

Secondary Schools Newsletter January 2019

Happy New Year. I hope you all had a happy and peaceful break. The following extract is from Pope Francis' Christmas Homily

*“The shepherds of Bethlehem also tell us how to go forth to meet the Lord. They were keeping watch by night: they were not sleeping but doing what Jesus often asks all of us to do, namely, be watchful. They remain alert and attentive in the darkness; and God’s light then “shone around them”). This is also the case for us. Our life can be marked by waiting, which amid the gloom of our problems hopes in the Lord and yearns for his coming; then we will receive his life. Or our life can be marked by wanting, where all that matters are our own strengths and abilities; our heart then remains barred to God’s light. So the shepherds immediately set out: we are told that they “went with haste” They do not just stand there like those who think they have already arrived and need do nothing more. Instead they set out; they leave their flocks unguarded; they take a risk for God. And after seeing Jesus, although they were not men of fine words, they go off to proclaim his birth, so that “all who heard were amazed at what the shepherds told them”
To keep watch, to set out, to risk, to recount the beauty: all these are acts of love. The Good Shepherd, who at Christmas comes to give his life to the sheep, will later, at Easter, ask Peter and, through him all of us, the ultimate question: “Do you love me?” (Jn 21:15). The future of the flock will depend on how that question is answered. Tonight we too are asked to respond to Jesus with the words: “I love you”. The answer given by each is essential for the whole flock.”*

As we begin the New Year I find it challenging to rely on God and not myself, I find it challenging in the face of difficulties to trust in God so my prayer for the new year would be that like the Shepherds we too are willing to risk, to trust and to hope.

A Future Full of Hope: The Year of Prayer



Please note that all details regarding this are in the Chaplaincy Newsletter but one thing to note is that because October has been declared by Pope Francis a special month of mission **our Education Mass has moved from June to 22nd October. Please note the change of date and try to have this put on your school calendar.**

There will be vocations exhibitions aimed at schools taking place in May. Please see the Chaplaincy newsletter for details and try to support this.

Heads of RE Meeting

Please note the next meeting takes place on Monday 4th February. As you may be aware there are considerable changes taking place on the national scene, including reforms to the Curriculum Directory, the Inspection Framework, Assessment and General Sixth Form RE. This day will update you on all of these and how they will affect your school. In addition, Cafod will be present to update you on their support for KS3 – KS5 and new developments.

Holocaust Memorial Day: 27th January. This year the day is a Sunday so please mark on the Friday or the Monday if possible.

Theme: The Power of Words

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27th January each year. It's a time for everyone to pause to remember the millions of people who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition during the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. The 27th January marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. The aim is to use the materials to inform pupils about the issues so that they are aware of the past and can consider issues today.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has a wealth of school material on its website including assemblies, one-off lesson plans and ideas for longer projects. Please note that these also include resources for SEN pupils. Please go to <https://www.hmd.org.uk/take-part-in-holocaust-memorial-day/schools/>.

New Outcomes in RE

Following the introduction of the new outcomes all primary schools doing the God Matters Syllabus have been asked to submit work. This will be moderated on 15th of January. If you would like to take part in the moderation which is at Alexander House, you are welcome to join me but you must let me know in advance. The intention is to create a portfolio of work which will be made available to all schools.

CCRS

The next session is on 19th January and 21st January and is on Sacraments.

In this session we will be considering what we mean by a sacramental church, how we understand things like 'Grace', how we teach sacraments to pupils.

Anyone can join in at any point and are welcome just to attend the course even if they don't want to do the written work for the qualification. In that case we will provide a certificate of attendance. If you have non-Catholic members of your department or non-specialist members you have a responsibility to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge to teach the syllabus. The CCRS might be a way of ensuring you are fulfilling your obligations.

Peace Sunday 20th January

The theme for 2019 is "*Good politics serves peace*" Pope Francis writes:

"One thing is certain: good politics is at the service of peace. It respects and promotes fundamental human rights, which are at the same time mutual obligations, enabling a bond of

trust and gratitude to be forged between present and future generations....today more than ever, our societies need “artisans of peace” who can be messengers and authentic witnesses of God the Father, who wills the good and the happiness of the human family.”

The full text is available from the Vatican website and PAX Christi have resources you can you around this day. They also have a series of lessons available for use with sixth formers and lessons to support topics for all three boards for the GCSE. These include lesson plans and PowerPoints.

Relationships and Sex Education

The current government guidance on RSE is found in ‘Sex and Relationship Education Guidance’ from 2000. In 2017 ‘The Children and Social Work Act’ proposed that ‘all pupils will study compulsory health education as well as new reformed relationships education in primary school and relationships and sex education in secondary school.’

Initially the deadline for RSE becoming statutory in schools was September 2019. However, following delays in guidance being issued, the consultation on the guidance period was from July 19th – 7th November 2018. Under the workload protocol, schools must be given at least one year of lead-in time for any major curriculum change. Therefore, the hard deadline for the statutory guidance is September 2019, to be in place for September 2020. We might receive the statutory guidance before then depending on what emerges from the consultation period and how long it takes to be agreed in Parliament.

If and when we have clarification around this we will update schools however you are reminded that our own guidance is on the website.

Advance Notice: A Conference for Sixth Formers, 27th November 2019

Given their conspicuous lack of success of our last attempt to organise a conference it might be a little optimistic to try again but we are after all a people of hope!. A couple of people responded last time saying that they thought in order to justify bringing pupils out of school the conference should be overtly RE focused. I have taken note of this and this conference will focus specially **on the role of women in religion and the approach of three different faith groups**. The conference is being organised with the help of **Gavin D’Costa who is the Professor of Catholic Theology at the University of Bristol**. Gavin studied under the theologian, John Hick. He was also Joseph McCarthy Professor at the Gregorian University, Rome. He acts as an advisor to the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales and the Anglican Church on matters of interreligious dialogue and theology. He also advises the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Vatican City. The three faiths represented at our conference will be Catholicism, Judaism and Islam. Our confirmed speaker for Catholicism will be **Dr Carmody T S Grey**, many of you will have read her work in the Tablet and she is Assistant Professor in Catholic Theology at Durham university. Details of the other speakers will be available shortly. I hope you will feel able to support this conference. I would be grateful if you could include this in your planning for next year.

Many thanks for all you do and I hope the new year is full of hope for you

Ann Fowler