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A FUTURE  
FULL OF HOPE  
CLIFTON DIOCESE

## Secondary Schools Newsletter Easter 2018

Happy Easter  
Christ is Risen

This is an extract from Cardinal Vincent Nichols Homily at the Easter Vigil. He is reflecting on the readings.

“The first reading was from the book of Genesis, speaking of the beginnings of all things, their creation. The words cried out the goodness and beauty of creation, all that God ‘found to be very good’. The story of God’s love actually begins there, in creation, just as our story begins with our first coming into being in our mother’s womb. **Every time we appreciate the beauty of created order, we are on the threshold of faith.** Such beauty might be in a sunset, in our garden, or in the face of another human being. The story of our salvation begins just there, for in such moments we begin to see with the eyes of God and respond to God’s love.

As we grow in faith in God, and in our Saviour Jesus Christ, **we should never lose this sense of the goodness of God’s creation.** We come to love that which we know: our homeland, our families, our own customs. **But we also strive to see all that is unfamiliar to us with the eyes of faith, acknowledging people different from us, as sons and daughters of God and beautiful in God’s eyes.**

The second reading reminded us that in the long journey of life, **God never leaves his people abandoned,** but accompanies them, step by step, in a cloud by day and a fire by night.

This story of faith, in its great sweep through history is also in the small print of our own lives.

The third reading made us face up to the presence of wrong-doing and evil. The prophet Ezekiel names that evil: ‘the blood they have shed in their land’; ‘the idols with which they have defiled it’; the profanation of the name of God. **Each of us has a conscience. Each of us knows our own wrong-doing.** Each of us sees the daily shedding of blood that is a mark of shame on our world.

This evening, then, is a moment for us to bring our faults before the Lord and to ask for the cleansing of which the prophet also spoke: ‘I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart. I shall put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh instead... You shall be my people and I will be your God’ (Ezekiel 36).

Perhaps we could reflect on this and ask how we live out our lives in the light of these readings both in our personal lives and at school.

### New outcomes for RE

The primary schools have been piloting these new national outcomes since September. No secondary school volunteered. The expectation is that everyone will be using them from September 2018. I have reattached the general framework. The outcomes are designed to mirror the skills required by the GCSE so they should fit more comfortably into your framework than the old levels

of attainment did. Their primary use is in planning to ensure progression. At this stage they are not (for Secondary) content specific. I would encourage you to look at the work of your primary colleagues to see the work they are doing.

### **Key Stage 3 RE**

The outcomes for each unit will be revised in the light of the new outcomes but this should not affect content. Please note Cafod resources for unit 6 are on line. A lot of this material fits in really well with the Diocesan theme of 'The Year of Mission' so do please look at this material.

### **GCSE**

Cafod's work to support this is on line now together with a map to each of the separate syllabi. After the exams take place we will do a comparison of the different approaches taken by the boards.

**Everyone should be doing the Catholic Option as prescribed by The Bishops' Conference if they are doing the GCSE. You do not however have to have all your pupils take part in the GCSE unless it is a requirement of your school.** I Would appreciate your comments on the respective RE papers as and when they occur. The CES has conducted a national survey of GCSE take up amongst Catholic schools and results show a three-way split between AQA, Edexcel and Eduqas. Although there was originally a lot of disquiet about the new GCSE schools do report growing confidence especially as the requirements have become clearer. All feedback received will be taken seriously but it is important to try and attend the Heads of RE days with other dioceses so this can be better understood. The largest single request was support for a non-GCSE option that would still be acceptable to heads. The report commissioned by the RE council makes a recommendation for a non-GCSE route that still carries progress 8 points and there is growing pressure to bring this about but it is outside of our direct control.

### **Sixth Form General RE**

You **MUST** ensure that this is taking place, receives sufficient curriculum time and is fulfilling the curriculum directory. **ALL courses must be submitted to the diocese. Originally, I said the end of January but not all schools have done this – so please submit your course as soon as possible. I just need an outline.** Bishops' Conference regulations are quite clear about the importance of this. If pastoral staff are delivering this course through tutor time you will be asked at your next inspection or monitoring visit how they are being prepared to teach this course.

### **Heads of RE Day 28<sup>th</sup> June**

- 1) This will be at Newman College Birmingham and will be run by the CREDO team. It will also be an opportunity to meet colleges from other Dioceses.
- 2) CREDO provides Catholic HEI support for schools.
- 3) The Credo team have made significant headway in keeping abreast of GCSE and GCE specifications, practice issues, strengths, negativities and positive ways forward. Some funded academic research is taking place.
- 4) They will be offering their insights on this day which will be a mixture of practical approaches and theology
- 5) Details of how to register and the cost will be sent out later

**You should as a school make every effort to attend this day.**

## **The CCRS (Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies)**

You are welcome to join in this course at any point. Our next module will be on 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May. This will be on the theology of inclusion.

### **Education Mass: Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm**

As a diocese we would like to both celebrate the work of our schools in supporting Catholic Education and remind everyone we still need to keep driving forward the cause of Catholic Education. You will be aware of the pressures surrounding Education at present. This is our Year of Mission and it would be good to show and celebrate our commitment to our mission so on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm we are holding a mass in Clifton Cathedral to celebrate and give thanks for Catholic Education. Bishop Declan will be the main celebrant. At the mass we will be asking everyone to renew their commitment to the cause of Catholic Education. Tea and Coffee will be available afterwards in the Apostle's Room. Pupils are very welcome. We would be grateful if you could publicise this event in your school and encourage as many as possible, including parents, to attend. We already have a school which has volunteered to lead our music but I would ask schools to volunteer to do a) the readings b) the bidding prayers and c) a thanksgiving (perhaps dance) after communion. If you are able to help please let me know. Each school will need to bring their banner and have people to carry this in procession.

### **Assisi: 2018 - Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> October**

This is now definitely confirmed but there is still an opportunity to register if you want to take part.

Assisi, the birth place of St Francis, is a truly beautiful and peaceful town. Most people who visit Assisi find themselves wanting to return.

In our visit we will have the opportunity to:

- Explore the rich Franciscan heritage and reflect on how Franciscan spirituality can contribute to our mission;
- Pray together;
- Share our stories and learn from each other;
- Explore the local area with its narrow picturesque lanes, faded fresco, stunning views and hidden olive groves

The cost is £300 per person excluding flights. (If you wish to bring your partner then there is a reduced cost for partners of £200.

This cost includes:

1. Dinner, Bed and Breakfast including wine with Dinner
2. Transport to and from Rome Fiumicino
3. A guided tour of the main Basilica
4. Our guide for the trip
5. All handouts etc.

Flights are available with easy jet from Bristol to Rome (check which flights with Jenny).

To confirm your place on the trip you must register with Jenny Fitzgerald [jenny.fitzgerald@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:jenny.fitzgerald@cliftondiocese.com) by Friday, 27 April and we require a deposit of £100 per person.

### Important Dates for your Diary

24<sup>th</sup> April            2<sup>nd</sup> NQT Day: Clifton Cathedral.  
 19<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> May    CCRS: Alexander House  
 10<sup>th</sup> May            Ascension Day (**Please note this is a Holy Day of Obligation**)  
 20<sup>th</sup> May            Pentecost Sunday  
 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> June    Primary Leavers Masses  
 26<sup>th</sup> June            Education Mass: Clifton Cathedral 7pm  
 30<sup>th</sup> June            Diocesan Family Day at St Brendan’s College (Organised by Adult Education)

The schools Department is organising a series of ‘briefings’ around the Diocese. They take place on:

Date	Time	Partnership	Location
Monday 14 May	7 – 8:30pm	DUNSTAN	St George Parish Centre (Taunton)
Monday 21 May	7 – 8:30pm	SAMUEL	Holy Family (Swindon)
Thursday 24 May	7 – 8:30pm	WCSP	St George School (Warminster)
Monday 11 June	7 – 8:30pm	GCSP	St Peter’s High (Gloucester)
Wednesday 20 June	7 – 8:30pm	NEWMAN	St Bede’s College (Bristol)
Thursday 21 June	7 – 8:30pm	AQUINAS	St Bernadette’s Primary (Bristol)
Monday 25 June	7 – 8:30pm	CAMINO	St Gregory’s College (Bath)

Although these are intended primarily for governors you are welcome to attend. The focus is twofold: First an update on the Educational Landscape and secondly an update on Relationship Education.

Many thanks for all your work.

**Ann Fowler**  
**Deputy Director**