CLIFTON DIOCESE

Department for Schools & Colleges
December 2004

Secondary Schools Newsletter

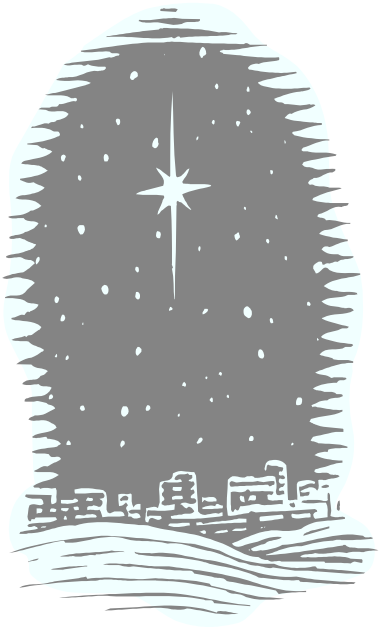
Dear All,

I am aware that for RE departments this is a very busy time of year. I hope you are surviving retreats, penitential services and carol services. It is easy for this time of year to be kidnapped and distorted not only by commercialism, but by our own expectations and anxieties. I came across this reading by the Reverend Richard Roberts

"The Christmas message is really about involvement, people with ideas who want to change things and influence others. People who feel passionately about something important have to be involved. Christians believe that when Jesus was born God himself became involved in the life of humanity, in order to change the existing order of things for the better. Christ's birth tends to upset our comfortable little lives; because we are afraid of this we hide the true message in tinsel, neon lights and Christmas trees."

In all the stress of Christmas for RE departments I hope you are able to find some still part for yourselves to contemplate this:

God became man who, if we let him changes our lives and enables us to be passionately caught up in the desire to build God's kingdom.



Coming Up

- **1st February 2005 - A Course for Chaplains and those involved in parish and school liturgy. Venue: Alexander House. Cost £20 including lunch. Steve Murray will be running a workshop on using mime in liturgy. (useful for preparations for Lent).**
- **14th March 2005 - Boys' Achievement – An in depth analysis of gender differences in learning together with key strategies to narrow the gender gap.**

Details of both these courses are in the events section of the web site.

The Year of the Eucharist

The liturgy office website, www.liturgyoffice.org.uk has some useful information on this topic. In Clifton – we are hoping to makr this event by gathering all secondary schools together and I have written to all secondary heads about the proposals. A copy of the documentation is attached.

Relationship Education

Further details and guidelines will be issued next term.

On behalf of the Department may I wish you a happy and holy Christmas.
Lent begins February 9th!! (sorry).

Ann Fowler
Secondary Schools Adviser

To: All Secondary & Independent Headteachers

14 December 2004

Dear Colleague,

As you may already be aware the theme of Mission Sunday this year was "Eucharist and Mission". This year from October 2004 through 2005 is the year of the Eucharist.

In a message produced for World Mission Sunday, the Pope reminded us that in our world today there is an urgent need for renewed missionary activity. This isn't to be interpreted in a narrow sense but as a reaching out to a world which is broken. Certainly in the western world today we are aware that our lives are dominated by images of violence, war, terror.

Many feel powerless to affect the situation; many young people especially do not feel a sense of self worth and get caught up in a materialistic society.

As Catholic schools we are part of the missionary activity of the church; like the church we aim to point towards Christ, to demonstrate that a community which lives its life centred on the Gospel can offer hope to a broken world.

The year of the Eucharist is designed to try and refocus us on what it means to be a member of a Eucharistic community. We encounter Christ in the Eucharist and as Pope John Paul says in his message

"We are made holy by the spirit in order to become one in heart and mind and to be witnesses of his love to the ends of the earth".

To try and help us focus on this year, we are initiating a Secondary Schools Mass to be held in Clifton Cathedral on 21 April at 11 a.m. Bishop Declan will be the main celebrant. Each school will be asked to prepare beforehand for the event and to bring about 50 students.

I realise that this has both time and cost implications for your school. I realise hiring a coach is not cheap and it will interrupt your timetables. However the event is meant to be a celebration of our distinctiveness, our faith, our Diocesan community and our mission. The primary schools from around the

Diocese have been gathering for a number of years and this has been a very joyful experience. I hope you will feel able to support this new event. (Further details will follow in the New Year).

The second event is a competition organised by the vocations team. The winning school will receive £100 and £20 will go to the winning student. Details of this are enclosed.

Many thanks for all your help and support.

Yours sincerely,

Ann Fowler
Secondary Schools Adviser

Secondary Schools Mass
Clifton Cathedral, Bristol
11 am - on 21 April 2005

I will / will not be arranging to bring a group of students to Clifton Cathedral on 21 April 2005.

Signed ……..

School …….

Please return the slip to Jenny Fitzgerald at Alexander House, 160 Pennywell Road, Bristol BS5 0TX by the end of February 2005.

The Rosary

OK David Beckham may use them but rosary beads have been around a lot longer than he has!

Originally the beads were used by pilgrims in the 13th century. As they walked to the various sites they would move the beads in time with their footsteps. They would say the words of the Hail Mary but as they were doing so they would be meditating on some aspect of Jesus' life. Saying the words is a way of freeing up your brain, stopping it being distracted, so you can concentrate on the meditation.

A traditional set of rosary beads looks like this:

The beads at the start represent an introduction. This represents your 'way in'. People normally make the sign of the cross and then focus themselves by saying one or two traditional prayers. There are five sets of ten beads, each set is called a decade. For each decade of the rosary there is one aspect of Jesus' life to focus on. These are divided up into 'mysteries'. Each mystery is once round the complete rosary. To complete all the mysteries you would have to go four times around the whole rosary.

We are asking you to focus on one set of mysteries and design contemporary images that reflect their meaning.

The mysteries are as follows:

The Joyful Mysteries

1. The Annunciation *(Luke ch.1, v26-33.38)*
   This reflects on the story of Mary being called to be the Mother of God. Because Mary said yes to God, Christ became present in our world. Christians believe that God calls each of us to do something for Him. This is called having a ***Vocation***.

   What do you think God wants of your life?
   How hard is it to listen to God's voice in today's world?

2. The Visitation *(Luke ch.1 v39-45)*
When Mary was pregnant she set out to visit her cousin Elizabeth, also pregnant. Not an easy journey.

How do we help others?
Is it important to offer our help and support to those who need it?

3. The Nativity *(Luke ch.2 v6-12)*
The story of Jesus' birth.

What does it mean that God became part of our world?
Do we see Christ in others?

4. The Presentation *(Luke ch.2 v25-32)*
Jesus is presented to God by his parents in the temple.

We are presented to God through our baptism. What does baptism mean to us?
Do we live out our baptism and respond to God's call?

5. The Finding in the Temple *(Luke ch.2 v41-50)*
Jesus was found at the age of about 12 teaching in the temple.

Why do you think some men and women chose to serve God in a special way be becoming priests and religious?
How difficult is it to make these choices in today's world?

The Sorrowful Mysteries

1. The Agony in the Garden *(Luke ch.22 v39-46)*
The night before he died Jesus prays to God. He is scared, frightened, vulnerable but in the end he prays "Thy will not mine be done".

Doing what God wants us to do, doing what is right is often the more difficult choice. You might have to go against friends, against what society thinks is ok.

How hard is it today to struggle to do the right thing?
Is it worth the effort?

2. The Scourging at the Pillar *(Mark ch.15 v6-15)*
Jesus suffers at the hands of others for doing the right thing.

Who do you know in today's world that has suffered for doing the right thing?
What kind of suffering have they endured?
Why did they do this?

3. The Crowning with Thorns *(John ch.19 v1-8)*
Most people know the story of how the soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head. They were making fun of him, mocking him, his beliefs and making him feel less of a person.

Do we get mocked for our beliefs?
Do we ever do the mocking?

4. The Carrying of the Cross *(John ch.19 v16-22)*
There are many familiar images of Jesus carrying his cross to Calvary.

What burdens do people carry in their lives?
Sometimes the burdens people carry seem too much for one person, how can you help?
Should our country help another carry its burdens?
Does believing in God make it easier to carry our own burdens?

5. The Crucifixion *(John ch.19 v25-30)*
Jesus died forgiving those who crucified him.

What matters enough to you to risk your life for?
What do some people risk their life for on principle?
How easy, how right is it to forgive those who do you harm?

<u>The Glorious Mysteries</u>

1. Resurrection *(Mark ch.16 v1-7)*
Jesus rises from the deal.

Is Jesus alive in your life today?
When he met Mary in the Garden, he called her by name and her whole life changed.
Do you believe God calls you by name?

2. The Ascension *(Luke ch.24 v 46-53)*
Jesus returns to his Father.

How important is it to believe that there is more to life than you can see or touch?
Do you believe in a spiritual dimension to life?
Is it important to consider this when making choices?

3. Pentecost *(Acts ch.2 v1-7)*
The Spirit of God changed the lives of the Apostles, gave them the courage to speak out even if this put them at risk.

What issues do we need to speak out about?
How do we show courage in our everyday lives?

4. The Assumption (Luke ch1 v46-55)
We remember Mary. Mary answered God's call, even though she had no certainties about the future.

Do you believe God still calls us today?
What does the word 'vocation' mean to you?

5. The Crowning of Mary (Rev ch12 v1)
Our lady is crowned Queen of Heaven. This reminds us of the importance of Mary. We do not pray to her but ask for her help in bringing our prayers to God.

What is your image of a strong woman today?
Do you think the Church respects the rights of women?
What problems do women still face?

The Mysteries of Light

1. The Baptism of Jesus (Mt.ch3 v13-17)
Jesus is baptised by his cousin John. This is the point where Jesus publicly responded to God's call. Even today many feel called to the Religious life.

Why do you think this is?
Women and men make many sacrifices to respond to this particular vocation. Do you know what work a priest or nun does?
Do you think their life still has value?

2. The Wedding at Cana (John ch2 v 1-9)
The Church teaches that marriage is a Sacrament.

Do you understand what this means?
Do you think marriage has value in today's world?

3. The Kingdom of God (Mt. Ch4 v 23-24)
Priests are meant to proclaim the kingdom not simply by what they say but also by what they do.

Can you give examples of how priests live out God's word?
How do you try to build the kingdom in your life?

4. Transfiguration (Mark ch9 v 2-7)
Look at the story of the Transfiguration.

What do you think this means?
Who inspires you today to hear God's voice?

5. Institution of the Eucharist (Luke ch22 v14-20)
This year is the year of the Eucharist.

When Christ said "Do this in memory of me" what do you think he meant?
How can we too be life for the world?

COMPETITION

Win £100 for the School
£20 for the winning entrant

Today the Rosary has become a fashion accessory for many young people but what does it really stand for?
What use is it in today's world?

By using the notes provided and any research you may care to make, we would like you to take one mystery of the Rosary and provide five images that you think will both appeal to young people and help make the meaning clear.

Apart from the prize winning - designs will be used in a leaflet published throughout the Diocese.

All entries should be submitted to Jenny Fitzgerald at Alexander House, 160 Pennywell Road, Bristol, BS5 0TX by no later Monday 25th March 2005.
The decision of the Judges will be final.