



Primary and Chaplaincy Newsletter May 2020

Christ is Risen

He is Risen indeed!

I hope you are all well and still hopeful despite everything going on around us. As we are reminded hope is not optimism. It is not a naïve belief that everything will work out well. Christian hope is the belief that no matter what happens God walks with you. I suppose if St Paul were writing today, he would say, ‘Who will separate us from the love of Christ? not coronavirus, not isolation, not fear of the future, No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

This is my last newsletter. I effectively leave the diocese on May 22nd. I have to say I was not anticipating the current crisis when arriving at my leaving date, but life is full of surprises! It has been a pleasure and a privilege. I am proud of all the work you do, and the way schools have risen to the current challenge has been awe-inspiring. I wanted to wish you health, hope and happiness for the future. I will miss all my interactions with schools, but one aspect has meant a great deal to me and that is the chaplaincy work. Please convey my thanks to all your young people who take part in this. Please tell them how proud I am of them and to continue to make a difference to people’s lives.

Early Years

Following on from the meeting with the Early Years Group there is now work on the website. This **does not follow the God Matters modular titles** but reflects the new Curriculum Directory headings and the outcomes for early years specified on the national

document. As with the God Matters work it consists of outcomes and suggestions for tasks to fulfil those outcomes. The tasks are intended as guidance so feel free to adapt, but if you are following them please note they are in order so should be undertaken as they are.

Reform of the Curriculum Directory/New 48 system

This work is still continuing, (courtesy of modern technology). There will be an update in the new term. The date for this is 22nd September. (Coronavirus/lockdown permitting!) This will be led by Philip the national RE adviser. All primary coordinators will need to attend.

This is a message from Dr Caroline Hull about the Children's Bible Project.

The ACN Child's Bible Project launches on Easter Monday and will, for now, offer families with young children an RE resource to use at home while schools are closed, but also will transition very easily into a classroom resource for use once things have returned to normal. There are bishops, priests, sisters, educators and prominent Catholic lay people taking part. We are working really hard to get this up and running asap because of lockdown, so we are getting started just after Easter with Chapter 1 and the project will run through August (and then will be available on the ACN website for future use).

The resources for the Child's Bible Project will sit in the Primary School area of the resources section on our website (www.acnuk.org). Each day we'll release a video of someone (a bishop, priest, Sister, ACN staff, teacher, prominent layperson, etc) reading that day's chapter and providing a brief, child-friendly reflection on it. Our schools' team has written a short prayer inspired by each chapter and put together activities (crafts, dramas, games, challenges, etc) to go with them as well.

I hope this sounds good to you--we do a lot of work in schools and we are keen to support families and teachers throughout this difficult time.

If you are still happy to help, I'd love to ask you to take a chapter--they are short (usually just a few paragraphs)!

We're just looking for two short videos--one of you reading your chapter and one of you giving a short, primary-age appropriate reflection about it. If you could end that with a few questions for the children and their families to discuss, that would be just perfect.

The videos aren't a big deal; I just did mine on my iPhone.

Just let me know if you'd still like to take part, and I'll send you a chapter and some more specific instructions. Please note this is aimed at **primary**.

If you are willing to take part in this then please contact Caroline directly on Dr Caroline Hull, Community Outreach Manager

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Resources

At present resources for Easter are on the website. I will add a May PPT and Pentecost before I leave. A prayer service for May is at the end of the newsletter. We are indebted to schools sending in videos or prayers by pupils. If you have something you would like to share please don't hesitate to send it in.

Competition Time

We have had lots of entries for the two competitions we have run so far. We would like to thank you for publicising this. All results and pictures (where appropriate) are being published on the school's department website and the Clifton Diocese site. Our next competition begins on Tuesday 28th April and ends on 15th May. We are back to a writing competition and the theme is New Life. This can be as creative as pupils wish - a Sci-Fi about discovering new life in space, a birth, new life on a farm, anything that connects to the topic. Entries should be less than 750 words and entrants should remember to give their age. Entries should be sent to competition@cliftondiocese.com

Thank you for all you do. Your help and support has been amazing. I have been extraordinarily lucky to have worked with you all and I will miss you, your pupils and the enthusiasm you have brought to RE. I would like to thank in particular those who have attended the courses, it was fun! Because under the current circumstances I won't have any opportunity to say this, I want to thank publicly all my department, Colleen who I think does a fantastic job of leading the department, Paul, Bill and Graham for all they do, for their support through everything, but especially Jenny. We have known each other for a very (more than I care to think about!) long time. Through all the changes in the department Jenny has been a constant. Always there, always reassuring, always on top of any situation. Without Jenny I wouldn't have been able to do what I do, and it would have been much less fun!

Take care, stay safe.

Ann Fowler
Deputy Director

Mary our Mother



As we pause to place ourselves in the presence of God, in this month of May we invite Mary our Mother to be with us as we listen and pray:

Reflection: Sing of a girl

Sing of a girl in the ripening wheat,
flowers in her hand, the sun in her hair.
All the world will run to her feet,
for the child that mother will bear.

Sing of a girl that the angels surround,
dust in her hand and straw in her hair.
Kings and their crowns will fall to the ground
before the child that mother will bear.

Sing of a girl on a hillside alone,
blood on her hand and grey in her hair.
Sing of a body broken and torn
Oh, the child that mother will bear

Sing of the girl a new man will meet,
hand in his hand, the wind in her hair.
Joy will rise as golden as wheat
With the child that mother will bear

Sing of a girl in a circle of love
fire on her head, the light in her hair.
Sing of the hearts the spirit will move
To love the child that mother will bear

Sing of a girl who will never grow old
joy in her eyes and gold in her hair.
Through the ages all will be told
Of the child that mother will bear

Words by Damian Lundy

We pray

Mary, chosen by God,
Believing in the angel's message
Accepting the will of God

Pray with us now as we try to try to do God's will

Mary, handmaid of the lord,
filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaiming
'Your will be done in me'

Mary, welcoming
shepherds and wise men alike;
rejoicing in God's love for all

Mary, blessed because you believed
that the promise made by God
would be fulfilled in you

Mary, who met in love,
Jesus on the road to Calvary;
Who meets us in love, as we carry our crosses

Mary, waiting in an upper room,
Who never lost faith though all seemed lost;
Who walks with us on our faith journey

Mary, woman of faith,
Living for others, risking all certainty,
Bringing Christ into our lives

Reading: The importance of Mary: based on a text by Paul VI

Reflection: I belong to You Lord

We bow our heads before the mystery of your love Lord.

The word of God became man.

He who was rich became poor for love's sake

The strong one became weak for love's sake

The creator for love's sake became creature

The immortal one became a mortal

The almighty weak for love's sake.

For love's sake we open ourselves to your spirit

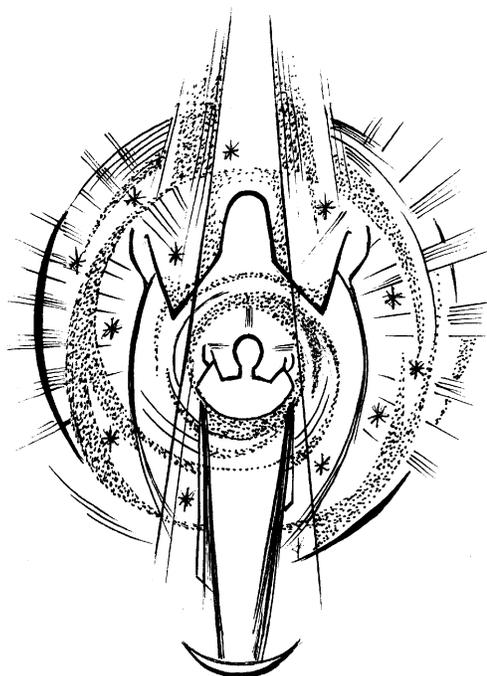
We strive to recognise you in others especially those rejected by the world.

We seek to learn from others, to listen with patience and open hearts.

To live in peace, to work for justice

To trust in your power and presence

To believe that you are present in our sharing.



Mary mother of God Adapted from a text by Paul VI

Mary is not simply some passive recipient doing what God wants because she is incapable of doing anything else. She knew the risks she was taking when she said yes to God. The penalty for having a child outside of marriage was death by stoning.

Knowing this, facing an unknown future, stepping out in direction she hadn't intended to go, risking the disapproval of family, friends, neighbours and possibly death she still says thy will be done.

Mary brings the kingdom, allows God to be present, because she gives herself totally to God without reserve. When she prays the Magnificat, the prayer tells of her own discoveries, her own journey.

Firstly, she has come to know herself and realise how much she is loved by God, secondly out this knowledge of the depth of God's love she is almost compelled to sing her praise of God and her thanks. Finally, because of God's great love she becomes present to and concerned for the powerless, the voiceless and those in need.

Mary offers a calm vision and reassuring word to the people of today, torn as we often are between fear and hope. We can be defeated by a sense of our own limitations, troubled in mind, divided in heart. Encouraged to have limitless aspirations for material success, yet somehow profoundly uneasy fearing failure. Mary had hope; she found peace in the midst of anxiety, chose eternal visions over earthly ones, life over death.

We too need to have faith, we too need to risk all to allow God to work through us. The fact that we are present in a situation can then alter it profoundly because through us God is present too. Like Mary we need to pray Lord I believe in you, Lord I trust in you, Lord come and be present among us.