

Saint Ninian's High School

Today our young people and families face great challenge. Economic, social and cultural changes have not left the Church unscathed, with an ever growing detachment from faith. Religious indifference is the prelude to a *de facto* atheism. Often the lack of knowledge of the basic tenets of Christianity goes hand in hand with an induced collective amnesia, with even Christians participating naively in the removal of those moral principles which have served as the foundation of civilization for at least twenty-five centuries of human history but also into forgetting the specific Christian contribution to the development, and flourishing, of Western Civilization down through the centuries. As you read the rich crop of articles and thoughts you will realise that celebration and worship are central in the busy life of our school and in the wealth of opportunities we promote and organise to celebrate our faith and to worship God.



We are not blind to the challenges we face, but the light of Christ is illumined in our celebrations of our faith and our expressions of worship—Holy Mass, prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, and many more. In Saint Ninian's the 'good news' is proudly, and with humility, proclaimed through the witness of students, staff, teachers, and parents. At the heart of our catechesis is the announcement of the person of Jesus Christ — the way, the truth and the life. It is He who provides the model to offer unconditional love for our young people allowing them to flourish in their education, finding fulfilment in potential and happiness, meaning and purpose in their life.

Each day we are privileged to recognise and acknowledge the miracles of school life. We know that our students thrive more fully when engaged in a healthy school community that contributes collectively to the greater good. As we work with students creating a flourishing school community together, we remind ourselves, in the midst of a global pandemic, to be grateful for all of the miraculous ways their healthy bodies, hearts, and minds are working in this moment bringing warmth, generosity of service, and kindness to others during these disconcerting times.

Within Catholic Education, the holistic formation of a person is a life-long process involving many agencies, not least the family, school, Church, and community. Christian virtue ethics focuses on the overall purpose of life, namely to live well and, with God's help, achieve excellence as a human person. Education is good for our nature and helps complete it by directing us to what makes us flourish and not simply what makes us useful. Catholic education is premised on an understanding of human flourishing, which is derived from an understanding of human nature built upon the works of Aristotelian, Augustinian and



Thomist foundations. A conception of the highest human good through a Christian vision of human flourishing is premised on the life of Christ, who provides a 'goal', an 'example' of human flourishing and character: this goal is union with God and one's neighbour through charity. If the main goal of education is to help our pupils to become 'full human persons', what does that mean to you? What does a 'full human person' look like? How effective is our distinctive Christian vision in enabling our children and young people to flourish?

Floreat Iuventus

Perhaps I should not share this with you but I will. My worst day in High School was the day I didn't go to school! It happened like this. One of my friends suggested we played truant one day...just to see what it was like. We walked aimlessly about Paisley carrying our brief cases which we had not been sensible enough to hide. We became convinced that everyone we saw knew we should be at school and would report us either to our teachers or worst still, to our parents. The hours seemed long and we were very soon regretting our decision, especially when it got to lunch and we had no money to buy something to eat.



Instead of an unexpected freedom, it cast a shadow that we were glad to leave behind. I think that was the day above all days that I realised the place and importance of school in my life. Drawing away from school was like drawing away from church. Attending a Catholic school affords us an opportunity, like no other, of drawing close to our loving Jesus Christ and doing the work of discipleship. Just being baptised as a Catholic is not enough. There needs to be a fire for our faith in our hearts.

How blessed we all are as priests, teachers, pupils and parents of pupils to have a **rôle** in the beautiful school that is St. Ninian's High, in which thousands of us have shared in an extraordinary legacy of Christian witness. Dedication to Catholic schools calls on us to be *a missionary first*. I don't mean we should all rush off to Albania or Zambia but to have an awareness that each of us in our own small way can build up the Church. Each prayer, each act of kindness and thoughtfulness, each little mortification can count for the salvation of souls and will ennoble the souls of young minds and hearts, entrusted to our care. Our passion should be to create and promote, not just education, but Catholic education and always desire an ever stronger future for St Ninian's High School. With the grace of God, and hearts truly on fire for Jesus Christ, this will surely happen. **Monsignor Monaghan**

For parents and teachers: In an increasingly multi-religious and secularised world, how do we educate for faith as an inclusive but distinctly Catholic school? In what ways, can we accompany the children and young people so that we show them—rather than just tell them—a way to God that leads to a meaningful faith commitment and purpose in life? The Pandemic has underscored every person's fundamental need to recognise the meaning and purpose of one's life. How can we as parents and teachers help our children and young people discover theirs? Because "we teach who we are," how can we educators model more "consistent" lives?

Getting back to Church after the pandemic

I have put together a small excerpt of what inspired me during a recent retreat I attended that may help others. It was interesting to hear that many have struggled to reintegrate back into their parish as they now feel conditioned to sit at home instead. Following this, we listened to a short catechesis about the importance of not succumbing to our laziness towards our faith. This made me think back to what the Pope Francis said during his homily during WYD in Poland, 2016, which I find very inspiring during this time.



Over the past year, we have been living in a world where FaceTime, Zoom and Microsoft Teams have allowed us to complete many tasks from the comfort of our own sofa. There is no doubt that technology has served us well during this time, allowing us to learn at home and keep in contact with loved ones. However, we may now be finding ourselves becoming too reliant on technology and less zealous to re-



turn to 'normal life'. This could be particularly true if we find ourselves struggling to reintegrate back into our parishes and attend Holy Mass after many months of being at home.

When Pope Francis addressed the youth, he explained "The times we live in do not call for young couch potatoes, but for young people with shoes or, better, boots laced!" The Pope inspires and urges us not to take a lazy approach to our faith but to go out into the world and actively search for the Lord in our lives rather than spending our valuable time relaxing at home with all our technology that

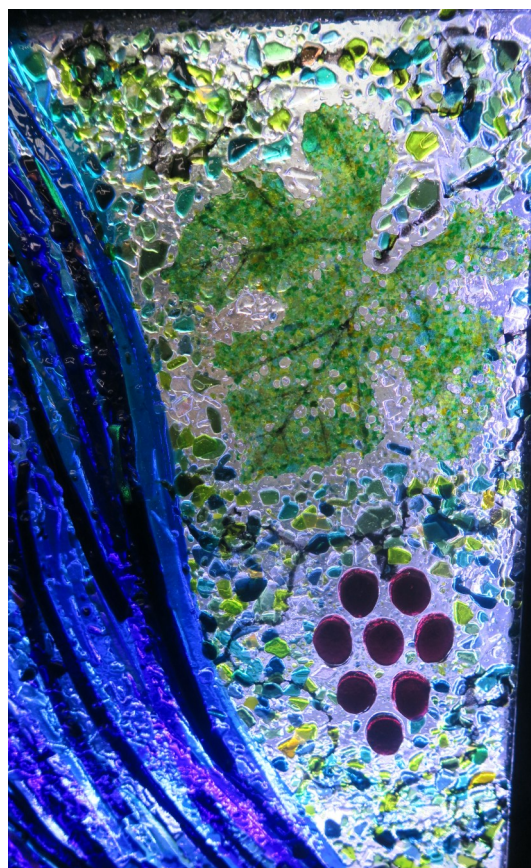
distracts us. Attending Holy Mass is vital for this! Here we can strengthen our relationship with God, who, is waiting to help us with all the struggles that we face in our lives. We must remind ourselves that we do not go to Mass to give something to God, but to receive from Him that which we truly need. We must pray to God to ask him to give us the strength to continue developing and fostering our faith. By attending Holy Mass, we can find hope again in receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit, something that would prove difficult to find from our sofa. **Colleen McAnenay, teacher**

My faith gives me hope and guidance on how to live my life as a Catholic. It shows me how to treat other people and I know if I talk to God if I need help. Saint Ninian's has helped me grow my faith by attending morning Mass or taking part in faith activities like the Salesian Sisters Breakfast and learning the origins of faith in my R.E. Lessons. **Chizitalu S2**

What Does my faith mean to me?

My faith helps me feel safer and braver because I can pray to God and ask to help and guide me. It always helps me to feel like I am not alone and always have someone to talk to. Currently as a pupil in first year, the school has helped me grow in my faith. I am a regular attender at morning Mass and enjoy the opportunity of this time with God at the beginning of the day. Furthermore, I have really enjoyed spending time on a Wednesday morning with the Salesian Sisters at the prayer breakfast. This is time spent before school with other pupils having a spiritual focus and enjoy some breakfast afterwards. **Michelle S1**

"One of the nicest ways to set your day into motion is to begin with a prayer. The prayer group at Saint Ninian's High School run by the Salesian Sisters offers a refreshing way to start your day with reflective prayer and discussion with both pupils and staff in the school. Running on a Wednesday morning starting at 8am the prayer group focusses on a different Saint or faith topic every week. We have learned about the Saint's Life and legacy. The gatherings are very informal, relaxed and everyone is made to feel very welcome. At our weekly gatherings, we like to reflect on the week ahead and the things we are looking forward to. We use this time to ask God to guide us through our week and offer any special intentions. It is always good to see a mix of all the different year groups and to see my friends there too. There are many teachers who attend as well as our parish priest, Canon Stephen. Once the prayer group has concluded, we all adjourn to the R.E. Department where we are treated to breakfast. This can include Muffins, pancake, or doughnuts! What better way to start the day!" **Sam S3**



In a radio interview in 1969, Pope Benedict XVI, then Cardinal Ratzinger, was asked what the Church would look like in the year 2000, he said: *it will have lost much. The Church will be much smaller. She will lose her social status, many of her buildings and many members. It will be hard going. Yet she will be a more spiritual, simplified Church, full of faith in God, focused on Jesus Christ and the Gospel. Meanwhile, humanity without God will find itself unspeakably lonely, without hope. Then people will discover the little flock of believers as something quite new, a hope meant for them, an answer for which deep down they have always longed. The Church will thus enjoy a fresh blossoming as a spiritual home, where people can find life, and hope beyond death* (adapted).

To be invited along to the commissioning Mass of the new altar was a great honour. To join with pupils, teachers and fellow parents to see the holy relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis and Saint Rosalia be placed in the altar chamber was a very special moment. I have now been a parent of the school for four years and have come to appreciate as well as realise the importance the school plays in the faith development of our children. All the opportunities our young people have to learn about as well as develop their faith is exceptional. As a parent I have come to realise the importance of supporting the school and ensuring I take on my role as the first teacher to my child.” **Parent S4**

“I was delighted to be asked to be involved with the Mass celebrating the 50th anniversary of St Joseph’s Church. Such an occasion gave me the opportunity to feel further integrated into my local parish and school community. I believe I speak for all involved when I say we truly felt the benefit of joining in faith with friends and family after an undoubtedly difficult year for this parish and others, in the wake of the pandemic. The unwavering community spirit in St Joseph’s remains evident from the time I spent with other parishioners following the Mass. The prevalence of young people at Friday’s Mass reflects the close link between the parish and school community, which is a vital aspect of my school experience and one that I value highly especially going into my final year at St Ninian’s. Other pupils and I greatly enjoyed the celebration of the prosperity of the Parish.” **Alice S6**

Laudato Si’ Schools

As a teacher of Religious Education and Acting Principal Teacher of Development, I am delighted to be leading on our work as a Laudato Si’ School. The Laudato Si’ Schools programme is run by the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) and SCIAF. It takes its name from Laudato Si’, an encyclical written by Pope Francis in 2015, which reminds us of our responsibility to care for the beautiful world God has given us and to stand up for the poor, many of whom are among those worst affected by climate change.

Since committing to becoming a Laudato Si’ School in November 2020, pupils at St Ninian’s have been learning more about the damage being done to the world around them and how it affects our brothers and sisters in the developing world. A number of lessons exploring the words of Pope Francis and the key themes of Laudato Si’ have been delivered to all year groups through Religious Education classes. Most recently this has included a series of lessons around COP26 and its importance in the fight to stop climate change and improve the lives of those already suffering from its consequences. Third year Religious Education classes are also taking part in a Climate Conference project where they are researching one country who has been particularly badly affected by climate change and will plea on that country’s behalf for financial support to cope with this disaster at St Ninian’s own mini-COP26.



However, being a Laudato Si' School is about far more than changes to the Religious Education curriculum. Instead, it is about a whole school commitment to the teaching of ecological education, the promotion of social justice, and the reduction of our own carbon footprint. Furthermore, Pope Francis' message provides us with the framework to embed key areas of work such as Learning for Sustainability and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child into the Catholic ethos of our school.

Through in-service day inputs, departments across the school have been asked to consider how they can link their work to the key messages of Laudato Si' as well as looking at how we as a school community can make changes to improve our own carbon footprint. In addition, the school Equality Working group is planning a uniform exchange in the summer term to allow for the recycling of pre-loved uniform and the St Ninian's SCIAF group has been rebranded as a SCIAF/Laudato Si' group in recognition of SCIAF's extensive work in this area.

Pupils and staff have responded with enthusiasm to the message of Laudato Si', recognising its relevance and importance to modern life. Going forward, I plan to continue to support departments to make links to these themes across the curriculum, to support initiatives to cut our own carbon footprint and to develop partnership working in this area with our associated primaries. This will ensure that pupils at St Ninian's will have the understanding and insight necessary to respond to Pope Francis' call to be stewards of creation and make a 'change for good' in terms of their relationship with others and the world around them. **Marie McCoy, teacher**



Recently, Pope Francis sent out documents to help us prepare for a Synod to be held in Rome in 2023. Over the next months, he wants to consult every Catholic across the world - individuals, groups, parishes, dioceses – asking everyone to review the way the Church functions, to revise our relationships and our attitudes, to see how things can be improved and what would make the Church more welcoming. It is a process, he says, *to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, to inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave people together* and to awaken a dawn of hope that will give strength to the Church's mission. Over the next months, we'll hear more about the Synod. **The Church is one, holy, Catholic and apostolic because she is founded on Christ and the Holy Spirit.**

Cop 26 Delegates Mass

I was given the honour to represent St. Ninian's at the Cop 26 delegates Mass on Sunday the 8th of November 2021 as a steward. My role was to guide the esteemed dignitaries to their seats as well as the rest of the congregation and to follow the dignitaries out of the church. I felt as if I was given a substantial amount of responsibility in making sure that everything was running smoothly before the Mass began and I was given the opportunity to briefly speak to the dignitaries present. Of those, I was able to speak to John Swinny, Deputy First Minister, the Lord Provost of Glasgow, and Most Reverend Bishop Mark Strange of the Scottish Episcopal church. Being given the chance to converse with these influential figures is a very rare experience to have, and I felt proud to have been given the chance to be in the presence of these dignitaries and represent the school.

The Mass in itself was a moving one, we are faced with



a climate crisis and the Mass really emphasised how important stopping it really is and the homily spoken sums this up well. The Bishop discussed how it is not us that will experience the harsh effects of climate change first, it is the people of developing nations and the poor, who have contributed much less to the damage of our environment than countries like our own, which reaped the rewards of the industrial revolution. This really highlighted the gravity of the situation and that this is a global issue, not a local one and we all need to do our part to slow the effects of climate change.

The Bishop also reminded us that we are to

be the stewards of the Earth, of God's creation and we are to keep it and not cause irreversible damage to it, which we are doing now. I am incredibly grateful to have been given this opportunity and I feel honoured to have been involved in this historic Mass. I have also been given that extra encouragement to help our common home even more, as we all should do. **Luke Campbell S6**

For Parents & Teachers: In an age of increasing pluralism, amidst conflicting claims to truth and easy soundbites, **how do we educate for depth?** In what ways can we accompany our students so that they learn to value truth and to persevere in seeking it, paying full attention to experience and engaging in careful — and even scholarly — reflection to guide their decisions? The Global Pandemic has emphasized the need — more than ever — to think critically, to evaluate diverse and conflicting claims and sources, against the prevailing copy-and-paste culture and allergy to nuance and complexity. How can our classrooms be conducive for deep thinking? How do we define 'depth' in our mission today?

The Life Group

As Pope Francis states, "Catholic education gives soul to the world." Discussing, sharing and practising our Catholic faith in schools is central to the formation of young people, helping to give them meaning and purpose to their lives and direction for the future. We want to help them to become effective contributors and responsible citizens and as teachers, we can do this every day in the classroom and in our example throughout the wider school and community.

In Saint Ninian's, I have had the pleasure of teaching religious education and working with faith groups in the school such as the Life group. The Life group aims to promote and share the belief that all life is valuable. Whether it is the unborn, the disabled, refugees or the homeless, all people should be treated with respect and dignity and our fundraising efforts aim to promote this view. We have worked closely with the Sisters of the Gospel of Life who provide financial and emotional care to women who find themselves in a crisis pregnancy. We have sent money to the Alma Mater group who support female students in university who struggle with childcare, fees and accommodation. We also support events in our city, as last week a number of pupils and staff visited St Andrew's Cathedral in Glasgow to attend the annual torchlight procession. This Mass was commemorating the 10 million lives lost to abortion in the UK and it helped to give pupils a deeper understanding of the sanctity of life and how fragile it is in our current society. In modern times it can be difficult to stand out from the crowd and to speak up for marginalised groups and those whom society views as being inconvenient or not worthy. I was filled with great pride

At the moment of the transubstantiation, everyone is linked to the Holy Mass - the whole Church, the entire congregation, the priest, those invoked and those presented to God in a special way - everyone receives his life, conjoined with the gifts, in faith and through the Lord."

(Adrienne von Speyr)



The Christian faith is not, or rather, not mainly, an idea or system of ideas. Its doctrines are important; its record of scholarship, its cultural impact and its intellectual vigour over two millennia are astonishing, but in the end these things are secondary. Each in isolation is the stuff of museums. The beating heart of Christianity, the source of its endurance and life, is love. The Christian faith is a relationship of trust and love with the person of Jesus Christ, the living Son of the living God - or it's nothing at all. Or worse, it's a deceitful sham" (Archbishop Charles Chaput *Things Worth Dying For*).

upon seeing St Ninian's pupils attend this event with such passion and enthusiasm. It is so important that we encourage all our young people to 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. To protect the rights of all who are helpless.' (Proverbs 31:8) Involvement in the Life group helps pupils to do this whilst giving them the education and the resources to evangelise and to speak to others about the injustices that the unborn face and the help and support needed for vulnerable mothers and fathers.

As teachers, we should also strive to use our own classroom and subject to promote the gospel values and to share the faith with our students, Catholic or not. Teaching pupils about social justice, equality, care for those in need and responsibility in society is crucial if we want to create a caring and nurturing environment for all. As a history teacher, my subject provides many opportunities to talk with students about important and impressive people from the past who can encourage us to be faithful servants of Christ. Maximillian Kolbe, Sophie Scholl, William Wilberforce and Martin Luther King (to name a few) can show us the rewards of perseverance, determination and commitment to the dignity of our fellow human beings. Each of these people gave their soul to the world and to God, allowing themselves to be a light in the darkness during times of totalitarianism, slavery and segregation.



It is important that we too look around ourselves and our own community and think about how we can make positive changes for God and for the world. How can we best use our Catholic education, faith and role as teachers to help shape our pupils, helping them to reach their full potential and to become future Saints of Scotland? **Clare Deighan, teacher.**

How can the Catholic school & its teachers make visible the evangelising mission of the Church?

The following characteristics stand out: harmony with the formative aims of secular schools, the originality of the educational community permeated by evangelical values; attention to young people; concern for teaching the integration of faith, culture and life.

As you enter our Oratory depicted in our stained glass window is **The Pelican**. Medieval Europeans noticed that pelicans were particularly attentive to their young, and even thought they would wound themselves and let their young drink their blood when no food was available. Therefore, the pelican became a symbol of Christ's passion. He poured out his blood for the forgiveness of our sins, as if shedding his blood for our spiritual food, which is what we encounter in the Eucharist

Let teachers recognise that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programmes. In order for the teaching of the Catholic religion to be fruitful, it is fundamental that the teachers be

The Catholic School's role in the mission of the Church is not to preach in isolation, but to propose the Good News of Jesus Christ, to change us into better, holier witnesses. May God help us bring many more young people and adults closer to Jesus Christ through the witness of our Catholic schools, our parish communities, and our families.



believers, committed to personal growth in the faith, incorporated into a Christian community, desirous of giving the reason for their faith through their professional expertise as well.

How can Parents, be the first catechists of their own children? Believing parents, with their daily example of life, have the most effective capacity to transmit the beauty of the Christian faith to their children. The greatest challenge in this situation is for couples, mothers and fathers, active participants in catechesis to overcome the mentality of delegation that is so common, according to which the faith is set aside for specialists in religious education.

The Catholic Bishop's Conference of Scotland, COP26 Delegates Mass, Sun 7th Nov 2021, St Aloysius, Garnethill, Glasgow.
Celebrant Bishop Hugh Gilbert, Homily by Bishop William Nolan.
Bishop Hugh Gilbert with Head Teacher John Docherty and pupils from St Ninian's High, Giffnock.
Photo by and copyright of Paul Mc Sherry 07770 393960 @Paulmcsherry2



If, gazing on the face of Christ, you feel unable to let yourself be healed and transformed, then enter into the Lord's heart, into his wounds, for that is the abode of divine mercy" (Pope Francis *Gaudete et Exultate*).

Adoro te devote latens Deitas

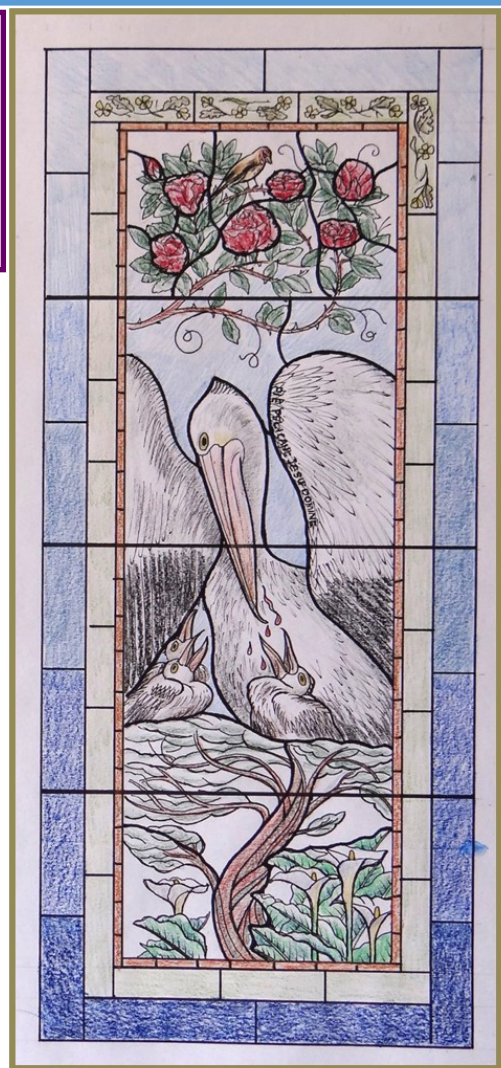
It is Jesus Whom you seek when you dream of happiness. He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you. He is the beauty to which you are so attracted. It is He who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle” (Pope John Paul II speaking to young people at World Youth Day in the year 2000).

My Faith life in School

As a pupils at Saint Ninians High school I feel very lucky to be able to celebrate my faith and have many opportunities to do so. I am fortunate that there is nearly an opportunity to do so every morning. For example I like going to Mass on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday morning. It is a great way to start the day and it gives me some calm time, without all of the pressures of school, in the presence of Jesus. I love to see the different priests from the different parishes as you don't normally see them at Sunday Mass. Furthermore I enjoy going to the prayer breakfast on a Wednesday. It is not just because of the lure of breakfast but because it is lovely to talk to Salesian Sisters who are always enlightening and great fun! Their enthusiasm brings great joy and the activities we do allow me to deepen my faith. **Niall S2**

When I began in first year, I was quite anxious as this was such a big school with so many people. I found it to be very busy but one thing I really enjoyed was attending Mass as it was such a peaceful and calm start to my day. More recently I have been attending the prayer breakfast on a Wednesday at 8am and again I have enjoyed being with the Salesian sisters. This had led me to attend their lunch time club with my friends where we play board games and enjoy the different activities. **Xavier S1**

I have really enjoyed my first year in Saint Ninians especially all the subjects I have studied. I have particularly enjoyed R.E. and more recently learning about the seven sacraments. Just now in R.E. we are learning about the Eucharist and the role it plays at the centre of the Catholic faith. Although I am not Catholic, I am encouraged to take part in my lessons and activities. Mrs McCoy has made accessing all areas of my Religious Education so easy and I have learned to understand and appreciate the importance so many different symbols of religious significance. **Louise S1**



Proclaiming the Joy of the Gospel

I wonder if you can remember the last time, you felt joyful about something. It might have been a birthday – either your own or someone else's. It might have been when you woke up one morning and remembered that you had a day off. It might have been when you were praised for something you did well – with your family, in the parish or at work. It might have been when you received some “good news” about something - maybe the birth of a baby. I have felt great joy in the last thirty-one years of my priesthood, especially when I reflect on what I have done and achieved. Some of my experiences have been good, others painful and some I have struggled through in life. In celebrating Catholic Education Week with our schools this year, Pope Francis has asked us to reflect on this theme of Joy – ‘Celebrating and Worshipping’ and how appropriate it is to call the priesthood “a joy” because it is full of fun and vitality

Catholic parishes and Catholic schools exist to make Jesus Christ better known and better loved. The context for this mission in schools is always that they are places of educational excellence, where all can grow in holiness as stewards of God's creation. A school's concern is to support families in the education of their children, especially their responsibility to help their children develop a personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ. The school therefore uses all the resources and expertise available for the harmonious physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual development of the young people in its care. In cooperation with the bishop, with parishes and with families, the school coordinates its activity to bring to full potential the gifts, talents and personalities of those young people for whom it is responsible.

and shows a real zest for life. I just love doing the pastoral duties - going to the Primary and Secondary schools every week, going around the parish visiting the sick and house bound, bringing



the Sacraments to the nursing homes, hospital and especially the hospice. Walking with people and meeting them where they are at. One of my most privileged pastoral experiences has been with the prisoners and the staff. Being present, available and listening to the needs of so many people who genuinely want to change, but who, for some reason, have struggled with the cards that life has dealt them.

Offering a little JOY by supporting others is so important, it is like being part of the real world, meeting people, going places like Lourdes, Rome, Salamanca (our Scottish Seminary in Spain), the World Youth Days and lots of trips with the youth, learning about different cultures. I have tried to enjoy my priesthood and it is great to be encouraged by others whether it

is in the schools, prison and hospice, hospital, in the streets or in the parish or my own home in the presbytery. It is good to encourage others along my journey in the priesthood as well as being encouraged by fellow priests and people in the parish. I have been very blessed with the presence of good bishops. Bishops, who have listened, walked with and challenged me. I was accepted to the priesthood by Bishop Stephen, ordained by Bishop John, celebrated eight years with Bishop Philip and now journeying with a new Bishop John who is the same age as me, well slightly older!

Team work has been a priority to me – working with other clergy, being supported and offering support to fellow priests and religious has been a joy. When I was doing Vocational work for the Priesthood, Permanent Diaconate, supporting the newly ordained and helping candidates discern for the priesthood, the most important word I learned was propaedeutic - where we journey together along the road of life.

Priesthood's natural joyfulness is what God wants all us to experience and not to forget as we grow older. I always think that God must



In our Oratory above our Altar, and depicted in our stained glass windows, there is **The Dove**. The dove is a white bird often depicted as flying gracefully before a shining aura of light. Sometimes the dove is carrying an olive branch in its beak. The dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. When Christ was baptised by John the Baptist, a dove descended on him, according Matthew 3.16 and Mark 1.10. The dove is sometimes depicted with an olive branch in its mouth as a symbol of peace. In Noah's story in Genesis 8.1–12, he sent out a dove to search for dry land. It returned carrying an olive branch only when the rain had stopped, and this was the sign and symbol of God's forgiveness. The dove also symbolises God's grace. The Dove was a gift for the Oratory from Mr. & Mrs. McBrearty, former teachers of St. Ninian's HS, and parents, both now sadly deceased.

Christianity lived properly is never a quiet presence in any society. It always has public implications” (Archbishop Charles Chaput *Things Worth Dying For*).



get a real lift when he sees us celebrating the Mass with different personalities! But more so on a Sunday morning when he sees the wee ones sing the Alleluia or the Hosanna, even though they can't understand all the words being said. But they'll always spend time at the end of Mass speaking to one of the priests or giving a high five to me. God must hope that we'll all be like the wee children when we come to church - happy, smiling and full of joy. That is the privilege of the priesthood!

It's the joyful exuberance which is infectious (and somewhat exhausting). And it's that same natural enthusiasm and enjoyment which Pope Francis is encouraging us all toward in Celebrating and Worshipping

the Gospel. He wants us to be joyful and grateful that God gave us faith through our parents. As well as using our experiences of the past student days in Thurles, both the good and the bad. As Fr. Seamus used to quote TS Elliott – 'I had the experience, but what was the meaning?' Pope Francis asks us to remember that God endowed us with talents and gifts and a capacity for life which he wants us to develop to our full potential in the priesthood. He wants us to take delight in our faith – as God does - in how we use these talents to show love for others by doing good in our parishes and priestly life and in the world more widely. He wants us to make the most of these talents in our priesthood today and with whatever God calls us forward to in the future.

Pope Francis also encourages us not to be silent or embarrassed about being Christians or Catholics. He wants us to celebrate and worship Jesus – to tell others about him, about how he loves us, heals us, comforts us and offers us the chance to be joyful for ever. That is the theme of my years as a priest. After ordination I was appointed to St. Mirin's Cathedral for five years. I then took up an assistant role in St. Patrick's, Greenock, along with being the Prison Chaplain, School Chaplain and Hospice Chaplain. After four years I was appointed Parish Priest to St. John's, Barrhead, for eleven years, where I had a great and long experience of parish life with two assistants – enabling me to take on a variety of roles as the Vocations Director and other remits with formation in the diocese. I was then appointed as PP to St. Charles', Paisley, where I was the Secondary School Chaplain, Chaplain to the local Hospice and Director for Lourdes and Diocesan Pilgrimages. Four years ago, I was appointed as PP to St Joseph's, Clarkston and Chaplain to St Ninian's High School.

I am very fortunate to see a school so vibrant and full of life and faith. We have a beautiful and peaceful Oratory – which allows everyone in the school moments of peace and silence. We all need a place to be alone in life. Here we , whether Catholic or non-Catholic can follow the path of the Lord – '... and go to some lonely place to pray'. We have Mass three mornings a week at 8.25am, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Rosary on a Friday at 12.25. We have the spirit of St John Bosco under the patronage of the Salesian sisters – Bernie and Gill, accompanied with the 'UR Space' group of youth. We have a prayer Breakfast, followed with juice and food – to cele-



Educating for Faith

Participants in our recent Inset Day 3 workshop commented that our *'Educating for Faith'* was what made our school distinctive; without this faith dimension the school would be no different to any other school. The Catholic tradition offers a wonderful narrative and sees the educational project from an eternal perspective. The Christian narrative transcends the small and virtual worlds and limited perspectives that dominate the lives of our young people. It offers a vision of life that is filled with hope, fulfilment, meaning and purpose. Furthermore, the narrative is inclusive and reaches out to everyone who shares in delivering our vision for young people in our school. The insights and practices of faith have something very practical to offer young people. In fact, they provide an antidote to many of the negative aspects of young people's life experiences. Sometimes, we can be cautious about presenting our narrative, preferring to speak about values instead. But we need to speak about God, about the transcendent; the challenge is to do so in clear and attractive terms. We are challenged as teachers to be authentic and to be a witness ourselves in this way. Related to this is the on-going need for staff formation, providing opportunities for staff to encounter God and to deepen their theological knowledge and understanding.



brate prayer and the breaking of bread together, before we start our daily work. We are so lucky to have these weekly moments to Celebrate and worship our faith.

So, how will I go on proclaiming the joy of the Gospel? By praying to God each day, thanking him for the gift of my life and for the talents he has given me? By showing how I follow the example of Jesus in the way I love, support and care for other people in my parishes and the commitments I make to my priestly life. By helping others to realise that following Jesus doesn't have to be a chore; being Catholic isn't something to hide; having a personal relationship with God through Jesus is joyfully rewarding and uplifting. As a priest in Scotland, that is what I want others to experience as they grow in their faith. That is what I pray to God for each day of my life. That is what I hope we will come to know when others hear the call from God to reflect on the priesthood and religious life.

In our Oratory, **The Sacred Heart** is depicted as a flaming heart. It is usually shining with divine light, pierced from a lance, encircled by a crown of thorns, surmounted by a cross, and bleeding. Sometimes it is shown in the chest of Jesus Christ. The wound, thorns, and blood represent Jesus' crucifixion, and the flames represent the transformative power of divine love. The Sacred Heart is an object of devotion for Catholics everywhere and shares the message of Jesus' sacrificial love for humanity. On its own the heart is a symbol of love, but the Sacred Heart, pierced and wrapped in thorns, shows the depth of Jesus' love and that his love is eternal.

And this is also my hope and prayer for all those who attend Mass and get actively involved in the life of the Church across Scotland. That through my presence as a priest others will come to know the joy of knowing and loving Jesus Christ. That the people I encounter in my daily life will appreciate the efforts of the church, who so keenly want to experience this joy. That others will see for themselves the impact of God's love, expressed through your, mine, and other priests loving words and actions. And parishioners and people I encounter will go on to make a real difference in the world by making a positive impact on people's lives. Then I and other priests really will be proclaiming the Joy of the Gospel. It has been a joy being a priest for 25 years in the Diocese of Paisley. The support I have received from the people, religious, priests, bishops and friends have brought me to where I am today. May I always remember the words of a close friend who keeps reminding me to say 'Not my will, but thy will be done' in my daily prayers. **Canon Stephen, Chaplain**

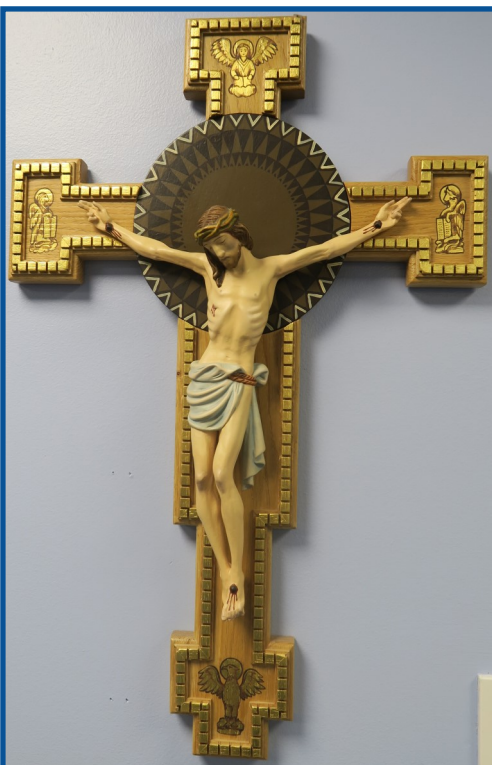
Life passes, riches fly away, popularity is fickle, the senses decay, the world changes. One alone is true to us; One alone can be all things to us; One alone can supply our need (St. John Henry Newman).

As you enter our Oratory you will find an image of **The Peacock and the Tree of Life**: The Ancient Greeks believed that the flesh of peacocks didn't decompose after death, and so peacocks became a symbol of immortality. The 'eyes' in the peacock's tail feathers symbolise the all-seeing God. The early Church adopted this symbol to represent the Christian belief in eternal life in heaven with God, and the peacock was often depicted next to the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is mentioned three times in Genesis 2 in Eden – as a source of food for Adam and Eve – in Proverbs (3.18, 11.30, 13.12 and 15.4) and four times in Revelation (2.7 and 22.2,19). It is both an actual tree in Eden and a newly restored tree in heaven.

My Faith life in School

One thing my faith has taught me is endurance particularly giving me the strength to keep going through difficult times. I have always hoped that God will guide me to achieve what I want to achieve. It may sound daft but my faith has helped me in my studies especially Maths. Maths is part of my curriculum and even though I am not the best at it, having faith that I can always get better and develop my God given talents has given me strength and belief. Furthermore, my faith has helped me to have faith and trust in others. Going to Mass or being part of the Salesian breakfast is a great way to feel a sense of togetherness. To sit in quiet reflection or to pray with others strengthens my faith and Saint Ninian's has been at the heart of this. **Mharia S4**

This year one thing that become apparent to me is to give back to the school and part of this to be in the service of God. I have taken on the various roles this year from being a student tutor to a subject ambassador. I have realised that I have a responsibility to give back to others and through my faith I have learned that the best way to give back is through my actions. Even though my faith can't do everything for me it has helped me believe that with God's love I



*“The privileged place for the prayerful reading of sacred Scripture is the liturgy, and particularly the Eucharist, in which, as we celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament, the word itself is present and at work in our midst. In some sense the prayerful reading of the Bible, personal and communal, must always be related to the Eucharistic celebration. Just as the adoration of the Eucharist prepares for, accompanies and follows the liturgy of the Eucharist, so too prayerful reading, personal and communal, prepares for, accompanies and deepens what the Church celebrates when she proclaims the word in a liturgical setting. By so closely relating *lectio* and liturgy, we can better grasp the criteria which should guide this practice in the area of pastoral care and in the spiritual life of the People of God” (Pope Benedict XVI *Verbum Domini*).*

“And so it seems certain to me that the Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals. But I am equally certain about what will remain at the end: .. the Church of faith. She may well no longer be the dominant social power to the extent that she was until recently, but she will enjoy a fresh blossoming and be seen as a man’s home, where he will find life and hope beyond death.” (*Pope Benedict XVI Faith and the Future*).

Food for Thought: “The Church in its two-thousand-year history has never before engaged with a secular culture. It presents a huge challenge. It is making the Church in Europe much smaller. In the past, what counted were statistics, the numbers of parishes and schools, the growing size of the Christian community, its weight. Now what counts is holiness, commitment, enthusiasm, the clarity of witness, teaching and leadership. Today, to be Catholic is to be totally counter-cultural and at times, evangelisation can seem like flogging a dead horse. Yet, Europe is a fertile mission-field. Dig through the topsoil and water wells up, even if dirty. The harvest is rich. Here in Britain, despite the vanguard of liberal, secular activists, it is rare to encounter direct hostility. Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14: 6) and at this moment, the Holy Spirit is at work in human hearts wooing them towards Him. It is not the ‘product’ that is defective but the ability of people within a busy, consumer culture to hear God’s call. As Catholics, it is our task to break through and to communicate Jesus Christ so that everyone can find their way to Him and to that true, genuine, lasting human happiness and fulfilment for which they long”. *Secularism: what does it mean to be human?* Bishop Philip Egan, 2021.

The lack of respect for God leads, according to Paul (Rom 1: 22-23) to confusion in how one perceives the significance of the sexual human body, with the acceptance of unseemly passions, and the whole of society is pervaded by disorder, violence, rebellion and ruthlessness (*Pontifical Biblical Commission What is Man?* [2021])

can achieve anything. Attending Mass, taking part in Caritas and spending time with the Salesians has helped me come closer to God and stronger in my faith but also to become a better person. **Anna S6**

Being Part of Caritas

When Pope Benedict XVI visited Scotland in 2010, he called upon young people to be faith witnesses to God’s love in their communities through learning and reflecting on our faith. The Caritas Award has given us, as Sixth Years, the opportunity to do just that; to deepen our understanding of our faith whilst contributing in a range of ways throughout our faith community. From volunteering in our local Parishes to lending a hand to those in need through charitable acts, many of us have are finding the Caritas journey a rewarding and enriching experience. In our final year here at St. Ninian’s the legacy of Pope Benedict’s visit has inspired us, as young Catholics, to take on a more active faith role within our communities and proved that “Love – caritas – is an extraordinary force . . .” **Luke S6**

Extra Ordinary Ministers of The Eucharist.

At our Inaugural Mass, Bishop John commissioned Sixth Years as Extra Ordinary Ministers of The Eucharist to assist at Morning Mass and at Year Group Masses. The commitment to and reverence shown to this privileged duty has been great and the group have shown to be excellent leaders of faith.

Pupil Voice on Faith in Saint Ninian’s

‘Having a rough day? Whenever I am, I remember that Jesus loves me and I feel proud of myself being able to carry on. I’m proud to be a Catholic. I’m

proud that Jesus loves me’. ‘Becoming an Extra Ordinary Minister of The Eucharist is a great way for



In our Oratory you will find the image of **The Fish**: One of the oldest Christian symbols is the fish. It was used by Christians to identify themselves and each other, often in times of persecution. It was found in the Roman catacombs, a secret meeting place during the time when the Christians were persecuted for their faith by the Romans. The fish is based on the first letters of the Greek words for Jesus Christ. The Greek word for fish is '*Ichthus*', which is also an acronym for Jesus. The Greek, '*Iesous CHristos THEou Uios Soter*' translates in English to, 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour'. Christ also referred to his apostles as 'fishers of men' while the early Christian writers called the faithful 'little fish'.

me to strengthen my faith and has helped me understand the importance of faith in our lives'.

'I am proud of how the Oratory has grown and expanded into a beautiful place of worship where pupils and staff can come together to pray'. 'I am proud of the amount of involvement of pupils in the faith life of the school'.

'I am proud of how much my school has enriched and deepened my faith. I have so many opportunities to practise my faith and I am very grateful.' 'My faith provides a bond between me and my family in a spiritual sense.' 'I am proud to be part of a community which really cares about faith and puts it first.'

"From the crisis of today a new Church of tomorrow will emerge – a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning. She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so she will lose many of her social privileges. In contrast to an earlier age, she will be seen much more as a voluntary society, entered only by free decision ... But in all [this] ... the Church will find her essence afresh and with full conviction in that which was always at her centre: faith in the triune God, in Jesus Christ, the son of God made man, in the presence of the Spirit until the end of the world. ..When the trial of his sifting is past, a great power will flow from a more spiritualised and simplified Church. Men in a totally planned world will find themselves unspeakably lonely. If they have completely lost sight of God, they will feel the whole horror of their poverty. Then they will discover the little flock of believers as something wholly new. They will discover it is a hope that is meant for them, an answer for which they've always been searching in secret." (**Fr. Joseph Ratzinger** in a radio talk given in 1969 called '*What Will the Future Church Look Like?*'))



"What are the qualities you see in others that you would most like to have yourselves? What kind of person would you really like to be?" Pope Benedict XVI 2010.

Theological Education

A Sine Qua Non for Catholic Teachers

**Dr L Franchi, School of Education,
University of Glasgow**

The need for Catholic teachers to have a sound theological education would seem to be self-evident. The reality, might be quite different: the avalanche of initiatives which covers contemporary educational practice has left little breathing space for study of areas which are not covered explicitly by such fraught and fluid terms like Professional Skills. With such a paucity of meaningful opportunities for ongoing study of perennial theological questions, we now need to re-emphasise why Catholic teachers should avail themselves of every opportunity to drink from the wells of theology.

"If we go out in the sun, we get a suntan .. but when we get in front of Jesus in the Eucharist we become saints" (Bl. Carlo Acutis)

Why is this important?

As we know, authentic Catholic schools should aim to develop an educational culture which is holistic and, in the classic educational sense, liberal. This forward-thinking requires a host of people with sufficient knowledge of the rungs on the theological ladder as well as deep engagement with the Catholic intellectual tradition. The theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity are the bedrock of this endeavour. Their implementation requires both theological fluency and pedagogical nuance.

Effective Catholic schools need a corps of teachers who have an appropriate standard of theological knowledge. They will thus be

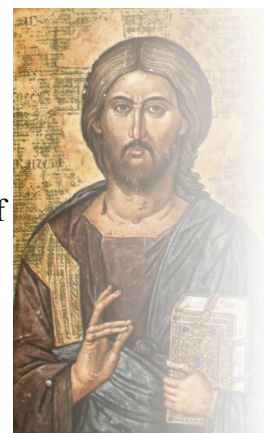
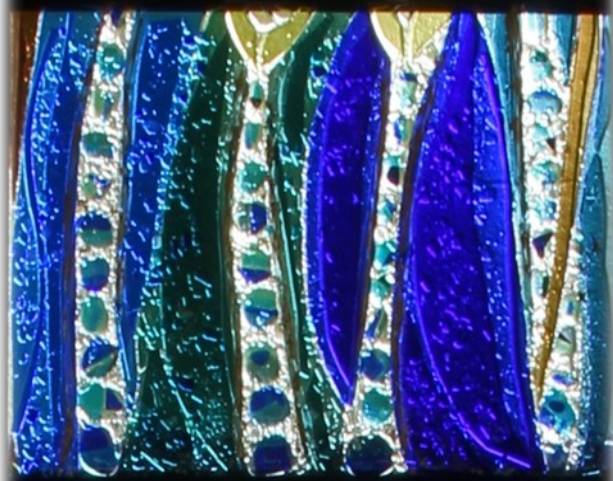
equipped to locate their professional vocation in the fertile field of the lay apostolate, opening new and exciting horizons for those who wish to develop the Church's educational mission. While Catholic teachers are not

normally called to scholarship in theological matters, the important work of teaching is informed by theological insights. Such high ideals will remain 'on paper' unless Catholic educators plan collegially a suitable way ahead. I make two suggestions:

There is a need to devise an INSET curriculum of theological topics which should be examined by schools over a set period. In this scenario, each INSET day will have time reserved for some study of a selected theological topic. Whether this is done on a national or diocesan level is another question: what matters is a firm commitment to move the agenda in this direction.

While all Catholic teachers have an obligation to develop their theological knowledge as part of their professional identity, specialist teachers of Religious Education should be supported (by schools / dioceses) to gain Higher Degrees in the subject area. This, of course, requires Catholic Higher Education bodies to offer sufficiently flexible opportunities for further study.

Since the earliest times, symbols have been important in every human culture and religious system. Symbols convey meanings in what they represent, and they point beyond their own existence. Catholic symbols help us to deepen our faith and shape our prayer. They bridge the material and spiritual worlds, and reveal truths about God. When you visit the Oratory you will see many symbols — water, sea storm and boat, wheat, grapes, vine, pomegranates, lily, blood, chalice, fire, infinity, roses, thorns, statues dedicated to Our Lord, Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Peace, Holy Family, and Saint Ninian, images of early Scottish Saints, Casa Candida, the icon of St. Ninian, Stations of The Cross, and within the altar chamber relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis and Saint Rosalia of Palermo.





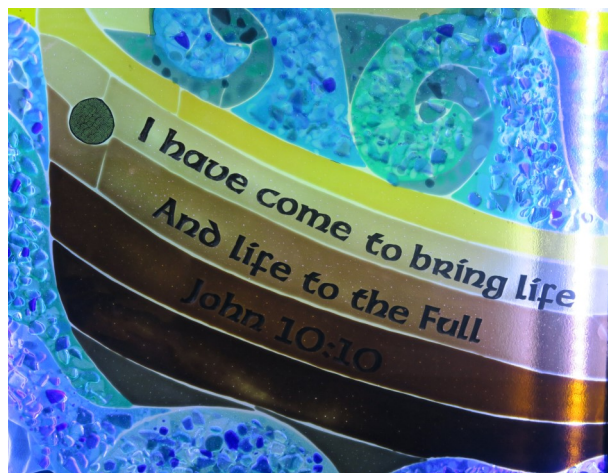
Catechists are witnesses who live for the celebration of the Eucharist and place themselves at the service of the Christian community, to support the deepening of faith in the concreteness of daily life. They tirelessly proclaim the Gospel of mercy, create the necessary bonds of welcome and closeness to better appreciate the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharistic mystery by offering the fruits of good works”.

Pope Francis, September 2021.

How can **I** bring people closer to Jesus Christ through my witness and service in the parish and my school? **What about His invitation:** “Come follow me” (Mark 1: 17)? **How**

might I respond? His offer: **“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full”** (John 10: 10)? **What does that look like in my life?**

Food for Thought: “Six years ago, I (an evangelical Anglican) gave a talk at the World Congress on Catholic Education about why it is essential to protect the religious distinctiveness of Catholic schools. I warned that there were signs, both in Europe and in North America, that those directing and teaching in such schools were often neglecting this distinctiveness. Why is this important? First, because parents have a right to expect that the schools they choose for their children will live up to their promises. Otherwise, the schools are engaging in false advertising behind a religious label. Second, because there is mounting evidence that schools with a clearly-defined mission that goes beyond academic instruction make an essential contribution to the health of society and the flourishing of students. Such schools form students of good character, enabling them to resist the seductions of a disintegrating culture. Unfortunately, this distinctiveness is threatened today as it never has been before, except under totalitarian regimes. There are external threats from government. But there are also internal threats, arising from a loss of nerve on the part of many educators who lack a clear understanding of and commitment to the proclaimed mission of their school. Those who guide and work in such schools should take nothing for granted, but strengthen the clarity and consistency of their mission”. **The future of faith-based schools**, Charles L. Glenn, *First Things*, 2021



Theological study can be easily caricatured as the solitary study of desiccated volumes from the hands of long dead men and women. We need to change the image: serious theological study, I suggest, is to immerse oneself in the Church’s living traditions. It is rooted first and foremost in love of the liturgy and in engagement with the wider life of the Church. As such, it is a major strand of the New Evangelisation project, with significant potential for the integral development of Catholic teachers as they seek to develop a culture of encounter in the world of education.

The Charism of Saint John Bosco and the Preventive System

Reason — Religion — Kindness

One of the moments in the week which I look forward to is the **Wednesday Breakfast** when the Salesian Sisters and volunteers join with students and staff in prayer and reflection from 8-8.25am. Thereafter we enjoy a snack and refreshment before formal school begins. Later in the day the Salesians and volunteers



run a lunch-time club which is greatly appreciated by our pupils. The charisma of the Salesians is a great gift to be shared with our pupils and teachers. Saint John Bosco offered helpful advice for the weary parent or frustrated teacher. One of the most challenging things about raising a child is knowing how, and when, to discipline. What is a parent (or teacher) to do when a pupil knows the exact buttons to push for maximum challenge, and nothing seems to be working? Don Bosco knows precisely

what you're going through, as he devoted his entire life to forming young rebellious boys. He took in hundreds of disadvantaged youth, educating them and exerting all of his energy towards turning these boys into upright men who would serve the greater good of society. As his efforts grew, John Bosco needed the help of others. This meant forming new teachers, too. In his letters to the teachers, John Bosco lays out a detailed **"Preventive System"** of education that seeks to dispose "the pupils to obey not from fear or compulsion, but from persuasion. In this system all force must be excluded, and in its place, charity must be the mainspring of action." Here are seven tips that Saint John Bosco gave to his teachers that are still relevant today and can help the weary parent or frustrated teacher guide children to the path of virtue.

Punishment should be your last resort.

In my long, career as an educator, how often this has been brought home to me! No doubt it is ten times easier to lose our patience than to control it, to threaten than to persuade. No doubt, too, it is much more gratifying to our pride to punish those who resist us, than to bear them with firm kindness. St. Paul often lamented how some converts to the faith too easily returned to their inveterate habits; yet he bore it all with patience as zealous as it was admirable. This is the kind of patience we need in dealing with the young.

The educator must strive to make themselves loved by their pupils, if s/he wishes to obtain their respect.

When s/he succeeds in doing this, the omission of some token of kindness is a punishment which rekindles emulation, revives courage and never degrades. Every educator must make them selves loved, if they wish to be respected. They will attain this great end if they make it clear by words, and still more by actions, that all care and solicitude are directed towards the spiritual and temporal welfare of our young people.

Except in very rare instances, corrections and punishments should not be given in public, but privately and apart from the others.

We should, therefore, correct them with the patience of a father/mother. Never, as far as possible, correct in public, but in private, or as they say — *in camera caritatis* — apart from the others.

The educator must see that the promotion of good behaviour, and the rewards and punishments entailed, are made known to the student, so that no one can make the excuse that s/he did



not know what was expected or forbidden.

In other words, children need boundaries and respond well to them. No one feels secure if they are flying blind, and they'll always crash.

Be exacting when it is a matter of duty, firm in the pursuit of good, courageous in preventing offensive behaviour, but always gentle and prudent. I assure you, real success can only come from patience.

Impatience merely disgusts the pupils and spreads discontent among the best of them. Long experience has taught me that patience is the only remedy for even the worst cases of disobedience and irresponsiveness among pupils. Sometimes, after making many patient efforts without obtaining success, I deemed it necessary to resort to severe measures. Yet these never achieved anything, and in the end, I always found that charity finally triumphed where severity had met with failure. Charity is the cure-all though it may be slow in effecting its cure.

To be real parents in dealing with the young, we must not allow the shadow of anger to darken our countenance.

If at times we are taken unawares, let the bright serenity of our minds immediately disperse the clouds of impatience. Self-control must rule our whole being—our mind, our heart, our lips. When someone is at fault, arouse sympathy in your heart and entertain hope in your mind for him; then you will correct him with profit. In certain difficult moments, a humble prayer to God is much more useful than a violent outburst of anger. Your pupils will certainly draw no profit from your impatience, and you will not be edifying anyone who may observe you.

It once happened...

A water-bearer in China had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always carried its full portion of water from the stream back to the house. But by the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot would only be half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to the house. Of course, the flawless pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what felt to the cracked pot like a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "Why don't you throw me out and get a new pot, for the other water pot must be your favourite. I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house." The water-bearer smiled and said to the pot, "I have always known about your crack, and I am very fond of it. Did you never notice that there were flowers only on one side of the long path? That's because I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Questions to ponder

- 1. What is the message of this story?**
- 2. Do you find it difficult to nurture and teach/parent two very different children, equally and unconditionally?**





The Crucifix: The most common symbol of our faith is the crucifix – a cross with the figure of the body of Jesus Christ attached to it. The crucifix is a symbol of sacrifice and atonement, since, according to the Bible, Jesus died for the sins of the world. The crucifix is found wherever there is a Catholic presence. A crucifix usually has the letters ‘INRI’ carved into the wood of the cross. These letters are short for the Latin phrase, “*‘Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum’*”, which translates as ‘**Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews**’. These are the words which Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea who sentenced Jesus to death, ordered to be written on the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified.

This beautiful story illustrates an example of a difference being appreciated not as a flaw but a value. If we see this story as an allegory for a teacher/parent with two children, it shows how a teacher/parent can nurture differently but equally, something the child will probably not be able to fully understand until they themselves become a parent.

Unconditional nurturing love is at the centre of our understanding of the story.

While good teaching and nurturing takes hard work and effort, nurturing love is a force of nature, and the norm in human society is that love governs child-adult relationships in a natural and powerful way. The difficulty may be in remembering to observe the children as they grow and change, and adapt to their different needs, appreciating that each child is on a different journey, and their gifts may need to be nurtured in individual ways.

And this is the ideal approach to teaching and nurturing. Every child is different and has different needs, and a good teacher will understand that and work hard to nurture for each of their students in a unique way for them, to meet their individual needs.



“When we pray, we speak to God. When we read Scripture, God speaks to us” (St. Augustine). Papal Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Gugerotti with Louisa Ward and Luke Campbell S6.

Being a teacher of young people is the greatest privilege by which any of us can be blessed: “Happy are you to have merited leading the children of God.” ([Num. 27:18](#)). The crown of a teacher is invisible, yet you know who is wearing it and who is not. It is there, in front of you, waiting for you to put it on. Wear it with pride and may all you do be blessed.