

Centred on Christ

OCTOBER 2024



Dear Colleague,

Bishop John is extremely grateful to all schools for the wonderful support which you gave in welcoming the **Papal Nuncio** to the diocese – especially given the very short notice you received on your return after the summer holidays. The Nuncio was extremely impressed with his visits to the two schools and his discussions with pupils and staff. He welcomed the fact that our chaplains were priests whereas in other parts of the United Kingdom chaplains are often lay people. He stressed that the role of priest chaplains was essential. In response to his concerns about families not praying together and not going to Sunday Mass, which he had expressed at his meeting with Diocesan departments on the first evening of his visit, the Diocese and the Head Teachers whom he met were able to share the Travelling Crib and Travelling Rosary initiatives, the joint planning undertaken by parishes and clusters and our work on strengthening Home-School-Parish partnerships. He was very complimentary about the work of our Catholic schools. The Nuncio and the Diocese are most appreciative of the dedication of Head Teachers and staff in promoting the Catholic Mission of their schools.

Looking back to the first few weeks of this session, this commitment was clearly evident in your support for the Welcome to the New Session Masses, the Confirmandi Masses, the Vocations Mass and the S6 Vocations Conference with pupils from all High Schools. We realise that in terms of staff release and the cost of buses that this was a significant commitment.

The Diocesan Working Group continues to plan support for schools on **Equalities and Inclusion**. In addition to the resources which were uploaded onto TEAMS at the start of the session (Education Resources for Schools/Equalities and Inclusion), we will offer CLPL in each local authority for Head Teachers and key staff. The training will take place in November and February – please see the CLPL Calendar.

Thank you to the Parent Councils who were represented at the meeting of the **Diocesan Parent Forum**. Members were appreciative of the presentation on the continuing revision of the S1-S3 Religious Education Course and contributed their views on the Diocesan Working Group's support for schools on Equalities and Inclusion. The next meeting will take place on 24 March 2025.

We look forward to the first meeting of **chaplains** this session on **Thursday 7 November (1.30-3pm)** in the Diocesan Offices. Please let us know of any topics you would wish to discuss.

Finally, **the Jubilee Year 2025** will begin on Christmas Eve when Pope Francis opens the Holy Door in St Peter's. Its theme will be *'Pilgrims of Hope'*. A Jubilee Year is a time to come back into right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of Creation. You will recall that a Staff Prayer Service on the theme of *'Rejoice in Hope'* was included in the August 2024 edition. We will share the Diocesan programme of events in due course but we plan to include established events (such as the Confirmandi Masses) but focus them as pilgrimages on the theme of Hope.

Thank you for all your support.

Neil Roarty

Neil Roarty
Director of Schools



*Our Lady of Paisley;
pray for us*

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Advent Prayer Service for Staff

Canon Tom Boyle

(The Service could be conducted around the Advent Wreath in the School Oratory or another suitable place.)

Opening Hymn

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Invitation to Pray

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Reader 1: *Advent is a time of preparation when we repent and wait in hope for the coming of Christ. It is also a time of prayerful waiting for the growth of Christ in our lives.*

Leader: We are called together as members of one family in the Lord. With this in mind, we make our prayer.

Psalm

Reader 2: *Psalm 80 refers to the years of trial during which God seems to have forgotten the people of Israel, but he brings them and us back and converts us. He does not abandon his people.*

Leader: Lord bring us back and convert us. Let your face shine on us.

All: Restore us, O God of hosts; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Leader: O Lord of hosts, how long will your anger burn against the prayers of your people?

All: Restore us, O God of hosts; make your face to shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Leader: You had a vine you brought out of Egypt.
You drove nations out, to plant it in their land.

All: Turn again, O Lord of hosts, look down from heave and see;
care for this vine, and protect the stock your hand has planted.

Leader: Then we will never turn away from you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.

All: Restore us, O Lord, God of hosts;
make your face to shine upon us, that we may be saved.

Advent Prayer Service for Staff

(Continued from page 2)

Reading

Reader 3: *A reading from the prophet Isaiah*

Is 2:3-4

In the days to come the mountain of the Temple of the Lord shall tower above the mountains and be lifted higher than the hills. All the nations will stream to it, peoples without number will come to it; and they will say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the Temple of the God of Jacob that he may teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths; since the Law will go out from Zion, and the oracle of the Lord from Jerusalem'.

He will wield authority over the nations and adjudicate between many peoples; these will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles. Nation will not lift sword against nation, there will be no more training for war.

All: Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord

(The Chaplain, if he is the leader, could reflect briefly on hope and fulfilment. After his words or in his absence a period of silent prayer should be observed to allow everyone to reflect on their hopes and the fulfilment of these hopes by the Lord)

Intercessions

Leader: O Wisdom, breath of the Most High!
You reign over all creation. Come and teach us.

All: Lord Jesus, come and save us.

Leader: O Lord, head of the house of Israel.
You appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Mount Sinai.

All: Lord Jesus, come and ransom us.

Leader: O Rod of Jesse,
You who stand as a sign to all the nations and before whom kings are silent, come without delay.

All: Lord Jesus, come and save us.

Leader: O key of David,
what you open no one can shut, come open our prison doors and set us free.

All: Lord Jesus, come and ransom us.

Leader: O Radiant Dawn and Source of All Eternal Light,
come and give light to those who live in darkness.

All: Lord Jesus, come and help us see.

Leader: O come, Desire and King of Nations, come and give us peace.

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon.

Advent Prayer Service for Staff

(Continued from page 3)

Advent Prayer

(Said together)

God of hope and promise, as we spend this Advent season in anticipation and hope of your arrival, we ask that your soothing presence be with us. Too often the expectations of our culture and our family obligations make us feel anxious. Help us to centre on our journey towards Bethlehem. Give us calm moments in which to contemplate the purpose of this time of waiting. May your presence be part of all our preparations and planning. Give us ears to hear the alleluias of the angels. Lead us toward the manger. Guide us with your star to a place of joy and repose. Amen.

Closing

Leader: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord
All: Almighty Ruler of the world.
Leader: He was, he is, and he will come.
All: Yes, he is near.
Leader: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to life everlasting.
All: Amen.
Leader: Let us go in the peace and joy of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.



Communities of Hope – or simply Schools of Ambition?

At a time when the mental health of children and young people is a significant concern for schools and families, it is vital that we nurture the virtue of hope in them. It is appropriate that the theme of the Jubilee Year of 2025 is *‘Pilgrims of Hope’*.

What is hope? Is it simply wishful thinking: for example, I hope the weather is good tomorrow or I hope my team wins the Cup. Is it ‘fuzzy’ compared to ambition and the setting of goals, important as these are?

For Christians, hope is a theological virtue along with faith and love (St Paul: 1 Corinthians 13:13).

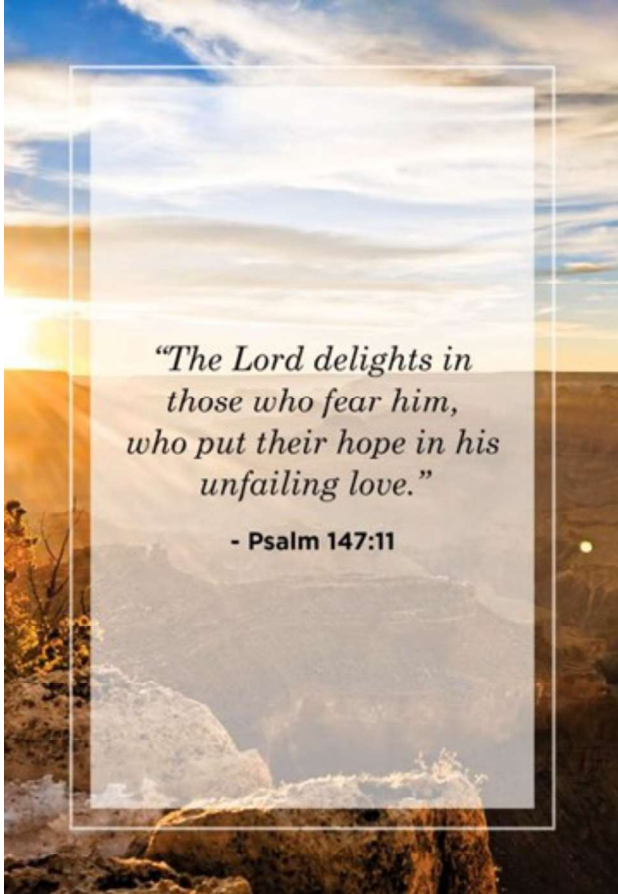
“The human virtues are rooted in the theological virtues, which adapt man's faculties for participation in the divine nature: for the theological virtues relate directly to God. They dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1812)

“Hope is the power by which we firmly and constantly long for what we were placed on earth to do: to praise God and to serve Him; and for our true happiness, which is finding our fulfilment in God; and for our final home: in God.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1817-1821, 1843)

“Hope is trusting in what God has promised, in the prophets, but especially in Jesus Christ, even though we do not yet see it. God's Holy Spirit is given to us so that we can patiently hope for the Truth.” (YOUCAT, 308, p176).

Points for Reflection	HGIOS
How far does the virtue of hope permeate the four contexts for learning?	2.2
How far do our R.E. programmes nurture hope in children and young people?	2.2
To what extent does their experience of prayer and liturgy, Mass and the Sacraments, enable children and young people to grow in hope?	2.2
How does the ethos of our school nurture hope in children and young people?	3.1
How does the ethos in my classroom nurture hope in children and young people?	3.1
How far does our approach to Health and Wellbeing nurture hope?	3.1
How far do our transition programmes foster hope in children and young people?	2.6
How far do our Equalities and Inclusion policies and protocols enable children and young people to grow in hope?	3.1
How far does our approach to assessment and reporting foster hope?	2.3
How does my leadership encourage staff and pupils to be hope-filled?	1.2, 1.3, 1.4
How do our pastoral care policies and approaches foster hope?	2.4
How does our partnership with agencies nurture hope?	2.7
How do our safeguarding and child protection procedures foster hope?	2.1
How far do our anti-bullying policies enable children and young people to grow in hope?	3.1
How far does our partnership with parents/carers nurture hope in families?	2.5

Communities of Hope – or simply Schools of Ambition?



Prayer for Hope

Heavenly father, I am your humble servant,
I come before you today in need of hope.
There are times when I feel helpless,
There are times when I feel weak.
I pray for hope.
I need hope for a better future.
I need hope for a better life.
I need hope for love and kindness.
Some say that the sky is at its
darkest just before the light.
I pray that this is true, for all seems dark.
I need your light, Lord, in every way.
I pray to be filled with your light from
head to toe. To bask in your glory.
To know that all is right in the world,
as you have planned, and as you want
it to be.
Help me to walk in your light, and live
my life in faith and glory.
In your name I pray, Amen. (catholic.org/prayers)

Act of Hope

With confidence let us pray the Act of Hope:
O my God, relying on Your almighty power
and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to
obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Your
grace, and life everlasting through the merits
of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.
Amen.

hope

Launch of the Travelling Rosary

St Fillan's Primary School - Claire Mackenzie



Faith Respect Responsibility Trust Teamwork Success

Staff, pupils and families were so enthused by the success of the 'Travelling Crib' initiative in our school, that we wanted to launch the 'Travelling Rosary' with the same degree of importance and high profile. Staff met to discuss what this would look like and the idea of a 'Prayer Breakfast' was born.

The weekly Rosary group met with the Head Teacher at the start of May and they were involved in the planning of the breakfast. The theme of 'Peace' was chosen as this linked in with the focus of the SCIAF Rosary group. Each class created a piece of artwork or poetry depicting an aspect of peace. Themes included: Peace in our World, Peace in our Homes, Peace in our School and Peace in our Hearts. This creative work was displayed and showcased the children's interpretation of the theme and the importance they placed on this virtue. The children embraced a shared understanding around respecting other people and their differences. As 'respect' is one of our core values, the children's exploration of the theme of peace helped to bring this value alive.

Pupil voice and participation is greatly valued in our school and so the Rosary group played a key role in the planning and preparation of the event. The children in the Rosary group gathered and shared ideas around where the breakfast would be held, the food we would share, the décor, who we would ask to help, who we would invite and how we would advertise the event. They also helped plan a programme for the event and tried to incorporate some familiar aspects of the Rosary group into the breakfast. The children also demonstrated great kindness and thoughtfulness towards their peers with food allergies by researching and offering alternative food choices. Some of the children asked our SFO (Senior Facilities Operative) John to support the children with the drinks. He happily obliged and helped the children to tidy up at the end.



*Be Brave Unleash Creativity Demonstrate Excellence Show/Radiate Enthusiasm
'In Learning, we are growing and succeeding Together.'*

Launch of the Travelling Rosary - St Fillan's Primary School



Faith Respect Responsibility Trust Teamwork Success

(Continued from page 7)

The breakfast was a huge success with over forty children in attendance. The breakfast was opened by the Head Teacher who showed the children the statue of Our Lady and the various other elements of the Travelling Rosary which were on display at the breakfast table. A box was passed around the table and the children each placed a coloured or patterned feather of their choice into the special box. This was a deliberate act to signify the children's presence with Jesus. Quiet, reflective music was played in the background and the children brought their own Rosary Beads or borrowed a set from the 'Sharing is Caring' box where parishioners in the past have donated rosaries for the children to use. Each child was given the opportunity to share a prayer of peace aloud if they wished to do so or to simply place their petition in the prayer box next to Our Lady's statue. This was followed by the recital of the Rosary for the intentions in the room and a chorus of 'Peace, Perfect Peace' which is a hymn that the children were very familiar with. The children then enjoyed their breakfast together of cereal, pastries, fruit and hot drinks whilst chatting about their evening and the day ahead.

Some of the children were keen to share the highlights of the 'Peaceful Prayer Breakfast' at Assembly and the children were keen to repeat the experience. Feedback from the children was positive with all the participants commenting that they would like to repeat the experience in the future. We also noticed an increase in the number of children who attended the Rosary Group in the weeks following this event.

Moving forward, we would like to invite our Parish Chaplain to come along and take part by leading the 'Grace' and also to encourage even more children and staff to be in attendance.

"I loved the breakfast as it was a chance to have food with my friends. I have never done this before." (Primary 5 child)

"It was a good chance to come into school early and to pray together. There are a lot of things happening in the world which are not peaceful." (Primary 7 child)



Be Brave Unleash Creativity Demonstrate Excellence Show/Radiate Enthusiasm
'In Learning, we are growing and succeeding Together.'

St Benedict's High School

Staff Retreat



Head Teacher – Alan Taylor

As headteacher, I was eager to organise a staff retreat aimed at strengthening our Catholic ethos and deepening the spiritual foundation of our school community. In Catholic education, fostering a shared understanding of our faith and values is essential for shaping both the personal and professional lives of educators. A retreat offers the perfect setting for staff to reflect on the mission of Catholic education, renew their commitment to serve as faith leaders, and grow together in a spirit of unity. By taking time away from the usual routine, this retreat sought to cultivate a deeper sense of purpose, allowing staff to reconnect with the core principles that guide our teaching and interactions with pupils.

Programme	
9:15	Welcome from Mr Taylor
9:20	Presentation by Fr Michael
10:00	Mass at St Aidan's Church
10:30	Tea & Cakes
11:00	"Building a Catholic School"
12:30	Community Lunch
13:30	Faith Walk
14:45	Prayer Service
15:00	Close

School Chaplain – Canon Michael McMahon

We felt an In-Service day/Retreat would be beneficial in bringing the Staff together with a clear sense of purpose and vision, which honoured our own distinctive contribution to Education in Scotland, and the willingness of the Staff to exercise their Vocation to Teach.

The day began with a Prayer, asking the Intercession of St. Benedict, our Patron, for our work and prayer that day - Ora et Labora.

I was then invited to give a focus for the day ahead with a brief overview of our shared task, a few slides illustrate this, speaking of the Values which underpin our activities and their history, their actualisation in the life of the school and ways in which we can better cooperate for the good of the Pupils.

We then joined the Parish Community at St. Aidan's – one of our cluster Parishes - for morning Mass. Later I ended the day with a Prayer and Blessing.

The staff were very animated through the day, we had great fun with the shared activities and the feedback was extremely positive from all present!

Principal Teacher of Religious Education – Claire Howell

In planning our staff development day, it was important that we had it clear in our minds what we were trying to achieve. We decided that we had three goals:

- To explore the distinctive nature of the Catholic school.
- To explore our school's vision, values and aims.
- For staff to enjoy a day together as a Christocentric community.



Catholic Schools
United in Faith and Community

A Catholic School

- Not a school for Catholics!
 - This would be a failure (does Not happen)
 - Not BATTERY HENS / PRODUCTION LINE
- Diverse Roll of Pupils
- Diverse STAFF
- History
 - 1918 and all that ...
- An Education Community based on Catholic Values

Solidarity and Mutuality

- We develop and grow together
 -or not!
- As a staff and therefore as a school
 - We personify the values
- Pupils will reflect what they see
 - Learned behaviour
 - In home and in school



St Benedict's High School Staff Retreat

(Continued from page 9)

Inspired by 'Developing in Faith', we decided upon the theme, 'Developing as a Community of Faith and Learning', as we felt that perfectly encapsulated our rationale for the day. I delivered a presentation on the character of the Catholic school, before exploring how my experience of Catholic education, both as a pupil and as a teacher, has helped me to feel God's love in the world. I then facilitated staff discussions on:

- How effectively do our vision, values and aims highlight the centrality of the development of the whole person?
- How do we show that we value every child and young person within our school?
- How well are staff encouraged to reflect on their own practice in supporting and promoting the aims, mission, values and ethos of the school?

My colleague, Gabriella Macdonald, then led an activity on 'Building Your Own Catholic School', where members of staff were in groups, given a variety of materials like cardboard boxes and tubes, and tasked with building their own Catholic school. Groups then presented their schools, explaining their vision, values and aims, whilst demonstrating impressive architectural and engineering skills! This was highly successful, with groups showing a great sense of fun, and a competitive attitude!



Depute Head Teacher – Bernadette McFadden

A significant, and most important, part of my DHT remit is to "Co-ordinate all Aspects of the Spiritual Life of the School". In this regard I co-ordinated the programme for the day and facilitated the afternoon session. It was an important decision for us to go "off campus" to one of our cluster parishes, immediately setting the tone that this would be an in-service day like no other.

We enjoyed a bring-a-dish community lunch, with staff sampling all sorts of haute cuisine prepared by their colleagues. This was followed by a Faith Walk where groups of staff went for a walk in the surrounding countryside armed with a bank of reflective questions to generate discussion about faith experience and beliefs. Thankfully the Scottish weather was kind to us! Overall, the day was a great success, bonding us as a staff and celebrating our catholicity.

St Benedict's Staff Feedback - Some quotes in response to, "What was the highlight of your day?"

"The walk - a lovely opportunity to chat to staff."

"Socialising and Claire's moving speech."

"Working closely with colleagues from across the school."

"Staff lunch."

"Building our ideal school, fun and active."

"All of it!"

"Kindness"

"Feeling part of the school."

"Experiencing a real sense of community with my colleagues."

"An opportunity to walk and reflect with staff. Fresh air and good chat!"

"Sitting with colleagues who I haven't spoken to for ages - the whole day was excellent though!"

Missio and the Diocese of Paisley



Gerard Gough, Missio Scotland: gerard@missioscotland.com

Missio Scotland is honoured to be the Bishops of Scotland's designated charity for Catholic primary schools. It is a role that we are keen to grow both in terms of schools' fundraising for the Missionary Children branch of Missio Scotland, but also in terms of engagement with us.

It is our hope that each Catholic primary school will fundraise for Missio Scotland, irrespective of the amount. Our **Missio Scotland Five Star Schools initiative** will play a major role in that going forward. In **2023-24, St Ninian's Primary became the first Missio Scotland Five Star School in the Diocese.**

I thought it might be useful to provide the Diocese with some facts related to schools' fundraising and engagement over the past two years.

Engagement

- In 2023-24, I visited 59 Catholic primary schools across Scotland, up from 40 in 2022-23. This marks an overall 47.5% increase in school visits.
- **The Diocese of Paisley accounted for 10 of the visits in 2023-24. This amounts to 16.9% of the total number of primary school visits. This was 8 more (2) than in 2022-23 - a 400% increase in visits.**

Fundraising

- In 2023-24, 86 out of 312 Scottish Catholic primary schools (27.6%) raised £35,500.81 for Missionary Children, as opposed to 55 (17.6%) having raised £26,607.43 in 2022-23. That marks an 56.8% increase in the number of primary schools fundraising and also a 33.4% rise in fundraising income (£8893.38).
- **The Diocese of Paisley had 32 primary schools (97%) raise £8783.87 in 2023-24 for Missionary Children as opposed to 12 (36.4%) primary schools having raised £3482.24 in 2022-23. That marks a 166.7% increase in the number of primary schools fundraising and a 152.2% increase in income.**

Thank you for everything which everyone in the Diocese of Paisley does for Missio Scotland.

Advent

Advent resources can be found here: [Missio Scotland Resources](#)

Your school can fly the flag for Missio Scotland!

Firstly, become a Five Star Missio Scotland School



Elect Missio Scotland Champions



Fundraise for Missio Scotland



Take part in the Christmas Art Contest



Pray the Mission Rosary



Perform a Missionary Saints Play



And you will receive your own Missy Moo Mascot!

- Then if you engage with Missio Scotland in any way (pray the Rosary, use our resources, hold an assembly), share that with us and fundraise in the years that follow you will receive...



Year 2: Receive a Bronze Flag



Year 3: Receive a Silver Flag



Year 4: Receive a Gold Flag



Year 5: Receive a special plaque



Taking part in our **Christmas Artwork Contest** (entry forms will be available soon from the same link) will earn schools one of their Five Stars. A video explaining the contest can be found here:

[Missio Scotland Christmas Artwork Competition](#)

Our **Caring Christmas Baubles** fundraiser encourages schools to fill in five coloured Christmas baubles based on the colours of the Mission Rosary and give a £50 per set Christmas gift to the missions.

SCIAF Resources



Elaine McGinlay: emcginlay@sciaf.org.uk

Real Gifts 2024

Schools are always incredibly generous in their support of our Real Gifts campaign and throughout the year. Thank you for your deep and unwavering commitment to SCIAF and to building a just world.

This Advent, SCIAF Real Gifts can help families and communities be more resilient to changing climates, extreme weather, and help them to build brighter futures.

Schools can choose to fundraise for one of our *Laudato Si'* themed Real Gifts. If you're a *Laudato Si'* School these gifts are the perfect way to put your learning into action.

Real Gift resources for schools including activities and assemblies are available at sciaf.org.uk/resources



NEW Digital Resource for Teachers – Tackling Climate Anxiety in the Catholic Classroom

We've teamed up with Scotdec and Justice & Peace Scotland to create a comprehensive new resource in response to fears and challenges voiced by teachers.

This new resource helps teachers think about the impact the climate crisis has on the health and wellbeing of pupils and explores how we can use Catholic Social Teaching – and *Laudato Si'* in particular – to navigate and respond to climate anxiety.

To access the resource visit sciaf.org.uk/tacklingclimateanxiety



Mary's Meals Resources

mary's
meals

George Morehead Email:
george.morehead@marysmeals.org

a simple solution
to world hunger

Dear Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Paisley,

As we enter the Season of Advent, we'd like to share some exciting opportunities with you, that will engage your pupils in meaningful activities whilst also enriching their understanding of charity and compassion.

This Advent, why not try the **Advent Jar** activity? Each day, encourage a student to write down something they're thankful for, place it in a jar, and add a few pennies. At the end of term, reflect on these blessings while raising funds for those in need.



We encourage you to explore our Nativity resources to share the Christmas story with your students in a meaningful way. These materials offer a fantastic opportunity to connect faith and action, helping students engage with the true spirit of the season. You can find them at the bottom of the page using this link: [Children's resources | Mary's Meals UK](#).

Consider participating in our Sponsor a School programme, a fantastic way to engage pupils by fundraising to provide meals for an entire school.

You will receive regular reports, allowing students to see the impact of their efforts and connect with the children they are helping.

[Sponsor A School | Mary's Meals UK \(marysmeals.org.uk\)](#)

We're excited to offer an opportunity to book a brilliant speaker with an inspiring and engaging story! Geraldine, who walked all the way from Glasgow to Rome to support Mary's Meals, can share her incredible journey filled with heartfelt moments and humour. This engaging experience will not only inspire your students but also bring a smile to their faces as they learn about the importance of charity and compassion.

Please email me if you'd like to book Geraldine or would like more information about her visiting your school!



Themes for Prayer and Assemblies



Diocese of Paisley

Education Department

November

Prayer for All Saints (1 November)

Dear God, thank you for the example of the Saints. I desire to join in their company, worshiping you forever in Heaven. Please help me follow their footsteps, and yours, Jesus Christ. Please help me to conform myself to Your image, seeking Your will in all things, as the Saints did. Please help me to devote myself, and all that I do, to Your glory, and to the service of my neighbours. Amen.

<https://www.praymorenowas.com/prayer-saints-day>

The Holy Souls

November is the month of the Holy Souls. During this month we pray especially for our departed friends and loved ones who are making their journey towards the eternal light of God. Please include appropriate prayers for the Holy Souls each day.

Prayer for All the Faithful Departed

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Prayer for Eternal Rest

*Into your hands, O Lord,
we humbly entrust our brothers and sisters.
In this life you embraced them with your tender love;
deliver them now from every evil
and give them eternal rest.
The old order has passed away:
welcome them into paradise,
where there will be no sorrow, no weeping or pain,
but the fullness of peace and joy
with your Son and the Holy Spirit
forever and ever.
Amen.*

De Profundis (Psalm 129)

*Out of the depths I have cried unto Thee, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.*

Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou, O Lord, shall mark our iniquities: O Lord, who can abide it?

For with Thee there is mercy: and by reason of Thy law I have waited on Thee, O Lord.

My soul hath waited on His word: my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch even unto night: let Israel hope in the Lord.

For with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him is plentiful redemption.

And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Eternal rest give to them, O Lord.

And let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace.

Amen.

(Continued from page 14)

November Feast Days and Memorials

St Margaret (16 November)

- [A Prayer to St. Margaret of Scotland, Patroness of Mothers & Learning - Totus Tuus Family & Catholic Homeschool](#)
- [PRAYER TO ST MARGARET OF SCOTLAND | Prayers4reparation's Blog \(wordpress.com\)](#)

Christ the King (20 November)

- [Prayer to Christ the King - My Catholic Life!](#)

St Andrew (30 November)

- [St Andrew Prayer | DAILY PRAYERS \(daily-prayers.org\)](#)

Persecuted Christians – #Red Wednesday, 20 November

Every year, ACN's **#RedWednesday** Campaign highlights the plight of Christians across the world who suffer religious persecution. Christians in many countries routinely face detention, violence and abuse for their faith. Increasingly in some countries, Christians are facing legal and structural oppression, such as young people being denied access to Higher Education. Priests have been abducted.

This year **#RedWednesday** will take place on Wednesday 20 November. We invite our schools communities to support the **#RedWednesday** Campaign and stand in solidarity with persecuted Christians. Check out our **#RedWednesday** Schools Resources, which include assemblies, prayer materials and lots more to support your fundraising and awareness raising in your school community. Our resources are full of information and personal stories to help your students understand the issue of religious persecution and the **#RedWednesday** message > [Aid to the Church in Need | Resources \(acnuk.org\)](#).

Could your school community become a **#RedWednesday** Fundraising Hero? Download our **#RedWednesday** Fundraising Pack > [Aid to the Church in Need | #RedWednesday Fundraising \(acnuk.org\)](#).

Perhaps our young people could reflect on how easy it is to practise their faith in Scotland and make the effort to attend Mass every Sunday – a privilege denied to millions of their fellow Catholics.

Open Doors UK produces an annual World Watch List which ranks the countries where Christians face the most persecution: [Serving Persecuted Christians Worldwide - Persecution Trends - Open Doors UK & Ireland](#)

More than 365 million Christians worldwide face persecution and discrimination for their faith – that's a staggering one in seven believers.

Last year, **4,998 Christians were killed for their faith**. Around 90 per cent of these were in Nigeria (just over 4,000), where Christian communities continue to be attacked by armed bandits and Islamic militants. The country with the next highest number of deaths is DRC, with 261.

Persecution in Pakistan

In October 2023, we focussed on persecution in Nigeria. This year, we will shine a light on Pakistan.

The devastating attack on the Christian community in Jaranwala in August 2023 was a sobering reminder of the hostile environment facing many believers in Pakistan. The attack on more than 20 churches and almost 100 homes was in response to two believers being accused of desecrating the Quran.

(Continued from page 15)

Pakistan's blasphemy laws are often used to target minority groups, but Christians are disproportionately affected – in fact, roughly a quarter of all blasphemy accusations target Christians.

Believers are targeted in other ways, too – both overtly and subtly. The number of Christian (and other religious minority) girls and women abducted, abused and forcefully converted to Islam is growing. For victims who return home, the shame of abduction and rape places a huge shadow over their lives within Pakistan's honour-based culture. They live under the fear and real threat of being followed and abducted again. The persecutors are seldom held to account – indeed, often the courts support forcible conversion. If a girl or woman converts from Islam, her own family might decide to murder her as a so-called 'honour killing'.

All Christians suffer from institutionalised discrimination, and occupations that are deemed low, dirty and degrading – such as working as a sewer cleaner or on a brick kiln – are reserved for Christians by the authorities. Many are referred to as 'chura', a derogatory term meaning 'filthy'.

Historical churches have relative freedom for worship and other activities. However, they are heavily monitored and have been targeted for bomb attacks. Most of the country's Christians live in Punjab Province, and so this is where most incidents of persecution are recorded.

December

Advent

Advent is the time of prayer and reflection in anticipation of the Second Coming and of Christmas. This year, the First Sunday of Advent falls on 1 December. The Fourth Sunday traditionally focuses on Mary. Information is available on a number of websites, including:

[The Liturgical Season of Advent \(catholiceducation.org\)](http://catholiceducation.org)

[What is Advent? - LifeTeen.com for Catholic Youth](http://LifeTeen.com)

[Following Mary's Advent Footsteps \(catholiceducation.org\).](http://catholiceducation.org)

Primary Advent Day—Sunday 1 December (2-5pm)

Please share information about the Primary Advent Day with pupils and their families. It will take place in St Mary's, Paisley. **Please encourage pupils to come along.**

Diocesan Resource

Father John Morrison, Vicar Episcopal for Youth and Vocations, has provided an Advent Assembly (TEAMS/ Education Resources for Schools/Prayers and Assemblies).

The Travelling Crib (P2)

We hope that once again the Travelling Crib will have a strong impact on children and their families. (CoC, October 2022, pp 8-9)

Aid to the Church in Need

ACN has produced Advent prayers and readings suitable for both primary and secondary schools. We encourage you to remember suffering Christians around the world and keep them in your prayers during this time. The Advent Candle Activity can be used to countdown to Christmas, encouraging students to record their prayers and preparations during Advent: [Aid to the Church in Need | Advent Prayers and Readings \(acnuk.org\)](http://acnuk.org)
ACN will add to their Advent Resources: [Aid to the Church in Need | Resources \(acnuk.org\)](http://acnuk.org)



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First Fridays for Life

Bishop John invites us to fast and pray to protect the unborn child and for the flourishing of the Pro-Life movement so that our society will build an authentic culture of life. Join your priests throughout the diocese on the First Friday of each month as all of us pray for life. Holy Mass will be celebrated at 7pm; Adoration and Confession from 6pm.

Dates for forthcoming First Fridays for Life Novena Masses:

1st November, St. Mirin's Cathedral, with Bishop John	7th March, St John the Evangelist
6th December, St. Aidan's Johnstone	4th April, St Charles Borromeo, Paisley
3rd January, St. Mary's Greenock.	2nd May, St. Colm's, Kilmacolm
7th February, St Joseph's Clarkston	6th June, Little Sisters of the Poor, Greenock

Diocese of Paisley - Education and Youth Calendar: 2024-25



Month	Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Target Group
OCT				Mission Month (See Resources in the August edition of Centred on Christ.)	School-based	P1-S6
OCT	27	Sun	2-5pm	Family Day with Mary	St John's Church, Barrhead	
NOV	1	Fri		All Saints Day	School-based	P1-S6
NOV	7	Thu	1.30-3.00pm	Chaplains' Meeting	Diocesan Offices	
NOV	16-30			Catholic Education 'Week' 2024-26 'Pilgrims of Hope' Preparation for Jubilee Year	Schools and parishes (Staff Prayer Service in the August edition of Centred on Christ)	All schools
NOV	20	Wed		Red Wednesday (ACN)	School-based events	All schools
NOV	21	Thu	10am-2.30pm	World Youth Day 2024 Conference	St Mirin's Cathedral	S3
DEC	1	Sun		First Sunday in Advent – The Travelling Crib Begins		
DEC				Advent Reflection Service for Staff	See pp2-4	
DEC	1	Sun	2-5pm	Primary School Day – Advent	St Mary's Church, Paisley	P4-P7
JAN	19	Sun	2-5pm	Primary School Day	St Mary's Church, Paisley	P4-P7
MAR	5	Wed		Ash Wednesday	School-based	All schools
MAR	9	Sun	2-5pm	Primary School Day – Lent	St Mary's Church, Paisley	P4-P7
MAR	13	Thu	1.30-3.30pm	Joint Meeting of Clergy and HTs: Strengthening Home-School-Parish Partnerships	Cathedral Halls tbc	HTs and Clergy
MAR	24	Mon	7pm	Diocesan Parent Forum	Diocesan Offices	PC Chairs and Church Representatives
APR	23	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	Craigmarloch, St Francis, St John's, St Michael's and St Colm's
APR	24	Thu	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Cadoc's & St Clare's
APR	25-27			Holy Year: Jubilee of Teenagers	School-based	S1-S6
APR	29	Tue		33 Day Diocesan Consecration to Jesus through Mary begins (ends on Monday 2 June)	School-based	P7 pupils
APR	30	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Charles', St Peter's and St Paul's

Diocese of Paisley - Education and Youth Calendar: 2024-25						 Diocese of Paisley Education Department
Month	Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Target Group
MAY	1-31			ACN Rosary for Peace (Maisie Milk)	School-based	P1-P7
MAY	1	Thu	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Thomas', St Mark's and St John's
MAY	7	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Catherine's, St Fergus, St James', St John Ogilvie and St Mary's
MAY	8	Thu	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Anne's, St James' and St John Bosco
MAY	14	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	OLM and St Joseph's
MAY	15	Thu	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	OLOP, St Anthony's, St David's, St Fillan's and St Margaret's
MAY	20	Tue	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	All Saints, St Mary's and St Patrick's
MAY	21	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Andrew's, St Joseph's, St Ninian's, St Joseph's and St Patrick's Parish
MAY	24-25			Holy Year: Jubilee of Children	School-based	P1-P7
MAY	29	Thu		Ascension Day	School-based	P1-S6
JUN	tbc			Mass for Pupils from ASN Schools		
JUN	5	Thu	2pm	National Caritas Awards Ceremony	Clyde Auditorium	Caritas Students
JUN	8	Sun	2-5pm	Primary School Day – Pentecost	St Mary's Church, Paisley	P4-P7
JUN	9-13			Generation Hope – Paisley Diocese	Cairn Brae, Perthshire	S1-S3
JUN	10	Tue	9.45-3pm	Teaching in Catholic Schools	Cathedral Halls	S6
JUN	11	Wed	4.30pm	Thanksgiving Mass	St Mirin's Cathedral	All staff – particularly NQTs
25 JUNE – 4 JULY				Youth to Lourdes		S3-S6

CLPL (October-December 2024)

Date	Time	Course		Venue
21.10.24	16:00 - 17:30	God's Loving Plan Opportunity for class teachers to explore implementing God's Loving Plan in the classroom.	East Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire Primary Class Teachers	Diocesan Offices Incle Street Paisley PA1 1HR
23.10.24	16:00 - 17:30	Sacrament of Confirmation – Session 1 To introduce diocesan guidelines for celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation - focusing on the Rite of Enrolment.	Teachers NEW to P7 and other interested staff	Diocesan Offices
24.10.24	14:00 - 16:00	Diocesan CHAS Meeting	Business Meeting	Diocesan Offices
24.10.24	16:00 - 17:30	Sacrament of Confirmation – Session 1 As above.	Teachers NEW to P7 and other interested staff	All Saints P.S. Blairmore Road Greenock PA15 3JS
30.10.24	10:00 - 14:30	S2 and S3 R.E. Course	Principal Teachers of R.E.	Diocesan Offices
30.10.24	16:00 - 17:30	Leadership in Catholic Schools - Session 1: What is Leadership? (Subsequent sessions: 20.11.24; 29.1.25, xx.2.25 and 18.6.25)	Teachers who wish to develop their leadership skills and/or to develop the leadership capacity in others. Teachers who have indicated a desire to move to the next step in their career.	Diocesan Offices
6.11.24	16:00 - 17:30	Sacrament of Reconciliation To support teachers new to P.4 or interested staff in preparing children for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.	Teachers NEW to P4 and any interested staff	Diocesan Offices
13.11.24	16:00 - 17:30	Sacrament of Reconciliation As above.	Teachers NEW to P4 and any interested staff	All Saints P.S.
20.11.24	16:00 - 17:30	Leadership in Catholic Schools - Session 2 - What is Distinctive about Leadership in Catholic Schools?	See 30.10.24	Diocesan Offices
27.11.24	15:45 - 17:45	Equalities and Inclusion - Church teaching i. Biblical anthropology: principles ii. Equality, dignity, solidarity in the tradition of the Church iii. Recent magisterial statements iv. Saints who witness to human dignity - Implications of the Equality Act for Catholic schools - Practical scenarios	HTs and Key Staff (Inverclyde) (East Renfrewshire – 5.2.25 and Renfrewshire 12.2.25)	Notre Dame High tbc
Dec 2024		Advent Reflection Service	Teaching and Support Staff	October edition of <i>Centred on Christ</i>