



NORES NEWS

December 2019 – The month dedicated to The Coming of Christ (The Immaculate Conception)

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

SUPPORTING CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND FORMATION

33 Westbourne Road, Luton, LU4 8JD Telephone: 01582 723312

from the Episcopal Vicar *Mgr Kevin*

ADVENT begins and the Church reminds us of its meaning :

ADVENT has a twofold character, for it is a time of preparation for the Solemnities of Christmas in which the First Coning of the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and likewise a time when, by remembrance of this, minds and hearts are led to look forward to Christ's Second Coming at the end of time,. For these two reasons Advent is a period of devout and expectant delight. [UNLYC n.39]

For the Church in England and Wales it is also the beginning of the YEAR of the WORD of GOD

The God Who Speaks: 2020 A Year of the Word
*celebrating, living and sharing
God's word*



How will we promote and celebrate the Bible in the life of our communities? It was lovely to see a bible display in a school foyer this week – the fine King James Bible that was given to every school is a deep rooted part of our English tradition and language. We have distributed the brochures for the Year prepared by the Bible Society. Bishop Peter hopes that every school will also have one of the Year of the Word banners which can be obtained from the office.

Pope Francis must have heard of our bishops'; Year of the Word because he then decided that Sunday 26 January [Third Sunday in Ordinary Time] as the Sunday of the Word of God. The document establishing this is called "Aperuit Illis" – *he opened their eyes*. It is taken from the Emmaus story where Jesus explains the scriptures to the two disciples and "their hearts burn within them!" http://m.vatican.va/content/francescomobile/en/motu_proprio/documents/papafrancesco-motu-proprio-20190930_aperuit-illis.html#&ui-state=dialog

BISHOP PETER wrote this to all parishes

" The Angelus and the Dowry of Mary

As you will remember, the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham came to our Cathedral from the 7 to 9 February in preparation for the rededication of England as the 'Dowry of Mary'. The date of the rededication is **Sunday, 29 March, 2020**. This will happen in Westminster Cathedral, in Walsingham, in every Catholic Cathedral, in every parish and in as many homes as possible. Mgr John Armitage, the Rector of the National Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham, has asked people to prepare spiritually for the rededication by praying the Angelus every day after our parish Masses – you may, of course, pray the Angelus at other times if you wish. The traditional times for the Angelus are 6am (or when you get out of bed), 12noon and 6pm. It is a most suitable prayer to prepare us spiritually for the rededication, recalling, as it does, 'some essential moments in the History of Salvation, reminding us of Mary's 'yes' to the Angel Gabriel, which undid Eve's 'no' in the Garden of Eden.' We profess our faith in 'The Word, who was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us,' and in his Death and Resurrection, the eternal destiny to which each of us is called in Christ.

I hope that many parishes will respond to Mgr Armitage's invitation to pray this beautiful prayer after our daily Masses, so that our hearts may be spiritually prepared for the rededication of England as the 'Dowry of Mary' on 29 March 2020. Mary, Our Lady, welcomed the coming of Christ into the world and into our lives. She will help us to do the same."

In January we will send out prayer cards with the Angelus for all schools. Very few will remember that we did the same in 1997 as part of the preparation for the Millennium Celebrations called by Pope St John Paul II. The prayer is very appropriate for Advent as it is Annunciation story.

Please continue to pray for the election of the new bishop for the diocese and for God's blessing for Bishop Peter as he continues to minister to us as our bishop.

SECONDARY RE AND THEOLOGY

Paul McHugh

The peace and hope of this Advent season to you. The immense mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God can be lost on jaded minds. Whilst in this present life we cannot comprehend mysteries like this, we can do as the Church has always done. We can sing and pray these mysteries. Carols like 'Adeste Fideles' (O Come, All Ye Faithful) tell of the 'God of God, light of light' who assumes our nature and enters human history in the womb of the maiden of Nazareth. It might be a good class exercise to look at a verse from a traditional carol and discover in it the mystery of the Incarnation in song. One day this mystery will shine out for all to see. *Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus. ... thou art now Thy Maker's maker, and thy Father's mother, Thou hast light in dark, and shutt'st in little room Immensity, cloister'd in thy dear womb.* (lines from John Donne, 'Annunciation')

PRIMARY RE

Anne Marie McIntosh

New Standards in RE Hopefully, by now you are getting used to the new standards – in red – at the beginning of each *Come and See* Learning Focus. Any feedback on the Greater Depth tasks would be appreciated.

Live Simply Following Joanne's inspirational input at the Deputy Heads' Conference last week lots of people were interested in the '**Live Simply Award**' The monthly assemblies for Live Simply are on the NORES website.

RE Subject Leader Day After our fantastic pilgrimage to Rome in October our next day together will take place on **Thursday 19 March 2020** and then in the Pentecost Term we will be joined by our secondary colleagues and school Chaplains on **Friday 5 June 2020**.

Come and See The next Come and See day will take place on **Thursday 6 February 2020**. This will focus on Preparing for the Pentecost Term. Then, during that term there will be another day on **Tuesday 12 May** Preparing for the Advent Term. These are stand alone days so any member of staff can come to one or both of them. Its great CPD. Please email admin@nores.org.uk

A Prayer for Christmas Day

Loving God, on this Christmas Day we give thanks that Jesus your Son has come into our world bringing us gifts of peace and joy.

Bless us as we sit together at this table for our Christmas meal. Bless the food we share and help us to remember those who are hungry.

Be with our neighbours and our friends, all who are lonely, sick or away from home. We pray for our loved ones who have died that they may now sit at your table in heaven. May we bring your peace and joy to all those we meet. Amen.

With every good wish for a happy and holy Christmas and a relaxing break.

From the DIRECTOR of SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Collette Curtis

Successful additional funding bids Two separate bids to the Department for Education for MAT growth funding to support the set up of the two regional MATs were successful. St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust was awarded £254,000 and Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust just under £200,000. This will support the development of the business structure to support the larger Trusts and the development of the school improvement structure. Congratulations and thank you to Joe Richardson and Lorraine Cullen for the huge amount of work they put into compiling the bid to a very tight deadline.

Thank you to the Sisters of the Holy Cross Two years ago, the Sisters of the Holy Cross generously provided the Diocese with a grant to support the development of future Catholic leaders.

The most significant impact has been the open discussion and shared experience of our Head teachers and leaders in what motivates them, how they lead in Christ's image in a practical way everyday and lessons they have learned in sharing this vision with all of their staff whether they are of faith or not. These discussions have led to the development of a programme of training sharing this experience with new and future leaders.

Currently we have:

- Peer to peer reviews, supporting the sharing of best practice and improving outcomes for children are taking place in 4 of the 7 partnership areas of the Diocese
- We have 14 leaders trained in delivering leadership in Catholic schools across the Diocese to governors, aspiring middle leaders and staff new to catholic education
- There are an increased number of accredited specialist leaders of education working in the diocese within partnership groups
- We have already seen aspiring leaders on these courses appointed to leadership positions in our schools.
- There are 16 future Catholic leaders signed up for leadership courses being delivered and mentored by more experienced Catholic leaders in our schools through the National Professional Qualification for middle and senior leaders. (NPQML/NPQSL)

Training for Directors and Governors Training for all those involved in governance within the new MAT structure from January and two representatives from each voluntary aided school are invited to the second of two days of specific training on Wednesday 8 January. This will be a great opportunity to meet others involved in governance in the Diocese, contribute to the vision of the new MATs, ask questions and gain updates on legal responsibilities. For more information contact Debbie Main, main@nores.org.uk

Formatio is the name of the national project co-ordinated through the Catholic Education Service to develop leadership and governance across England and Wales, *Formatio* has developed a suite of online training materials for Foundation governors. The first two of these modules has now been released and are free to all governors whether a Foundation governor or not to support their knowledge of the distinct nature of governance within a catholic school. The training can be found here: formatio-ces.org/moodle/login/index.php If you have any problems accessing this, please contact Debbie Main at main@nores.org.uk

Recruitment and Retention of staff I am aware of the difficulty some schools are having in specific areas recruiting staff. Some partnerships are looking at creative ways of using pooled funding to recruit staff who can be used across a number of schools to avoid paying large supply costs. Teaching Personnel a supply agency has offered schools in the Diocese a deal including a reduced daily rate, preferential option on identified staff in an area and targeted training so that supply staff are able to fully support our Catholic ethos. Details of this have gone to head teachers. I do want to emphasize that schools are under no obligation to use this agency and that judgment on the quality of service and supply staff is a matter for individual schools and partnerships.

GOVERNANCE APPOINTMENTS

Debbie Main

Duns Scotus Trust, Director: Melanie Kavanagh

Local Academy Governors

St Thomas of Canterbury Academy Trust: Theresa Gibson

St Peter Catholic Academy Trust : Rosaline Kadiri

Foundation Governors

Our Lady's Primary School, Amersham. Amanda Healy and Kevin Franklin

St Brendan's Primary School, Corby.: Eleanor McGrath

CCRS NEWS

Steve O'Brien

A new CCRS course will begin at St Anthony's school in Slough in January 2020. Publicity and application forms have gone out to schools and parishes during October so, if you are considering joining the course, please look out for details in your staffroom or parish. If you can encourage a friend or colleague to join you, it is always good to share the experience! Following on from the Slough course, CCRS will begin in Luton in September 2020. It is also worth noting that, for those who would wish to follow the course at a more accessible level, the DCRE [Diocesan Certificate in Religious Studies] covers the same material but require the completion of a short reflective log rather than full assignments. Students opting for DCRS will be awarded the Diocesan Certificate on completion.

In national survey of students who recently completed the CCRS, 89% of responders said that CCRS was highly relevant for their work in school and would recommend it to others, whilst 83% said the course had met or surpassed their expectations. I hope to see you on a course in 2020! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

- **Trade, refugees and migrants:** What they wish Britain's role in the world to be – especially when negotiating new trade deals if the UK leaves the EU and how they will make sure [refugees and migrants](#) will be treated with [dignity](#)?
- **Domestic poverty:** How will they help [people trapped in poverty](#) here in England and Wales.

Away from politics, another popular way to respond to issues of world poverty at this time of year, is to buy **"World Gifts" for Christmas**. Many are very appealing to children as they include such delights as "The goat that gives" and "Fantastic fish". All the gifts offer life changing possibilities. Don't forget your school volunteer! Why not invite them in to do an **Advent Assembly** focusing on our campaigns and World Gifts? On the website you can also find an interactive **Advent Calendar and Service**

For more information on any of the above look at our website or get in touch : 01494 863 777 northampton@cafod.org.uk

MISSIO NEWS

Fr Wayne Coughlin



Having wrote my last contribution looking at the new Altar to St John Henry Newman in Ss Philip and James Church (Bedford), I am now gazing upon an innovative display at Hothorpe Hall. I imagine it speaks of our spiritual journey with Jesus as we embrace the Holy Cross and are renewed by the Sacred Scriptures. The new Altar and the display are very different in style but each intends to touch the heart!

To that end, it is said that Fr John Henry Newman possessed the great skill to **"move minds and touch hearts"**. It is surely a rarity to do both. The twin pursuits of Newman were truth and purity; he knew these would come only at a great personal cost since he (as are we) was seeking them in a culture that does not value either. Our Christian task will always be to journey from worldly shadows and images into the Truth that is Jesus.

Wonderfully Newman in his majestic "Second Spring" sermon spoke of our own diocese and from which, he said, will arise saints. He also believed that there would come a time when Catholics would again have to defend truth and purity even at the cost of shedding their blood; the new diocesan saints that emerge may well be martyrs!

In this midst of writing such prophetic literature Newman remained very 'human'. Amongst Newman's foibles was the fact that he had a strong aversion to continental hotel food and soft beds! We know he was slow to forgive those who hurt him. Yet at the same time he wrote a beautiful thank you note to a young girl who had sent him cakes! We also know that Newman was an emotional character: he often wept whilst writing parts of the *Apologia* as he painfully recalled the great losses he had incurred in becoming a Catholic.

Newman was thus a complex individual. We are all complex individuals! It is this which gives us courage to become the saint that God wants us to be. However your school is observing the season of Advent I hope you will find time to reflect on the truth that we are called to be saints. The distinctive contribution of the Catholic school to society is that it has the possibility to raise up a new generation - not just of good people but - of saints.

Missio (Mission Together) has some wonderful resources for the observance of Advent; do have a look at the website!



CAFOD NEWS

Deborah Purfield

With the **General Election** impending, the **older students** and adults will have questions about how we as Catholics should respond. We have a **list of actions** you can take to show candidates that voters want them to act and help to fight poverty.

Four especially important election issues to raise are:

- **Aid:** What will they do to tackle global poverty and to support [overseas aid](#)?
- **Climate crisis:** What steps they will take to [end the UK's contribution to climate change](#) by putting us on track to reach 'net zero' [greenhouse gas emissions](#)?

ADULT FAITH FORMATION, CATECHESIS & CHAPLAINCY *Alex Heath*

Year of the Word 2020- 'The God Who Speaks'

Initiative On SATURDAY 6 JUNE 2020 there will be a DIOCESAN SCRIPTURE FESTIVAL called WORDFEST2020 as part of our celebrations for The Year of the Word. Please save this date and more details about the exciting programme will be available soon. Please see <http://godwhospeaks.uk> and the Diocesan Website (follow 'FAITH' and then 'YEAR OF THE WORD') for more details of what is on offer nationally and in the Diocese. I have also now created a power point presentation for the hymn 'Praise to you Eternal Word' which is freely available from www.nores.org.uk (Follow 'In the Classroom' and 'Chaplaincy').

Catechist Training & Gatherings The current Bishop's Certificate in Catechesis Level 1 course taking place in Luton draws to a close in early December. It has been a fantastic group of about 25 catechists.

A new Catechists Brochure is now available from the NORES office or electronically via www.nores.org.uk (Catechesis section). It outlines the various Catechetical Gatherings and also the training available. The conversations that have taken place on the parish and Pastoral Areas over the last two terms will inform the AGM in the Lent Term with our Bishop when we will hear about catechetical issues from around the Diocese. For more details please see the brochure.

School Chaplaincy Training Days On Tuesday 4 February 2020 we welcome Martha Flavell who has been instrumental in helping to offer Open the Book to Catholic schools. Open the Book (OtB) is a project which offers primary school children an opportunity to hear key Bible stories, from a team of Christians from local churches, who present the stories during assemblies/acts of Collective Worship. Our Joint RE & School Chaplaincy Conference for 2020 will take place on Friday 5 June 2020 where we will welcome Fr Eamonn Mulcahy and Wintershall Education. During the morning session Fr Eamonn Mulcahy will help us explore the theme 'The God Who Speaks'. Fr. Eamonn Mulcahy is a Spiritan or Holy Ghost Father Missionary originally from Manchester. In the afternoon bringing the Word of God to life we have the fantastic team from Wintershall Education. Included in this afternoon session is an overview of their work in Biblical drama including an overview of the resources and opportunities they offer to schools such as: Actor-led Assemblies, the Life of Christ production, Character Education material, Themed Workshops and Online Resources. For more information on their work please see: www.wintershall-education.com. Please see the booking form which is now available from the NORES office for full details and to book places for your members of staff.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and yours a truly peaceful and joyful Christmas and New Year, and we will see you again in 2020, during the Year of the Word

Pope Francis says Yoga doesn't lead us to God

Caitlin Bootsma

[3 November 2015]

Source: *Catholic Online* (<https://www.catholic.org>)

In a recent homily, Pope Francis reminded listeners that practices like yoga aren't capable of opening our hearts up to God. "You can take a million catechetical courses, a million courses in spirituality, a million courses in yoga, Zen and all these things. But all of this will never be able to give you freedom", he explained.

While yoga was just one example offered among many, the Holy Father touched on a matter of great debate among faithful Catholics who happen to prefer this kind of exercise. Can Catholics participate in yoga?

The answer is a bit more nuanced than one might think. Catholics should not participate in any of the "spiritual" aspects associated with yoga, but technically can do the actual physical exercises. However, many people who practice yoga caution that it is often difficult, if not impossible, to separate the exercises from the meditations.

For example, a common mantra repeated in yoga is "So'ham" that roughly translates to "I am the universal self". This focus on the self is contrary to the focus on God to which we are called. In the words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI: "Christian prayer... flees from impersonal techniques or from concentrating on oneself, which can create a kind of rut, imprisoning the person praying in a spiritual privatism which is incapable of a free openness to the transcendental God" (Some Aspects of Christian Meditation, 3) (Originally quoted here).

The Pope tells us that only the Holy Spirit can "move the heart" and make it "docile to the Lord, docile to the freedom of love". If we are seeking a zen-like peace from yoga meditation, then we are seeking peace from the wrong source.

PRAYING WITH OUR SCHOOLS

PRAYER INTENTIONS – *ask the school to pray with the Pope* that a spirit of dialogue, encounter, and reconciliation emerge in the Near East, where diverse religious communities share their lives together.

FEAST DAYS – **both are the diocesan patronal feasts!**

8 December: St Mary's Primary Schools at

Caddington, Aston le Walls, Amersham

Last week of Advent:

Thomas Becket Secondary, Northampton (29 Decem

THE VINE - *As Communications Manager, Neil Roseman is stepping into the role as editor. Please send all news items to communications@northamptondiocese.com*

JACKIE MCCARTHY, NORES Office Manager is retiring after 24 years very dedicated service to us all. We wish her well in the years ahead. She transferred offices from Thornton to Milton Keynes to Luton, and has been the welcoming voice of NORES to so many of you over the years, serving our schools in so many ways. We offer her our prayers and blessings for a happy and enjoyable retirement, as we say thank you for all she has done.