



Chaplaincy Newsletter January 2006

*When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone
When the kings and princes are home
When the shepherds are back with their flocks
The work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost
To heal the broken
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoner
To rebuild the nations
To bring peace among people
To make music in the heart.*

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Hopefully all of you managed to get a break over the Christmas holidays. As the words of the poem remind us the work of Christmas is only just begun. As chaplains more than most in schools you do find the lost and heal the broken and hopefully make music in the hearts of those you encounter. Many thanks for all you continue to give.

The words of Howard Thurman appear on one of Pax Christi's Christmas cards. It is appropriate that the year begins by celebrating peace. **Peace Sunday** this year is celebrated on January 15th 2006, the theme is; "In Truth is Peace". Resources for this day can be found at www.paxchristi.org.uk If you can please try to support the work of Pax Christi, perhaps by holding a special assembly. Prayer cards from Pax Christi are available to order at approximately £2-£3 for 50.

Dates for Your Diary

1. "Chaplaincy Day February 2nd 2006

This Day will be for all chaplains and will tackle the issues of self abuse, including self harm. The afternoon will continue with the topic looking at practical ways of approaching the problem and will also include a report on general chaplaincy news. Tea/Coffee will be at 9.30am for a 10.00 start. We aim to finish at 3pm. Because we have a speaker the cost will be £20. please confirm attendance either by e mail to Jenny.fitzgerald@cliftondiocese.com or by phone on 01179025593

Education Sunday

2. In 2006 Education Sunday will take place on February 12th. The theme this year is "Prizes that Last". Education Sunday is designed to be a celebration of the distinctiveness and achievements of Christian education. Celebrated since 1878, now more than ever it is important to remind ourselves why Christian education is different, why it is worth believing in, why it is worth supporting. Christian education is inclusive; it offers a vision of life which enriches all who come into contact with

us. It offers a vision of life in distinct contrast to the prevailing materialism of our time. 2006 is a year of many sporting events; The World Cup, The Winter Olympics, The Commonwealth Games. The theme picks up the sporting metaphor challenging us not to run “aimlessly” but to have purpose and vision in what we do. All Schools are being asked to mark the event in some way and if possible to link with their local parish. It might be possible to have a group of students animate the liturgy on that Sunday in one of your feeder parishes or perhaps arrange for students work on an aspect of faith to be displayed in church. If you are speaking at church on that day a possible text is attached to the end of the newsletter. Materials supporting Education Sunday are available now from www.natsoc.org.uk and should be available soon from the CES web site.

3. Come Back to Me” Tuesday 28th February 2006

An evening of preparation for Lent to be held at Prinknash Abbey. The evening will include reflection for ourselves on Lent, ideas for celebrating (a short) Lent in school and the Easter season. Some resources will be provided. The session begins at 4.30pm and will finish at 8pm. A light supper will be provided. Cost £20

4. Secondary schools Mass Wednesday 17th May 2006

Yes I know it seems a long way off but it isn't honest! I would like to publish full details in the next bulletin. St Augustine's Trowbridge, helped by St Edwards Melchet Court, will be organising the music and students from St Brendan's college will be helping with the organisation on the day. If you would like to take responsibility for a particular part of the mass please let me know as soon as possible. (Please confer with RE department)

5. Chaplaincy Day Thursday 16th June

This will be a joint day for heads of RE and Chaplains and will be run by CAFOD. 2007 will see the anniversary of “Populorum Progressio”. CAFOD will be producing a range of materials to help schools get the most out of this document. This session will be an awareness raising day. Please note the date now further details will follow later

Further details of all courses and events will be found on our website

Vocations

Fr Robert King has become the new vocations director for the diocese. He is anxious to make contact with and support schools in their work to promote a culture of vocation. If you would a talk from Fr Robert or an assembly on the topic please contact me and I would be happy to facilitate this. The website address for the national office is: www.ukvocation.org/ If you would like to sign up your school for a day of prayer for vocations then again please contact me directly.

L'ARCHE

The L'arche community have asked for help in recruiting assistants to work with adults with learning disabilities in their communities in Britain. If you have sixth form students who are considering a gap year this may suit them. If you would like further details, or to arrange a speaker for your students, please contact me.

The annual Conference for Chaplaincy Coordinators

This takes place in Sheffield on January 23rd -24th. The speaker will be Nigel Bavidge and the topic evaluating Chaplaincy. I will be attending the conference on behalf of our diocese and will give a report at our next meeting

Finally

I am trying to build up a picture of how chaplaincy works in practice throughout the diocese, **if you are holding a chaplaincy meeting I would welcome an invitation to attend.** Many thanks for all you do and the dedication you bring to your work.

Ann Fowler
Chaplaincy Co-ordinator

Talk for Education Sunday:

There are two versions given of a possible talk. The first version assumes you will be given a few minutes after communion; the second version adds more detail to some of the points and assumes you have a slightly longer period. Please remember to name all schools within your area.

Brief Version

- Introduce yourself and background (e.g. Head, Chair, member of staff)
- Thanks to priest for opportunity to speak about Catholic education on Education Sunday.
- Catholic schools have a key role in the mission of the church; they exist like the Church, not for their own sake but to communicate Christ to others. Clement of Alexandria said “to give a child a good education is always a work of salvation”
- In this country, as a result of the efforts and sacrifices of previous generations, we are fortunate to have an established network of nearly 2,500 Catholic schools, with almost all the cost of running them met by the state.
- In our own Diocese there are 75 maintained and independent Catholic schools educating over 20,000 young people.
- Our own parish is served by (mention **ALL** the Catholic schools – primary, secondary/sixth form college & independent)
- Catholic schools are not secular schools with RE tagged on; nor are they simply schools where we go to mass. Catholic Schools exist to offer a radical alternative to state schools
- Within these schools we try to present a synthesis of faith and life, we celebrate and live out the vision of the Gospel; we try to be a community based around the presence of the risen Christ. This means helping individuals discover God in the ordinary events of their lives. *(If you have a slightly longer period please look at additional notes here)*
- The work of Catholic schools is assisted by the Catholic Education Service at national level and the Diocesan Department for Schools and Colleges at a local level. The second collection today is to help fund their work.
- On behalf of the Heads, Governors, and Staff of all these schools may I thank you, whether or not you currently have children of school age, for the support you give to the work of the schools through the parish and ask for your continuing prayers for our work.

Additional Notes

- Within the school we try to present a synthesis of faith and life, we celebrate and live out the vision of the Gospel; we try to be a community based around the presence of the risen Christ. This means helping individuals discover God in the ordinary events of their lives.
- All schools take part in the pursuit of truth; all schools would claim to put the person at the centre of their policies, catholic schools do the same. For us however this means something specific. we aim to make the promotion of the human person the goal of education, because we believe that all people are created in the image of God, that Christ reveals what it means to be human and that their exists within the heart of God a dream for every individual. Our task is to help those we come into contact with discover that purpose to “draw out of them the truth of their heart.”
- Bearing witness to the Gospel is not some nebulous ideal; it isn't enough to say we'll just be nice to each other. The gospel makes demands on people; it calls us to live in a particular way. It means that all our policies and practices, the entire curriculum, not just RE is effected, and it means that we deliberately attend to the presence of God in our midst, that we are people of prayer.
- Our beliefs do not narrow our view of life, faith does not counteract reason; Pope John Paul said “Faith and reason are the wings on which the human spirit flies” we are encouraging students to look beyond to see choices and options that the secular world does not offer.
- Living by the Gospel means making difficult choices. The school like the church must have an option for the poor; this means poor emotionally, spiritually, academically, socially, economically, behaviourally. All are welcome. Society itself is based largely on a premise of individual freedom but we are called to work for others, we are a materialistic society we are told we can buy our way to success and happiness, but we need to challenge these values. Schools strive to use a language which talks about justice; about the need for reconciliation; about the need for salvation; “my hope is based on the Lord who made heaven and earth”
- When adults work with children they model a way of being human. In a society which is often restless, lost selfish' frightened, hurting and without hope; in a world which is broken, torn apart by violence and greed; it is important to present to young people a vision of God's kingdom, where the poor and disadvantaged find true justice, to offer them an experience of communion with each other with God. They may chose to reject this vision, they may chose to walk other paths but if we aren't there we lose an amazing opportunity to answer the call of Christ to show others what it means to be fully alive.
- None of this is possible without teachers who can develop the vision, who are willing to see the work as a vocation. Pope John Paul said “ the world will listen to teachers if they are first witness “ We do not need perfect people, we need people who will have the openness to share their stories, to try to live out God's call, to be willing to travel with young people on their faith journeys. we teachers with the imagination and vision to see Catholic schools as places of inclusiveness where all are welcome and where God's love is visible