives of this sort would certainly include the practice of *lectio divina*, so that the prayerful reading of the sacred text will help support and strengthen the spiritual life.

[MISERANDO et MISERA – November 2016 n.7]

I have given so much space to the Pope's words because I sense in them a real challenge for us as a diocesan community of parishes and schools. How will we respond? While not launching a Year of the Bible, it would be good to review seriously the place of the scriptures in our schools. For many years we have asked that every classroom has a prayer table where the Bible has pride of place. How is this transferred into the place



of the Bible as a book in say the assembly hall, the entrance hall. The image above is of Pope Francis blessing the people after the gospel [as does Bishop Peter]

with the Book of the Gospels. Then the Book is returned to a special stand, called the *Evangelarium*.

How do we honour the Book of the Scriptures throughout the school? Has it an *Evangelarium*? Could our display monitors which greet so many people to our schools have a short scripture quotation? One of our partnerships shares a *Thought for the Day* by email each day. This idea could easily be the used across the social media of any school, perhaps just a phrase from the gospel reading of the mass of the day.

St Jerome says: *Ignorance of the Scriptures is Ignorance of Christ*. Pope Francis' challenge is simple but profound. How will your school respond? More ideas to follow! Also see Alex Heath's article for other ideas.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION, CATECHESIS and CHAPLAINCY

Alex Heath

Scripture With our focus on the Bible this year there are a number of opportunities to help us engage with the riches of the Bible in 2017 here is just a flavour of what's coming up:

A new short retreat based on the Book of Ruth (approx. 2-3 hours in length) is available for any group, parish or school that is looking for a Scripture based retreat opportunity for adults in the coming months, perhaps for Lent or Eastertide. I have developed these reflections working through the Book of Ruth and am happy to offer this on demand in the Diocese. Please contact me at the NORES office if you would like to book this retreat.

The Bible Timeline initiative continues to grow in the Diocese. We will be gathering leaders of Bible Timeline leaders in February to support them in their service to the Word. If your parish or group is interested in running one of these easy to run courses, please contact me at the NORES office as we can give advice and put you in touch with others who have started it in their parishes. Please see <http://biblestudyforcatholics.com/how-to-start-a-bible-study> for background details about the courses.

There will be a **Scripture Conference** entitled: *Who do you say that I am? Images of Christ in the New Testament* for all who engage in scripture in liturgy and catechesis. The main speaker will be Ian Boxall and it will take place from 6-8 June at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts. Sessions will include: Jesus the Teacher: Christ in Matthew | Jesus the Enigma: Christ in Mark | Jesus the Merciful Physician: Christ in Luke | Jesus the Mystic: Christ in John | Jesus the Divine Warrior: Christ in Revelation. Please see www.rcia.org.uk for more details and to book.

Morning and Evening Prayer of the Church is a day offered by our Bishop's Council for Catechesis on Scripture that is prayed in with Fr John Hemer, on Saturday 13 May. More details will be available soon.

School Chaplaincy Our next Chaplaincy Day on Friday 3 February focuses on **Developing our Leadership Skills** with Charles Whitehead. Copies of the booking form are available via the NORES website (Events and Courses) or the NORES office.

Catechesis The next basic training course in catechesis, **'Being a Catechist'** takes place in Bedford from 7.30pm-9.30pm on Friday 10 March & 9.30am for 10am start - 4pm on Saturday 11 March 2017. Publicity material is now available. If you would like a *Being a Catechist* course (5 x 2 hour sessions on the basics of catechesis) in your area, please talk to your parish priest and contact me. **The next meeting of the Bishops' Council for Catechesis will be on Monday 27 February at 7.30pm at the RE Centre**, we look forward to welcoming you.

CAFOD NEWS

Deborah Purfield



New Year's Resolution – Volunteer for CAFOD!

Why not make volunteering for CAFOD your resolution? We need volunteers to speak in parishes and/or schools about our work. We provide training and resources. Do get in touch if you feel called to offer yourself in this way.

School Visits and Resources

We have great GCSE resources including an [animation on human dignity](#). Do have a look.

For the autumn term, our volunteers have made over 20 visits to schools which is fantastic! Thank you to our wonderful team of volunteers and to all the school who have invited us in.

Emails were sent in December 2016 to all school offering a CAFOD visit in the Spring term. Do get in touch if your school would like our volunteers to do an assembly and/or workshop.

CAFOD was thanked for our work with Catholic schools at the Annual General Meeting of the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisors in December 2016. We are delighted to be able to be involved in this work.

Supporter Days

Our Lent Supporters' Days are a wonderful way of hearing about CAFOD's work and meet other people. Do let us know if you can make it. We would love to see you there.

Saturday 4 February - St Martin de Porres, 366 Leagrave High Street, Luton LU4 0NG

Saturday 18 February - St Joseph – Austenwood Common, Chalfont St Peter SL9 8RY

Lampedusa Cross

The Lampedusa Cross is available for parishes, schools and groups to borrow. It has been left as a legacy to the Cathedral from the year of Mercy. Please get in touch with the CAFOD volunteer centre to book the cross. CAFOD volunteer Centre – dpurfield@cafod.org.uk, 01844 274 723

RSE documents on CES WEBSITE

We have been asked if these can be made available as Word rather than pdf documents. Any pdf can be opened by Office 2010 and newer by right clicking on the file and selecting "open with Word". This will open the pdf as an editable Word doc.

SCHOOLS' COMMISSION

Collette Curtis

Recent headlines- working together to promote the high quality Catholic education we provide.

Faith schools risk 'increasing social segregation' Faith schools enrol higher-than-average proportions of high-attaining pupils and relatively low proportions of disadvantaged children, and risk damaging social mobility according to new research. Faith schools take on 28.4 per cent of pupils who achieve high scores at key stage 2, compared with 23.7 per cent at non-faith schools, figures from an Education Policy Institute (EPI) report show. They also educate lower proportions of disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs than other state schools. And one in 10 faith schools is more selective than the average grammar school, according to EPI.

TES Reporter 2nd December 2016.

We are proud of the quality of education we provide in schools across the Diocese for all of the children who attend them. In light of the amount of negative press for Faith schools around the white paper proposals for removing the cap on the proportion of children with a designated faith allowed to attend a faith school there are a number of issues we are working with Dioceses across the country on.

We and the Church of England refer to our schools as Church schools. Research has shown that there is far wider public support for Church schools rather than faith schools. Please ensure that we all use this language where relevant.

As a Diocese we are collating the proportion of children from other religions or none attending our schools together with proportions of disadvantaged pupils and children for whom English is not their first language. All of this information is held on Raise On Line reports and we would be grateful if you could send the relevant pages to main@nores.org.uk. In this way we will be able to produce a summary report of the diverse nature of the children attending our schools so that we can prepare for any challenge.

Across Dioceses within the province we are monitoring the approach of Ofsted inspection teams given a number of challenges nationally by Leaders of Church Schools.

I hope you have a very Happy and relaxed Christmas.

HEAD TEACHERS' CONFERENCE 2017 – 2,3 March

Book the date now! Forms and details have been sent out. This will be led by Fr Jonathan Veasey, Director of Schools and RE in Birmingham diocese. He wants to explore the way your leadership contributes to the New Evangelisation – and invites your comments. Email Fr Kevin with your thoughts.

PRAYING WITH OUR SCHOOLS

Each month we offer ideas for particular intentions for prayer from the Pope and for individual schools. We hope you use them to ensure that we embrace the wider church and world in our prayer life.

PRAYER INTENTIONS – ask the school to pray with Pope Francis for his intentions for January

Christian Unity - That all Christians may be faithful to the Lord's teaching by striving with prayer and fraternal charity to restore ecclesial communion and by collaborating to meet the challenges facing humanity.

FEAST DAYS - pray for the schools who celebrate their feast days this month.

28 January – St Thomas Aquinas, Milton Keynes

3 February – Thornton College [St Claudine Thevenet]

The Feast Days of the Multi Academy Trusts and Partnerships are given below:

St Francis of Assisi MAT - October 4

St Alban MAT - June 20

St Thomas of Canterbury MAT - 7 July

[feast of the Translation of the Relics of the Saint as the school keeps the feast of the saint on 29 December]

St Luke MAT - October 18

St Peter MAT - June 29

St Paul Partnership – June 29/30

SS John Fisher & Thomas More Partnership [June 22]

Duns Scotus Trust - November 8

St Bonaventure Trust - July 15

THEOLOGY FOR CATHOLIC ADULTS is a very useful modular course. It offers the chance to spend a day doing theology for yourself, which then becomes invaluable for your teaching. Look for the leaflet!

CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The new course in Aylesbury will now start from January 2017. Please contact the administrator Warren Edwards for details: edwards@nores.org.uk

SCHOOL NEWS - THIS YEAR

APPOINTMENTS

Jo Marsh as Deputy Head Teacher at St Michael, High Wycombe [Easter 2017]

- p/t CEO for St Alban MAT [January 2017] – Joe Richardson.

- Fiona Maynard as Head of St Ethelbert's, Slough. [January 2017]

- Lisa Sumpter as head teacher for the joint St Joseph & St Gregory Primary School, Bedford [Sept. 2017]

INTERVIEWS in January

Head Teacher – St Joseph's, Gerrards Cross.

SECONDARY RE AND INSPECTION

Stephen O'Brien

GCSE assessment and marking training day I have invited AQA, Edexcel and CAFOD to join us for a day looking at the assessment and marking of student work under the new RE GCSE arrangements. The day will be on **either** 30 January 2017 or 2 February 2017. I am awaiting confirmation from one of the boards after which I will write to subject leaders with the date and a request for numbers attending. It will be difficult to run the day if we cannot get two colleagues from each department to attend. You will remember that the day was previously cancelled for this very reason.

New S48 Inspection Framework A new inspection framework for canonical inspection under Ofsted Section 48 is nearing completion and will be available for viewing in the Pentecost term. NORES will offer introductory training at the appropriate time. Depending on its finalisation, the new framework will be introduced in September 2017 or at the start of 2018. Interestingly, this change will also spark a renewal of the process for school self-evaluation. The content and style of the SEF-RE will be modified to synchronise with the new framework and will provide more detailed guidance on the completion of Part B.

Congratulations! I know departmental colleagues have worked hard to successfully introduce the new GCSE and A level courses. I have seen examples of excellent work around the diocese and congratulate all on the dedication and creativity that has been evident. I wish you all the very best for continuation of your work in 2017.

Teaching RE? We are short of RE teachers and subject leaders in one or two places around the diocese. If you are reading this and know of anyone who is suitably qualified and might wish to teach in or lead one of our Secondary departments, please contact me as I would be delighted to meet with them and make the necessary introductions!

BISHOP PETER'S PASTORAL LETTER for 2017

A full copy is attached to this as well as it being available on the website. It will be useful for you for assemblies and newsletters. Here is a short extract :

One week after the birthday of Jesus, what does his mother, Mary, highlight for us at the beginning of a new year? In the Gospel, after the visit of the shepherds, Mary treasured all they told her about her new-born Son, and pondered it in her heart.Accepting the will of God in her life and focussing on the mystery of her Son in prayer are two lessons we can take into the New Year. Like Mary, we can be people of prayer, and our lives can be directed in response to the will of God. We can pray for the grace to be faithful to the commandments, the commandments of love.... As with the wise men, Mary, the mother of Jesus and our mother, invites us to treasure our faith in Jesus and to ponder with her on what Jesus is asking of us in 2017. Certainly, Jesus is asking us to be people of peace, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God.

NEWS FROM THE PRIMARY CORNER

Anne-Marie McIntosh

School Visits for the next term are nearly all confirmed. If you are on the list and have not chosen a date please email me. Thank you.

RE Subject Leader Meetings. Please let me know the dates of these meeting as I really want to attend to work alongside you and support you in your role. Thank you.

RE Subject Leaders Day. Thank you very much for attending the day earlier this month. If you weren't able to be there you should by now have received a copy of all the handouts. The liturgies and the handouts should also be on our website now. Our next day together is in the Lent Term on **Thursday 23 March**. We will then have a joint day with our Secondary Heads of RE colleagues in the Pentecost Term on **Thursday 22 June, 2017**.

Year of Mercy. I hope, this year, that you and everyone in your school has come to know God's merciful love anew. If you haven't closed the year yet there is a liturgy on our website based on the Cafod liturgy for the end of the year of mercy.

Inservice. Twilight inservice on 'The Changing Shape of Education' will take place around the Diocese starting, with a session in Slough for all members of staff, on 23 January from 4.00pm – 6.00pm. Watch out for the flier soon to arrive in school with further details.

Live Simply. Thank you for taking part in the 'Live Simply' Challenge so far. During the month of December we are encouraged to pray more and to pray especially for those who do not have a safe place to sleep or enough food to eat at Christmas. Email: mcintosh@nores.org.uk

WEEK of PRAYER for CHRISTIAN UNITY

18-25 JANUARY - Each year we are asked to pray for the unity of the Christian Church for which Christ prayed. The date is not ideal, being often hit by wintry weather, which is why elsewhere in the world it is linked to Pentecost. This year takes on special significance being the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the moment when Martin Luther makes his move away from Rome. Special resources for this are available at jlg.org.uk.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland have produced material you may find useful – ctbi.org.uk. Their material for the week is entitled "Crossing Barriers" and they say "There are fifty million Christians in Germany who, traditionally, have mostly belonged to the Roman Catholic Church or one of the Protestant State Churches. Recent developments, particularly the reception of refugees and asylum seekers, have begun to change this balance and other Christian traditions are finding expression. Whilst that which unites the churches is stronger than that which divides, there are still areas of difference in which the churches remain self-absorbed or construct new walls.

The text from 2 Corinthians announces that God has, in Christ, reconciled the world to himself. The love of Christ compels us to be ambassadors of this reconciliation, which is enacted by dismantling the walls. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, Germany experienced how a seemingly insurmountable wall could be brought down. The fall of this wall is a symbol of hope that, with the love of God, nothing is impossible."