



A LIFE LIVED IN COMMUNION

## Secondary Newsletter December 2019

Today, the first Sunday of Advent, a new liturgical year begins. In these four weeks of Advent, the liturgy leads us to celebrate the birth of Jesus, while reminding us that He comes every day in our lives, and that He will return gloriously at the end of time. This certainty leads us to look to the future with confidence, as the prophet Isaiah invites us, who with his inspired voice accompanies the whole path of Advent.

Isaiah's wonderful vision is a divine promise and impels us to assume an attitude of pilgrimage, on the way to Christ, meaning and end of all history. Those who hunger and thirst for justice can only find it through the ways of the Lord, while evil and sin come from the fact that individuals and social groups prefer to follow paths dictated by selfish interests, which cause conflict and Wars. Advent is the time to welcome the coming of Jesus, who comes as a messenger of peace to show us the ways of God.

In today's Gospel, Jesus exhorts us to be prepared for his coming: "Watch therefore, for ye know not what day your Lord will come" (Matthew 24:42). Watching does not mean having your eyes materially open but having your heart free and oriented in the right direction, that is, willing to give and serve. That's watching! The dream from which we must awaken is constituted by indifference, by vanity, by the inability to establish truly human relationships, by the inability to take care of our isolated, abandoned or sick brother. The expectation of the coming of Jesus must therefore translate into a commitment to vigilance. It is above all about marvelling at God's action, his surprises and giving him primacy. Surveillance also means, to be attentive to neighbours in difficulty, to be challenged by their needs, without waiting for help, but by learning to prevent, to anticipate, as God always does with us.

(Pope Francis Angelus 1December 2019)

## **The Year of Communion**

**Our parishes and communities  
should be places  
where Christ is celebrated  
shared,  
proclaimed and lived,  
where everyone is welcomed  
and valued  
and all have a sense of responsibility  
for the life of the community and the world.**

If schools were not able to collect their documentation from the Cathedral, we have some copies available. There is a booklet for Governors and School Leaders with suggestions for reviewing the school in the light of the diocesan pastoral plan. You will find this in the **Governors' section of the schools' website** under the Heading 'The Year of Communion'. Please look at this and draw it to the attention of your governors. There are some resources to support this already in place and more will be added as the Year of Communion progresses.

## **GCSE Updates**

On the basis of returns to the CES, (approximately 85% of schools nationally responded). Catholic schools are comparable with schools nationally at both thresholds (4 and 7) at GCSE. The national figures for Catholic schools are at Level 4 - 72.5% and at level 7 - 30.3%. As a diocese our average figures are at Level 4 - 73.4% and at Level 7 - 30.8% . Thank you for all your hard work in achieving this. Highest levels of satisfaction correlate to studying Eduqas, Route B and highest levels of dissatisfaction with Edexcel, spec A. Qualitative responses indicate that this is connected to Edexcel's failure to provide schools with sufficient support in how to write high band responses to the AO2 evaluation questions. A national complaint has been submitted about this.

## **A Level Update**

For A Level nationally Catholic schools underperform against all other schools nationally. Nationally the total number of A Level entries has dropped by almost a quarter since 2017, although it is clear that this drop-off cannot be a consequence of a change to the GCSE, since those numbers won't be available until next summer. It is most likely that the fall in entries is related to the move from modular to linear A Levels with the loss of an AS results that could count towards final outcomes. In Clifton the A\* to B pass rate was 39.5% which compares to a national figure of 49.8% and a Catholic schools' national figure of 45.1%. There is however considerable variation throughout the diocese on both numbers and results.

## **The God who Speaks.**

The year 2020 will be the 10th anniversary of *Verbum Domini* – Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation on 'The Word of the Lord' and the 1,600 anniversary of St Jerome's death. These dates have motivated the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to make 2020 a year of focus on 'The God Who Speaks'. There is a section of the website under **Governance** now entitled 'The God who Speaks'. Any resources from the Diocese will be placed there. At present you will find questions and reflections on the Bible for use with staff. Work for pupils in both primary and secondary will also be placed there. There is also a

national website [www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/the-god-who-speaks](http://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/the-god-who-speaks) which contains resources. We are holding an event for this on March 19<sup>th</sup> /20<sup>th</sup> (schools select one day to come). Bishop Declan will be attending. Further details of this will follow.

### **Heads of RE Meeting**

There may be a change of date for this as we have invited Carmody Grey to speak at this meeting. Carmody, who will be known to those of you who read The Tablet, is Assistant Professor of Catholic Theology at Durham University. She was one of our speakers at our sixth form conference and was excellent. Many thanks to those of you who brought students to our Women in Faith Conference. In the evening our speakers offered a version of this for adults and this is available on the diocesan website. As soon as I have confirmation from Dr Grey, I will inform you of the details.

### **Key Dates for your diary in the next few weeks.**

Advance Notice: Primary school Masses take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June. The day a school attends is based on partnership areas.

- **The CCRS** for teachers takes place on January 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. This will be on the **New Testament**. Everyone is welcome to attend even if just for this Module. Since this is 'The Year of the Word' it might be an appropriate course to consider for any non-specialists in your department.
- **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February. RE conference at St Mary's Twickenham.** Please see details attached to the end of the newsletter
- Lent begins on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February
- **19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> March 'The God who Speaks' event** with Bishop Declan. Further details of this will be sent out separately.

For full details of all courses and their costs please look in our course booklet.

### **Resources:**

- Looking at Cafod's work to support Global Learning more information can be found at [www.cafod.org.uk/connectingclassrooms](http://www.cafod.org.uk/connectingclassrooms)

Thank you for all you do. I hope you have a happy and Holy Christmas

Ann Fowler

Deputy Director

# Saturday 8th February

## St Mary's University

NEXT Friday 29th November is the next cut off point for early booking on to the **ATCRE National Conference** for just £45. The cost in December goes up to £50.

**This conference is likely to sell out** and is generating a lot of national and even international interest. We currently have people travelling from all over the UK to attend, and while we appreciate the travel, we do feel that it will be worthwhile for all those involved in Catholic RE.

*It is pleasing that Catholic schools are paying for staff tickets, travel and, in some cases, accommodation to attend. We do believe this represents good value for money.*

Our speaker list confirms some of the best speakers on Catholic Religious Education in what will be one of the **biggest and best Catholic Education conference ever hosted in England and Wales.**

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### SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

**Bishop Alan Williams SM - Bishop of Brentwood**

**Mary Myatt** - Educational Consultant and former RE teacher. Her recent books include: [The Curriculum: Gallimaufry to Coherence](#); [High Challenge, Low Threat](#) and [Hopeful Schools](#).

**Michael Merrick** - Catholic writer, speaker and primary headteacher at St Ninian Catholic Federation, Carlisle. He has featured on BBC Radio 4 and in a number of Catholic publications.

**Edmund Adamus** - The renowned Theology of the Body expert running a session on ToB & RSE

**Matt Boniecki** - The insightful Catholic RE teacher leading on 6th Form RE: *"Catholic Theology through A Level RS and Core RE"*

**Ann Clucas** - Author of [How To Teach Everybody: Strategies for Effective Differentiation](#) as well as recent work books for [Edexcel and AQA GCSE RS](#) will be running a session on RE and SEND.

**Dawn Cox** - Head of RE and SLE, one of most highly regarded RE teachers in the country on [Twitter](#) and for [her blog](#). Dawn will lead a session on curriculum design and teaching techniques to ensure students not only understand, but also remember content.

**Sr Marcellina Cooney** - Author of *The Way, The Truth and The Life* shares the work and Mission of the Teacher's Enterprise in RE.

**Julia Cunningham & Andy Lewis** - The Shrewsbury Diocese RE Coordinator (JC) and [Catholic textbook author](#) (AL) present "*How to Lead RE in the Catholic School*"

**Matthew Dell** - Senior Lecturer on the PGCE RE and MA Education at St Mary's ([Profile](#)) uses 25 years of classroom experience to share "*The Power of Storytelling*"

**Rev. Dr. Stephen Fawcett** - Lecturer in moral theology at St Mary's College, Oscott, will present a vision for a Catholic RSE curriculum

**Claire Fernandes** - An associate lecturer in Primary RE, she has written for *The Pastoral Review* journal as well as TenTen Theatre online resources. She will lead a session on Primary Catholic RE.

**Dr Leonard Franchi** - Lecturer in Pedagogy, Praxis & Faith at the University of Glasgow ([Profile](#)) and author of [Shared Mission: RE in the Catholic Tradition](#) will share his wisdom and insight

**Susan Kambalu** - The CAFOD Inset Coordinator will demonstrate the new and upcoming CAFOD resources to help improve Catholic RE in the classroom

**Fr Eamonn Mulcahy** - The Holy Ghost Father from Manchester will share his insights on leadership in Catholic RE

**Prof Richard Rymrz** - Head of Religious Education and Director of Research at BBI – The Australian Institute of Theological Education ([Profile](#)) will share his global insights on Catholic RE

**Dr Sean Whittle** - Experienced RE teacher, academic ([Profile](#)) and author of [A Theory of Catholic Education](#) will lead a session on his various areas of expertise.

*NB - All speakers and sessions subject to change and adaptation*

*To book a place go to:*

<https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/events/2020/02/atcre-national-re-conference-2020>