



Secondary Schools Newsletter November 2006

As we enter the month of November we remember all who have died. Talking about death is almost the last taboo, yet it is the only certainty of our lives. If we are helping students to become mature adults, then helping them cope with the reality of death is at least as important as helping them cope with life. As Christians “our hope is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth” This is not a vain or foolish hope but grounded in the reality of the resurrection, so with St Paul we are able to say:

“We want you to know the truth about those who have died, so that you will not be sad, as are those who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will take with Jesus those who have died believing in him.

What we are teaching you now is the Lord’s teaching: we who are alive on the day the Lord comes will not go ahead of those who have died. There will be the shout of command, the archangel’s voice, the sound of the trumpet, and the Lord himself will come down from heaven.

Those who have died believing in Christ will rise to life first; then we who are living at that time will be gathered up with them to meet the Lord. So encourage one another with these words.”

From the letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

During the last few weeks there has been much debate about the nature and purpose of voluntary aided faith schools. We need to be clear about our own identity and purpose and we need to be able to show that our schools contribute positively to social cohesion. For this reason a separate section on social cohesion is being added nationally to the Section 48 inspection. This means that extra criteria will have to be added to the existing documentation. Schools are already providing evidence of this; it is simply the case that existing good practice will be specifically reported on. It is expected that this new section will come into force after Easter 2007. There will be a session offered in the January term where the new guidelines will be explained. Please note this is a whole school issue not the sole responsibility of the RE department, though RE will be asked how through its syllabus and activities it contributes to social cohesion. It is worth noting that: “OFSTED statistics confirm that the pupils in a Catholic school closely reflect the national school population in terms of levels of disadvantage and special educational needs. Catholic schools have a higher proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups than other schools. Catholic schools, on average, already welcome 30% of their pupils from other Churches, faiths or none. Pupils in Catholic schools achieve above average academic standards and are less likely to encounter bullying, racism and harassment than in other

schools. Catholic Secondary schools are also twice as effective as other schools at developing the virtue of respect for others.”¹

14-19 Guidelines

During the last Heads of RE meeting Adrian Dempsey asked for views on the form Schools would like to see RE exams take in the future given the nature of the new guidelines. If you haven't yet submitted views you still have an opportunity to do so. You can contact Adrian directly by e mail at Adrian.Dempsey@lancasterdiocese.org.uk or send your comments to me and I will pass them on.

ICONS

There is a national review of ICONS taking place. The forms will be sent shortly to all secondary schools. It is important that as many departments as possible give their views. If you do not use ICONS there is space for you to say why and if you use ICONS as a part of your syllabus or you have replaced sections with your own schemes you can also indicate this. I would be grateful if people could be as honest as possible.

Many Tongues One Faith: November 25th 2006

This is a day conference run by our adult education department to explore the challenges and opportunities presented to parishes and schools as a result of immigration. It will look at, amongst other things, how the liturgy can be enhanced by making use of vibrant customs and approaches from many countries and the talents of new members of the community. The day will be held at St Bede's college, Lawrence Weston, Bristol and runs from 10am till 4.30pm. Further details and booking forms can be obtained from Ronnie Mitchinson Tel: 01179025595 or ronnie.mitchinson@cliftondiocese.com

Translations of readings for mass can be found at the following two sites, there may well be others. <http://www.conferenciaepiscopal.es/pastoral/turismo.htm> this site belongs to the Spanish Bishops conference. It is in Spanish but they show the flags of the countries they provide translations for. The second site <http://www.virc.at/all/english.htm> is the Vienna international religious centre and is in English. Both these sites provide translations of the readings. If anyone knows of a site that provides translations for the prayers of the mass will they please e mail the information in so we can circulate.

Live Simply Campaign

This begins on November 26th (This is National Youth Sunday.) It is the 40th anniversary of **Populorum Progressio**, and it is perhaps more important than ever that we try to live in a way that promotes justice for all. Cafod are providing many resources for use throughout the next year and there is also a dedicated web site, www.livesimply.org Bishop Declan is also asking parishes and schools to try to promote awareness of, and raise money for, **San Antonio parish in Peru**. San Antonio parish is looked after by Father Daniel O'Sullivan, a priest of the Clifton Diocese, who is originally from Bath.

¹ CES Statement

Father Daniel is member of the St James Society – a missionary organisation providing priestly ministry in South America – since 1982. Previously he had been a Curate at St George in Taunton. For more information about the Peru appeal, please email peru@cliftondiocese.com. As part of this launch CAFOD are organising a diocesan **Advent service on Thursday 7th December** in Clifton Cathedral. The service begins at 7.30pm. Further information can be obtained from Tony Vassallo contact clifton@cafod.org.uk

Family Spirituality

You may remember that in 2004 the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales launched a major programme of listening to the needs of families in our church. At the end the Bishops published an interesting report of what was heard called “Not Easy but Full of Meaning.”

Following this in April 2005 the Bishops of England and Wales agreed a plan of collaborative action to meet the needs identified in the report. These needs were summarised as follows: In 2006 making our parishes welcoming parishes where all feel accepted, in 2007 supporting marital and family spirituality and finally in 2008 helping parents and grandparents explain their faith in God to children. We are now about to enter the second phase of supporting family spirituality. The school is a place of encounter with many families who might not normally go to a church. It may therefore be possible to link with your feeder parishes to organise an event or information through the school. May I also remind you about the work of the Clifton Catholic Children’s Society. If anyone would like more information on the work they do to support families their website is <http://www.ccsadoption.org/>; there is also a unit of work available for year 7 students which is obtainable from me.

Dates for Your Diary

- **Mass for Teachers and Governors Tuesday 21st November 2006 at 7.30 pm.**
This will be held at Clifton Cathedral and our main celebrant will be Bishop Declan. It will be an opportunity for all to rededicate their work to God. Afterwards tea and coffee will be served in the Apostle’s room to give everyone a chance to meet their colleagues from around the diocese. **I would appreciate it if you could draw this event to the notice of all your colleagues and parents and encourage them to attend. In particular if you try to encourage your school not to hold any other events on that night I would be grateful.** If you would be willing to help with the music, (please!) could you contact me as soon as possible.
- **Heads of RE Day February 27th Alexander House 10.00am start, 3pm finish .**
In response to requests at the last Heads of RE Day Bishop Declan will be joining us on the day and will give his view of catholic schools and also of religious education. It would be helpful to have **in advance areas of interest or specific questions** you might like to ask. I would appreciate as full a turn out as

possible. Please could you confirm with Jenny that you will be attending. Bishop Declan will stay to lunch and we will continue on after lunch.

- **National Youth Sunday: November 26th 2006**
At the time of writing materials were not yet available but should be soon from the catholic youth service website www.catholicyouthservices.org.uk If possible could you facilitate the involvement of students in their local parishes on this day. The material will contain many ideas for liturgies and could be adapted for use in assembly
- **Education Sunday February 4th 2007**
A more detailed information pack giving details of how you can support this event will available from the CES in November

Further details of all courses and events will be found on our website. May I wish you a holy, prayerful and relatively stress free Advent. Thank you for all you do

God Bless

Ann Fowler
Secondary Adviser