



Secondary Newsletter September 2020



Welcome to the beginning of a new school year. I hope that you were able to have a break and a rest in the summer. Thank you all for adapting your teaching and roles within school during the lockdown. We now face new challenges as the schools fully reopen and I pray you will all stay safe and well.

I would like to start this newsletter by addressing the students in your school. In an interview during the COVID 19 pandemic, Pope Francis offered advice about how to face the daily challenges that affected us all.

"We need to rediscover the concreteness of small things, the small acts of kindness shown to those who are close to us, family, friends. We need to realise that our treasure lies in small things."

There are so many students in secondary schools that you probably feel close to everyone. When Pope Francis said those words; we were with our families. To ensure you keep each other safe in your schools and colleges you need to embrace the words of Pope Francis. By making sure you wear face masks, follow social distancing, however hard it may be and follow the guidelines set by staff, your small acts of kindness will keep everyone around you safe and well. Good health is something we should all value and treasure.

The Season of Creation

The Season of Creation starts on 1st September and finishes on 4th October, the Feast of St Francis. There will be some ppts to support this on the website. The Stations of Creation is available to download on the Clifton Diocese website. I would like to set a challenge for Secondary schools to write their own Stations of Creation. This can be done in bubbles or classes with each year group focusing on different stations. You could follow the format of the Stations on the website or create your own. The stations can be found in the communion section of the website but fit in with the Season of Creation and Laudato Si.

<https://cliftondiocese.com/communion/>

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha is also the saint of the environment and ecology and was canonised by Pope Benedict on 21/10/2012. She is the first Native American to be recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church. We sometimes feel thwarted in our efforts to become closer to God. If we were less distracted, in better health, had less opposition and more solitude we could be nearer to him. Saint Kateri eventually found the support of a Christian community so her faith blossomed with prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Older children might be interested in her steadfast devotion to God which led to practises of self-mortification. I thought that might make an interesting debate, is it ever right to physically harm yourself?



Relationship and Sex Education

The new statutory Relationship, Sex and Health Education is compulsory from this month, September 2020. 'Schools should start teaching from that date if they meet the statutory requirements. If they are not ready, or are unable to meet the requirements, they should begin teaching by at least the start of the summer term 2021.' DFE 9th July 2020.

The **Catholic Education Service**, in partnership with **Ten Ten Resources**, have provided online training for teachers in Catholic secondary schools. The training is free and has been created in conjunction with the **Department of Education**. I know that many teaching staff in schools have completed the training during lockdown. I would advise all teaching staff in secondary schools to complete the training, so they are aware of the Catholic church's teaching. Relationship education isn't always something that can be taught in a lesson and questions could arise during tutor group times.

Please make sure that policies and resources that have been adopted have gone through the consultation process with parents and are signed off by your full governing body.

The God who speaks

2020 is the 10th anniversary of Verbum Domini - Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation on 'The Word of the Lord.' Scripture is at the very centre of the church and should be a part of our everyday lives. The bible shows us how to understand our world and live in harmony together. Due to Covid 19 some scripture-based events that were planned did not take place. There are 'Year of the Word' resources available for secondary education on 'The God who speaks' website <https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/the-god-who-speaks/education/> please let me know of any events you do.



Laudato Si



It is the special anniversary year of Laudato Si which will be celebrated until 24th May 2021. We would like to recognise this important encyclical in our schools and colleges. Pope Francis calls on us to consider how we use the planet's resources so we can transform our relationships and live in harmony with God, nature and one another. I am calling on you to do something special to

mark this anniversary. This could be creating a prayer space or garden, planning a special celebration with your parishes or becoming a livesimply award community with CAFOD. There are some ideas on the Caritas Scotland website for secondary schools which includes making your own stations of Laudato Si and animation. <https://www.sciaf.org.uk/resources/514-laudato-si-schools-resources>

CAFOD

CAFOD are inviting schools and families to support them in the Coronavirus Appeal at Harvest. The theme this year is 'How do I keep my child safe if we don't have water for handwashing?' Pope Francis reminds us that access to clean, fresh water is a basic human right. Harvest Fast Day is on 9th October. There is also a national CAFOD assembly on the you tube channel on Thursday 10th September at 10:00am. Resources are available on the website: <https://cafod.org.uk/education>

We Stand in Solidarity/Black History Month

After George Floyd was killed in America Bishop Declan, who is Lead Bishop for International Affairs, made a statement about racism in our society. He reminded us that we are all made in God's image and asked that we pray to God to overcome racism in all its forms. The whole statement can be read online <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/39726>

In response to Bishop Declan and the current issue I would encourage you all to think about the images and resources you use in schools. Do you use role models that represent every child? Are children inspired by the images you use?

October is designated as 'Black History Month' and so to support this there will be power points about saints of colour available under the resources section of the website. There are also lots of resources online including <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/black-history-month-primary-and-secondary-resources/zjwf8xs> for you to use.

Secondary Heads of RE Conference

This virtual event will take place on Tuesday 22nd September at 10am. It will be led by Philip Robinson, the national advisor for religious education. During the first session he will cover updates on the new Curriculum Directory and the new Section 48 Framework. He will also provide updates on GCSEs and A levels. I encourage all Heads of RE to attend.

GCSE Results

I would like to thank those secondary schools who have sent their results to the diocese. I will share an analysis of the results in the next newsletter. Thank you to all teachers for assessing the children during difficult circumstances this year.

Education Sunday

Education Sunday is on 13th September 2020. The theme for this year is 'A learning people in a time of change'. Many children learning from home, and staff, have had to adapt to a different way of teaching during the last few months. This encourages us to reflect on what we have learnt about ourselves and our relationship with God. There are resources available on www.cte.org.uk/EducationSunday2020

Education Mass

It is important that we celebrate the wonderful work the schools and colleges have done in the past year. The Education Mass on 10th November 2020 will be a virtual or recorded mass but it will give us a chance to reflect and spiritually prepare ourselves for the year ahead. I will notify you of the final plans in the next newsletter.

More Key Dates

- CCRS unit on The Church - Saturday 26th September and Monday 28th September
- Religious Education Link Governors - 3rd October 2020
- Aspiring Leaders course Day 1 - 16th November 2020
- Governor Induction Training - 19th November 2020
- Cross Phase Modular Course Day 1 - 3rd February 2021
- Sunday 18th October 2020 - World Mission Sunday
- 22nd November is National Youth Sunday, there will be resources available on the Clifton Diocese website

God our Father,
open the horizons of our minds and hearts
so that we can see what hope your call holds for us.
Pour out the overflowing gifts of your Spirit
so that we, your Church,
may become a people of hope for our world.
We ask you this through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.
Our Lady, Woman of Hope,
pray for us.
St Peter, Rock of Hope,
pray for us.
St Paul, Apostle of Hope,
pray for us.



Louise White
Diocesan RE Lead