



Secondary Newsletter February 2020



As I write this is the scene outside our house. Flooding on this scale was meant to be a once every hundred-year event but it is happening with increasing frequency. Climate change coupled with a neglect of the environment has become a lived reality. In March 2019 when addressing the International Conference ‘Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Pope Francis said *“Dear brothers and sisters, today, after three and a half years since the adoption of the sustainable development goals, we must be even more acutely aware of the importance of accelerating and adapting our actions in responding adequately to both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (cf. Laudato Si’, 49) – they are connected. The challenges are complex and have multiple causes; the response, therefore, must necessarily be complex and well-structured, respectful of the diverse cultural riches of peoples. If we are truly concerned about developing an ecology capable of repairing the damage we have done, no branch of science or form of wisdom should be overlooked, and this includes religions and the languages particular to them. I*

express my heartfelt appreciation for your efforts in caring for our common home at the service of promoting an inclusive sustainable future. I know that, at times, it can seem far too difficult a task. And yet, “Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start” (Laudato Si’, 205). This is the change which present circumstances demand because the injustice that brings tears to our world and to its poor is not invincible.”

Lent is the opportunity to make a new start, to try to be the people God calls us to be and make a difference to our world. Living Lent <https://livinglent.org/> is focused on using Lent as an opportunity to review our actions and change the way we live in small ways. They have

produced resources to help schools, churches and families change in practical ways over the 40 days of Lent. Please look at their website and see if you can use some of their ideas.

Linked with this is:

World Water Day 22nd March <https://www.worldwaterday.org/>

Pope Francis has spoken a great deal about climate change and the need to protect our environment. Water, climate change and social justice are closely linked. This day is intended to help us focus on the way we use water and what we can do to protect our environment.

World Book Day 5th March

Even if as a secondary school you do not normally focus on this perhaps in this ‘Year of the Word’ you could think about taking part. This year we are being asked to use this day to help us focus on Scripture. The Bishop of Wrexham writes:

“One specific way our schools can be engaged with a sense of unity is to make a distinctive mark with World Book Day (WBD) this year by focusing on the book that is the Bible, or just one of its seventy-three books, perhaps a Gospel and if so St. Matthew’s. There could be the reading of favourite Bible stories or of some of the less familiar ones; there can be Bible themed collective worship, the potential is enormous. Another suggestion would be to invite into your schools local personages – MPs, AMs, Mayors, Community Police Officers, Fire Officers, even celebrities if they have them in the locality and others- asking that they read their ‘favourite’ Bible story or passage and give a few words of explanation as to why it is special to them. Such an activity is both good publicity/marketing/community engagement of schools and thus a form of evangelisation as well as a demonstration to the children that ordinary, everyday people read and read the Bible. Secondary schools might choose to have a ‘Gospel readathon’. This, other ideas and resources can be adapted from the WBD website <https://www.worldbookday.com/> to make World Book Day, a Bible Day, a God Who Speaks day.

The Rt. Reverend Peter M. Brignal

Relationship and Sex Education

The new guidelines come into force from September 2020. There is material available now on our website to help support staff. You will find this under the Governor section of the website. Please ensure that all staff who are involved in any aspect of teaching this are familiar with and understand the teaching of the Catholic Church. (This may involve science staff, English staff- topics may come through literature- as well as those directly involved in the teaching of RE and PSHE.

Heads of RE Day - 2nd March at Alexander House

I apologise for the confusion over this date. It is March 2nd!

During the day we will be looking at the new Curriculum Directory, the New Section 48 inspection framework and Cafod will also be looking at how their work can support us in the Year of Communion. If you haven’t already done so, please could you let Graham know if you are attending. Lunch is provided.

Sixth Form General RE

The requirement is still 5% of curriculum time, (this does not include assembly time or retreats) . Support for general RE materials is available from CAFOD and Missio as well as other agencies. You may want to look on <https://education.rcdow.org.uk/re-catholic-life/core-re-human-trafficking-and-catholic-social-teaching/> This is a booklet around the topic of Catholic Social Teaching and Human trafficking . It has 7 lessons in with a PPT for each one. You may (and in some cases would need to) adapt the PPT but it is a good starting point for the topic

GCSE and A Level

The DfE recently released the league tables for secondary results. I would be the first person to say these in no way represent what a school is really about, but they are interesting because the same pattern is revealed here as in RE results, namely A level results overall are down this year. (I realise there are variations between schools). If you recall 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. This is worth further discussion.

A Possible Resource During Lent

Eggs and Ashes (Downloadable book) Ruth Burgess & Chris Polhill Practical & liturgical resources for Lent and Holy Week SKU/ISBN: 9781905010967. Available from the Iona website. It contains liturgies, reflections, prayers and poems some of which are focused on the environment.

Many thanks for all you do

Ann Fowler
Deputy Director