



## Chaplaincy Newsletter December 2008

I would like to express my thanks to everyone for their prayers and good wishes over the last few weeks. The expression of support have meant a great deal to me and encouraged me in a very difficult time.

During the presentation of the pastoral guidelines Bishop Declan quoted the words of the prophet Jeremiah "the plans I have for you are plans for your welfare not woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope" and pointed out that those words were spoken to the Jewish people during a very difficult time when they were suffering. I guess that this is the nature of hope, not to hope simply because things are going well but to know that the present reality will not have the last word. It is to know, despite everything that happens that God will be there. This is a lesson I personally have to learn again. Jeremiah goes on to say "When you call to me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you, when you look for me you will find me". I have begun to realise that in the past I relied on my own strength, the notion of trusting in God was more intellectual rather than holistic. Now the concept of trust has begun to take on a far deeper meaning. This may not be a bad lesson to learn. As we approach Christmas and we consider all the problems the world is facing it can be difficult sometimes to see signs of the kingdom, yet we are called to live in hope to make an act of faith; this can only come out of a deep confidence that God is still God and that come what may nothing can separate us from God's love.

This Christmas may God Bless you and inspire you, bring you hope and encouragement, so that you may live the gospel in the reality of your life and thus witness to those you teach.

### Resources for Advent and Christmas

- National Youth Sunday this year was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November. All the resources are available from: [www.reclaimthefuture.org.uk/](http://www.reclaimthefuture.org.uk/). They are worth looking at, they include video material and can be used during Advent
- There are many websites giving details of the Jesse Tree but try <http://www.crivoice.org/jesse.html> to get started.
- For examples of prayers for Advent, including prayers with young children as well as teenagers try <http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/child/adv.html> or try <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/> and follow links for advent.
- For books check out <http://www.rpbooks.co.uk/>
- Go to <http://cowo.culham.ac.uk/> and click on the multi media section. There is a power point there for Advent which is suitable for young people. This site also provides links to others

- **Spirit of the Season:** The Autumn and Advent 2008 issues are now available. <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS/2008-9/index.html> The Lent edition is normally available in December.
- We also have in the departments a series of prayer stations based on the O Antiphons. These are suitable for use with small groups of pupils; in addition there is a liturgy for staff and power point available. If you would like any of these resources please get in touch.

### The Pastoral Guidelines “Becoming a People of Hope”

If you were able to be at one of the venues around the diocese, where the pastoral guidelines were being presented, you will have heard Bishop Declan talk about his hopes for the future. Young people figure largely in those hopes and the guidelines outline the proposals for supporting young people and the adults who work with them. There is also a section on the relationship between schools and parishes. If you haven't already got your copy of the guidelines please download one from

[www.cliftondiocese.com](http://www.cliftondiocese.com) and consider how this might apply to you. There will be a more document produced for schools early in the New Year. In particular I would welcome thoughts on strengthening the connections between secondary and primary, and school and parish.



### Dates for your Diary

- **The Year of St Paul: A Day for Chaplains and RE staff March 12<sup>th</sup> 2009**  
As you are already aware this has been designated the year of St Paul. In order to support your work in this area Fr Nicholas King will be running a day for us in the spring term and will talk about making the teaching of Paul relevant for young people. A poster is enclosed giving details of this event. Please support this day, Fr King is an excellent speaker and as you already this is a major initiative of the church.
- **Education Sunday: 8<sup>th</sup> February 09**  
Resources to support this day are available from [www.educationsunday.org](http://www.educationsunday.org) It would be good if schools and parishes could arrange a joint celebration to mark this day.
- **The Secondary schools mass takes place this year on June 25<sup>th</sup> 2009.** No I don't know where the time went either! As usual I need your support to make this work, but this year more than ever. It is possible that I will have to have further surgery in 2009 and I would hope to have the mass planned well in advance. The theme this year is -Hopeø following on from the theme of the pastoral guidelines. If your school is able to volunteer to take on a part of the liturgy please let me know.

God Bless and keep you, thank you again for your prayers and all that you do to enable our schools to become places of prayer, communion and mission. I apologise for the fact that this edition is a little shorter than normal a full service will -hopefullyøbe resumed in the new year!

Ann Fowler

### **Useful Dates 08 /09**

First Sunday of Advent:	30th November 08
Gaudate Sunday:	14th December 08
The Epiphany:	4th January 09
The Baptism of the Lord:	11th January 09
Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas):	2nd February 09
<b>Education Sunday</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> February 09</b>
Ash Wednesday:	28th February 09
Palm Sunday:	5th April 09
Good Friday:	10th April 09
Easter Sunday:	12th April 09
Ascension:	24th May 09
Pentecost Sunday :	31st May 09
Corpus Christi::	14th June 09
Ss. Peter & Paul:	28th June 09