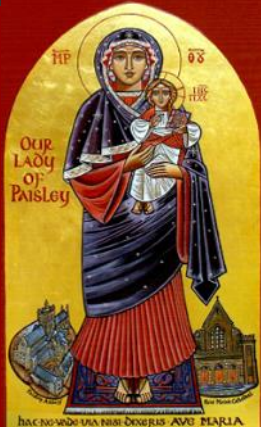


Centred on Christ

APRIL 2025



Our Lady of Paisley; pray for us

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Dear Colleague,

I hope you had a happy Easter and are refreshed for the summer term. This is always a busy but rewarding time. We will keep SQA candidates in our prayers and trust that the Holy Spirit will guide them through the exam diet. We also keep our Confirmandi in our prayers as they prepare to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As our P7 and S6 pupils prepare to move on to the next stage of their lives, we wish them every happiness and success.

We also wish teachers and support staff who are retiring this summer a long, happy and healthy retirement. If you wish to nominate them for a Diocesan Commendation for Service to Catholic Education, an online application form can be found on the Education section of the Diocesan website: <https://rcdop.org.uk/application-for-commendation-for-service-to-catholic-education> Please give the Curia plenty of time to process the commendation.

Prior to the Easter break, we issued the draft **Education and Youth Calendar** for next session. If there are any conflicts with other events, please let us know as soon as possible.

On Page 6, you will find the **Summary Strategic Plan for 2025-26**. We would be grateful if you would include appropriate targets in your School Improvement Plans. Thank you for all the ways you have worked with the diocese to enrich the faith experiences of children and young people.

We are delighted at the many innovative ways in which schools have celebrated the **Jubilee Year** and kept the theme of Pilgrims of Hope at the forefront of the life of your communities. Please continue to share these events with us.

One of the targets for the year ahead is to form an **Association of Catholic Teachers**. Father Matthew, our Vicar Episcopal, intends that the Association will organise events which will support FAITH, FRATERNITY and FORMATION. The spiritual development of staff was also a focus of the recent Joint Conference of Clergy and Head Teachers and we look forward to further developments at school/cluster and parish levels. Integrating *Companions on the Journey* within our PRD processes would be an important way to provide support for our teachers' ability to contribute to the Catholic Mission of our schools.

From August 2025, the St Andrews Foundation will offer teachers the opportunity to gain an **additional qualification in Religious Education**. The ATQRE course fulfils the academic requirement for applying to the GTCS for professional registration as a **specialist** Religious Education teacher. For all details including teaching dates and costs <https://www.gla.ac.uk/study/cpd/atqreforcatholicalschools/> or contact clare.fodey@glasgow.ac.uk The Diocese of Paisley will pay **one third of the fees** for any applicants who live in the diocese and attend Bishop John's support sessions: <https://www.rcdop.org.uk/atqre>

The **Diocesan Parent Forum** met last term and we are grateful for the suggestions made as to how we can continue to support parents in the faith formation of their children and to further develop the role of the Parent Forum.

The **Thanksgiving Mass** will be celebrated in the Cathedral on **Wednesday 11 June** at 4.30pm. All staff are very welcome to join Bishop John for this Mass, but we would particularly welcome NQTs, mentors and Head Teachers.

Best wishes,

Neil Roarty

Neil Roarty
Director of Schools

A Reflection for Teachers on John 4:4-42

Understanding and Embracing the Lessons from Jesus and the Samaritan Woman Father David Boyd

Light a candle, settle in a place where you will not be disturbed, and silence yourself.
Take three deep breaths. Read the passage slowly and notice what parts
resonate with you.
(New International Version)

⁴ Now, he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. ^[a])

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

A Reflection for Teachers on John 4:4-42

(Continued from page 2)

The Disciples Rejoin Jesus

²⁷ Just then, his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” ³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

³¹ Meanwhile, his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³² But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.”

³³ Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”

³⁴ “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵ Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶ Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷ Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. ³⁸ I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.”

Many Samaritans Believe

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words, many more became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.”

Reflection

The narrative of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman is a profound passage that offers numerous lessons for educators. This biblical account is rich with themes of inclusion, transformation, and the power of genuine dialogue. Reflecting on this passage can deepen our understanding of our roles as teachers, not just as educators, but as facilitators of growth and change in the lives of our students.

The Context of John 4:4-42

Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman occurs at Jacob's well in Sychar, a Samaritan town. This setting is significant, as Jews and Samaritans had a long history of mutual animosity. Despite this, Jesus intentionally travels through Samaria and engages in a meaningful conversation with a Samaritan woman, breaking social and cultural barriers.

Breaking Down Barriers

One of the first lessons for teachers from this passage is the importance of breaking down barriers. Despite the social norms of the time, Jesus' willingness to speak with the Samaritan woman highlights the need to transcend prejudices and biases. As educators, we encounter students from diverse backgrounds with various cultural, social, economic and family contexts. Our responsibility is to create an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and understood, regardless of their circumstances.

A Reflection for Teachers on John 4:4-42

(Continued from page 3)

Creating Inclusive Learning Environments

Just as Jesus broke down barriers, teachers can foster inclusivity by acknowledging and valuing the unique experiences and perspectives that each student brings to the classroom.

The Power of Genuine Dialogue

Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman is a powerful example of genuine dialogue. He listens to her, engages with her questions, and offers insights that transform her understanding. This exchange emphasises the importance of communication in teaching. It also calls us to enter into dialogue with the Lord in prayer.

Listening to Understand

Effective teaching requires more than just imparting knowledge; it necessitates listening to understand the needs and aspirations of our students. By actively listening, teachers can:

- Build trust and rapport with students.
- Identify and address any barriers to learning.
- Encourage students to express their thoughts and feelings openly.
- Pray about the things happening in their lives, their families, and the school.

Transformative Conversations

The impact of Jesus' words on the Samaritan woman was transformative. She went from being an outcast to a messenger, spreading the news about Jesus to her community. Similarly, teachers have the potential to inspire and transform students' lives through meaningful conversations. These interactions can ignite a passion for learning, encourage self-discovery and foster personal growth and deepen faith in Jesus.

Embracing Vulnerability

Another key aspect of Jesus's interaction with the Samaritan woman is vulnerability. Jesus, weary and in need of water, initiates the conversation by expressing his need. This act of vulnerability creates a space for genuine connection. It is essential to acknowledge our vulnerability and that sometimes, like Jesus, we can be weary and thirst for life-giving water.

The woman also experiences vulnerability as Jesus asks her about relationships. Her initial reaction is one of avoidance.

Modelling Vulnerability in the Classroom

As teachers, embracing our own vulnerability can profoundly impact what we present to our students. By acknowledging our limitations and being open about our own learning journeys:

- We embrace our humanity and our need for God's grace, making it easier for students to relate to us.
- Our vulnerability can help us to be more compassionate with ourselves and our students.
- We encourage students to take risks and embrace their learning processes.
- We foster a classroom culture where mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth.

The Role of Compassion

Compassion is a central theme in Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman. Despite her status and past, Jesus treats her with kindness and respect, offering her "living water" that leads to eternal life.

A Reflection for Teachers on John 4:4-42

(Continued from page 4)

Teaching with Compassion

Compassionate teaching involves recognising and addressing the emotional and social needs of students. This can be achieved by:

- Providing a supportive and nurturing learning environment.
- Being attentive to the challenges and struggles that students may face.
- Offering encouragement and support, particularly to those who may feel marginalised or disadvantaged.

Encouraging Self-Reflection

Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman prompts her to reflect on her life and beliefs, leading to a profound transformation in her life.

This, in turn, brings about transformation in the lives of those who hear the woman's experience.

As teachers, our commitment to growing in faith can transform our lives and the lives of the children entrusted to our care.

Conclusion

John 4:4-42 offers invaluable insights for teachers. By breaking down barriers, engaging in genuine dialogue, embracing vulnerability, teaching with compassion, and encouraging self-reflection, we can create a transformative educational experience for our students. Just as Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman led to her personal transformation and had a ripple effect on her community, our interactions with students have the potential to inspire and influence their lives in meaningful ways.

Prayer for Teachers

Lord God,
Your spirit of wisdom fills the earth
and teaches us your ways.

Look upon these teachers.
Let them strive to share their
knowledge with gentle patience
and endeavour always to bring the
truth to eager minds.

Grant that they may follow Jesus
Christ,
the way, the truth, and the life,
Forever and ever.

R/. Amen.



Draft Summary of Strategic Plan 2025-26



Diocese of Paisley
Education Department

- 1. Continuing to build up the Diocesan Family of Schools and work in partnership with stakeholders and Church Agencies to achieve shared goals**
 - a) To embed Developing in Faith and Diocesan toolkits within schools' self-evaluation processes in order to facilitate the identification of schools' support needs and the sharing of good practice across the Diocese.*
- 2. Offering Appropriate CLPL and Developing Leadership for Learning in Faith**
 - a) To establish an association which will provide regular support for Catholic teachers in their spiritual development.*
 - b) To continue to liaise with Local Authorities re Diocesan NQT and Leadership in Catholic Schools courses.*
 - c) To provide support for schools in meeting the needs of all young people, made in the image of God, which enables them to respond sensitively and in line with Church teaching to those who have a particular protected characteristic.*
 - d) To encourage teachers to undertake appropriate RE qualifications and support the introduction of the revised route to achieving the CTC.*
- 3. Supporting Curriculum Planning and Meeting Learners' Needs on their Faith Journeys**
 - a) To liaise with RE Coordinators to identify resources that would support activities suggested in Diocesan Primary RE planners to enhance RE teaching and learning.*
 - b) To continue to enhance the Primary curriculum by embedding the National Schools Singing Programme (NSSP) in Inverclyde Primary Schools.*
 - c) To continue to plan, implement and review the Diocesan Secondary curriculum in the Broad General Education phase and provide appropriate information for parents on the revised course.*
 - d) To continue to review and enhance the Senior Phase R.E. programme in collaboration with schools.*
 - e) To continue to work with SPRED and further develop links between schools, SPRED and the Diocesan Education Department and further liaise with schools to support pupils with Additional Support Needs to grow in faith.*
 - f) To nurture the spiritual development of children and young people by continuing to participate in the Holy Year, taking forward the legacy of the Carlo Acutis Eucharistic Miracles Encounter and supporting the introduction of Generation Hope Hubs in Secondary Schools.*
- 4. Strengthening Home-School-Parish Links by Supporting Parents, Chaplains and Schools**
 - a) To continue to share and extend good practice in Home-School-Parish partnerships.*
 - b) To further develop the Diocesan Parent Forum as a means of consulting parent representatives and developing support for Parent Councils and to contribute to the National Catholic Education Forum.*
 - c) To continue to deliver support for school chaplains and to continue to engage with schools in further developing arrangements which support the work of chaplains.*

Integrating *Companions on the Journey* within our PRD Processes

In 2016, SCES published *Companions on the Journey* aiming to provide a framework for CLPL on the Catholic mission of our schools and to integrate it within the PRD process. The document can be downloaded from the SCES website: <https://sces.org.uk/companions-on-the-journey/> It asks teachers to reflect on how they can accompany children and young people on their journeys of faith, just as Christ accompanied the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Companions on the Journey (CoJ) sets out six areas for Catholic School CLPL:

- Personal Spiritual Development
- Vocation of the Teacher
- Catholic School Mission and Identity
- Religious Education
- Catholic Curriculum Issues
- Catholic School Leadership.

It takes each of these areas and exemplifies how different types of CLPL could be linked to the various stages of the teacher's career and GTCS Professional Standards, from Provisional Registration to Headship. Both SCES and Diocesan CLPL Programmes show the links to the six CLPL areas and the five stages of the GTCS Standards.

Reflection

- How far do we integrate *Companions on the Journey* within our PRD processes?
- Do we encourage teachers to reflect on at least one of the six areas for Catholic School CLPL **before** their PRD meeting?
- How far does the teacher identify what they hope to achieve by participating in relevant CLPL? What difference will it make to them and to the school community?
- How far do we make the SCES and Diocesan programmes available to staff as part of the PRD and Improvement Planning Processes?
- Within the area of Religious Education, do we encourage teachers who do not have the CTC to undertake *Setting Out on the Road* or the revised route to achieving the CTC being launched in 2025-26? **(Teachers who do not have the CTC are unable to teach RE.)**
- Do we encourage teachers to undertake the ATQRE to become specialist RE teachers?
- What types of CLPL do we plan within our own collegiate programme? How far do we provide opportunities for Personal Spiritual Development? How far have we made use of Diocesan documents such as *A Community of Faith: Centred on Christ* to meet teachers' needs in understanding Catholic School Mission and Identity?
- Is Leadership CLPL only for teachers aspiring to senior leadership positions or do we nurture our leaders from the early stages of their careers? How can we do this within the school and with the support of the Diocese and SCES? The example given in *Companions on the Journey* for Provisional Registration is understanding the Role of Parents as "first educators". Can we encourage them to read and reflect on the diocesan document *Partnership with Parents: From Ideal to Action*? For those aspiring to SLT posts, can we encourage them to participate in the Diocesan course on *Leadership in Catholic Schools*?
- How do we know if our CLPL programme has been effective in meeting the identified needs of teachers? How has it made a difference to the experience of children and young people?

Integrating Companions on the Journey within our PRD Processes *contd.**(Continued from page 7)*

Catholic School CLPL Area	Type of CLPL Activity
Personal Spiritual Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiences which provide opportunities for personal reflection & prayer, leading to growth of self-awareness, beliefs, values and commitments
Vocation of the Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exploration of a personal response to being called to teach, called to evangelise, called to catechise, called to witness, called to lead, called to accompany young people
Catholic School Mission & Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities to understand the vision and values of Catholic education, to reflect on how these affect the mission of the Catholic school and to explore how they are addressed in school evaluation and planning working in partnership with the Church, with parents and the wider faith community to address Catholic school mission
Religious Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge of Scripture, Church teaching and of world religions learning about the purpose and nature of Religious Education in a Catholic school experience of using 'This Is Our Faith' to plan lessons, units and programmes
Catholic Curriculum Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> familiarisation with range of moral, social, ethical and spiritual aspects of some curriculum topics e.g., Life issues in Science; education for loving relationships; War, Peace, Environment, Hunger etc., Learning about Rights, Social Justice etc
Catholic School Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discernment of personal call to leadership roles at various career stages knowledge of statutory arrangements affecting Catholic schools knowledge of Church teaching which offers guidance on a range of ethical practices required of school leaders familiarisation with Catholic school systems internationally

The Prodigal Son

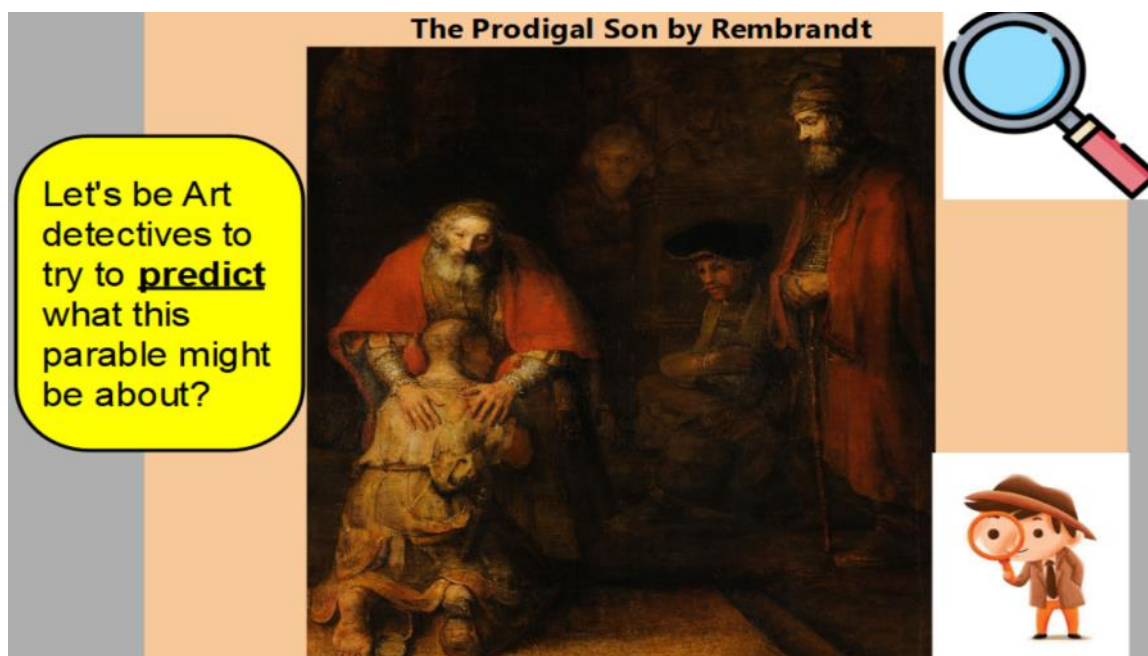
A Holistic Approach to Faith, Literacy, Art and Health and Wellbeing in the Primary Classroom

Murron Moore, Our Lady of the Missions Primary School

Planning

I planned this lesson for Primary 3 pupils to introduce them to the parable of the Prodigal Son whilst fostering literacy skills and promoting reflective thinking about emotional wellbeing. Through combining differentiated activities, creative tasks and digital resources, this lesson encouraged pupils to explore faith and emotions in an engaging and meaningful way.

I began the lesson by revisiting pupils' prior knowledge of other parables that the children had been learning about to support pupils in building connections between their prior learning and the new parable. The success criteria were negotiated and co-constructed with the learners which helped pupils to become more aware of how they would be successful by the end of this lesson. To spark my learners' interest and curiosity, I showed them a painting of 'The Prodigal Son' by Rembrandt. Through effective questioning, I scaffolded pupils' ability to critically analyse artistic elements, such as colour, focal point and space to help them to begin to predict some key themes of the parable. Through exploration of the lighting, characters, body language, facial expression and focal points, pupils were able to confidently infer a very good understanding of how long ago the parable was, who the main characters are and whether this would be a happy or sad story depending on the lighting. Pupils were encouraged to take some time for reflection based on their initial thoughts of the painting as they used sticky notes to share how the painting made them feel.








To support my learners' ability to make informed predictions about the parable, pupils were given time to infer the meaning of the word 'prodigal' with the help of picture clues on the smartboard. As a result, pupils were able to make more insightful predictions about the parable based on their analysis of the painting and inferencing skills whereby they demonstrated a deeper understanding of some of the key themes of the parable. Pupils were given the opportunity to record their predictions on a talking tin to refer back to later.

The Prodigal Son - A Holistic Approach to Faith, Literacy, Art and Health and Wellbeing in the Primary Classroom

(Continued from page 9)

We then spent time reading the parable of the Prodigal Son using the Children's Bible as the simplified language and illustrations can aid pupils' understanding of the key messages of the parable. I utilised Bloom's Taxonomy questions throughout reading the parable to prompt higher-order thinking, encouraging pupils to empathize with the characters. For example, pupils explored the son's journey of repentance and the father's act of forgiveness, reflecting on how these themes relate to their own lives. After reading the parable, I encouraged pupils to write how the story made them feel after reading the parable on another sticky note. We also revisited some of the pupil's predictions on the talking tins and took the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their predictions and how their ideas can evolve and adapt as we gain more information.

I carefully differentiated the tasks to ensure that the needs of all learners were met. Lower-ability pupils sequenced the parable using cut-and-stick sentences accompanied by their drawings of the characters' feelings at each stage of the story. As a group, we spent time revising sequencing and pupils were given the opportunity to practise this skill, in a group setting, with the example of an everyday morning routine prior to working on their task independently. My middle and higher ability groups completed a cloze procedure activity whereby they had to fill in the missing words either with or without a word bank. My higher ability group was challenged to complete their task without a word bank and they were then asked to draw a picture of the father and the son and add their own adjectives to describe each person's feelings and qualities. These activities encouraged pupils to develop key literacy skills, as well as fostering pupils to connect personally with the parable's themes. For additional support, a digital station was available with Chromebooks where pupils could choose to watch a YouTube video of the parable or refer to their children's Bible. These resources helped to bridge any gaps in pupils' memory and understanding of the parable to ensure all pupils could access the key themes of the parable.

The Lost Son		11th September 2024
Fast Finisher: Draw a picture of the Father and the Son to show how they both felt when the Son returned home.	1. The young Son wanted his _____.	Suns: Fill in the missing words using your own words.  Moons: Fill in the missing words using the word bank. 
	2. The Son _____ all of his money.	
	3. The Son had to eat with the _____.	
	4. He was very _____.	
	5. He decided to go home to his _____.	
	6. The Father _____ his Son.	
	7. They had a big _____.	
S.A.	  	

Impact on the learners

This lesson contributed to the holistic development of the pupils, developing their faith, emotional wellbeing and academic growth. It not only taught them a key Gospel message but also equipped them with skills and knowledge that they will be able to apply across the curriculum.

The Prodigal Son - A Holistic Approach to Faith, Literacy, Art and Health and Wellbeing in the Primary Classroom

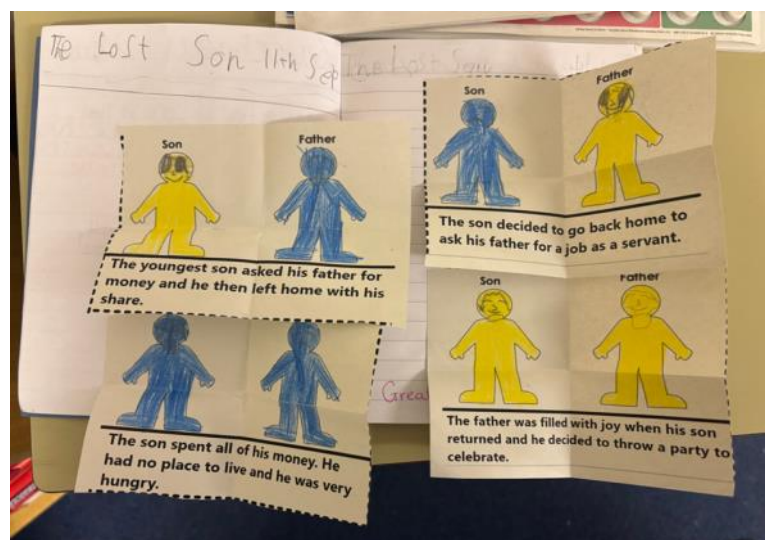
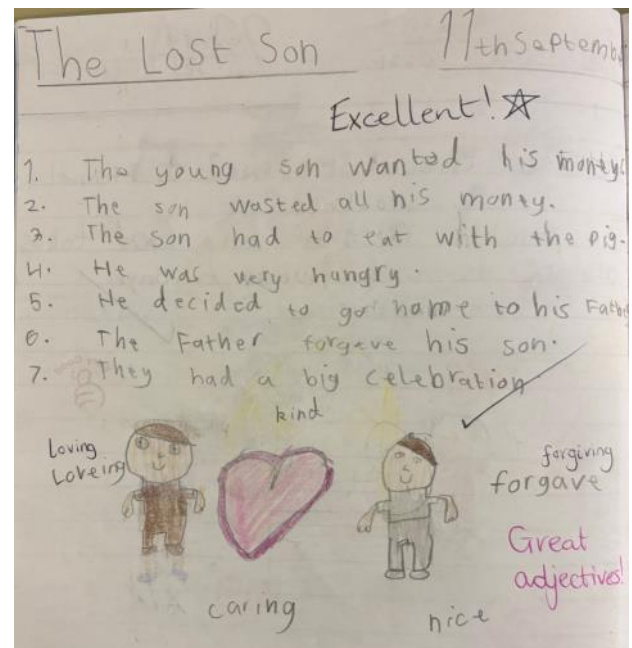
(Continued from page 10)

The use of the religious art helped to hook pupils' attention and spark a sense of curiosity helping them to become active participants in their learning from the beginning of the lesson. The pupils' curiosity encouraged them to ask questions and make predictions about the story whilst making them eager to find out more about it. It also provided an opportunity for all learners to access this learning through a visual medium which can be easier for some pupils to decode which promoted inclusivity of all pupils.

Through class discussion and collaboration, pupils analysed the artist's painting and reflected on the characters' feelings which helped them to connect emotionally with the story. By using sticky notes to express their feelings and drawing on how the characters felt at different points, learners developed a deeper understanding of emotions such as regret, forgiveness, and love. This helped them to empathise with others as they considered the perspectives of both the father and the son. Pupils in the high ability group demonstrated an excellent grasp of the emotions and qualities of the father and the son by identifying their own adjectives for each.

The integration of literacy activities, such as cloze procedure tasks, sequencing tasks, and adjective-based character descriptions helped to challenge my pupils' understanding of the parable. By encouraging children to analyse the motives of the characters and evaluate their actions, pupils developed high order thinking skills by applying the lessons of the parable to their own lives. I utilised effective questioning throughout the reading of the parable which scaffolded critical analysis and creative thinking, helping learners become more confident in articulating their thoughts and engaging with the parable.

Through creating links between RE and Health and Wellbeing, pupils began to reflect on the importance of forgiveness and being compassionate in their own relationships. By involving pupils in class discussion, providing differentiated activities and digital resources, all pupils were able to access and engage in the learning in a meaningful way. Pupils were given the opportunity to reflect on how the different texts made them feel. This led to class discussions about forgiveness, reconciliation and unconditional love which helped pupils to identify links between the parable and their own lives. As a result, this opened up the doorway for pupils to reflect on their own spiritual journeys and the teachings of the Catholic Church on compassion and mercy.



Missio Five Star Schools - Andrea Grant, Missio

St Ninian's Primary School

St Ninian's Primary School in Gourrock recently joined the growing list of Missio Scotland Five Star Schools throughout the country, becoming the first school in Paisley Diocese to receive the accolade.

To mark the milestone, Bishop John Keenan of Paisley along with Communications Officer for Missio Scotland, Gerard Gough, visited the school, where they spoke with pupils and staff about the importance of supporting the Pope's Charity. They then attended a beautiful assembly, organised by the schoolchildren themselves and the bishop presented them with a special award.

The Missio Scotland Five Star School initiative was established in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic with the aim of increasing engagement between our primary schools and Missio Scotland—the Scottish Bishops' designated charity for Catholic primary schools.

To become a Missio Scotland Five Star School, a school must complete all the tasks shown on the Missio Scotland Five Star Schools Chart, namely: praying the Mission Rosary; fundraising for Missio Scotland; putting on a Missionary Saints play; commissioning Missio Scotland Champions; and entering Missio Scotland's Christmas Artwork Contest.

When schools have completed each task and provided Missio Scotland with evidence—be that via a photo, video or social media tag—they are then sent out the corresponding star. When a school has a star for each of the five tasks on the chart, they become a Missio Scotland School Five Star and receive their own Missio Scotland mascot, Missy Moo!

In the years that follow, if a school engages with Missio Scotland in any way—prays the Mission Rosary, holds an assembly or uses our resources for example—and fundraises for us, they receive a Bronze Flag (Year 2), a



Missio Five Star Schools - Andrea Grant, Missio St Ninian's Primary School

(Continued from page 12)

Silver Flag (Year 3), a Gold Flag (Year 4) and a special Golden Missy Moo Award upon having engaged and fundraised consistently for five years.

"It was fantastic to see yet another Missio Scotland Five Star School being recognised for their engagement efforts and with St Ninian's being the first in Paisley Diocese, that was very special too," Gerard Gough said. "The Missio Scotland Champions put on a really impressive and poignant assembly in the presence of Bishop Keenan and the entire school community. I know myself, the staff at St Ninian's and the Education Department at Paisley Diocese were delighted that Bishop Keenan was able to take time out of his busy schedule to present St Ninian's with their well-deserved award. Hopefully they'll go on to achieve their Bronze Flag award very soon too!

Bishop Keenan said, "I was most encouraged with the work the children and the whole school community had put into gaining their Missio Scotland Five Star School Award. They have shown that by coming together to pray, fundraise and work together, our children can become real missionaries and ambassadors of children helping children, exchanging in faith and friendship with other pupils around the world regardless of background or beliefs. It is the true meaning of mission."

"We now have 12 Missio Scotland Five Star Schools throughout the country, including two in Paisley Diocese— St Ninian's and **St Joseph's in Busby**— which marks a really great start to the initiative. It is our hope that someday, in the not-too-distant future, every Catholic primary school in Scotland will become a Missio Scotland Five Star School, because that will mean that they will have focussed in on engaging with ourselves and are aware of our importance, not just in Scotland, but as part of the wider Pontifical Mission Societies throughout the world."



Missio Jubilee Year Section and Resources

<https://www.missioscotland.com/primary-schools/jubilee-2025>

Laudato Si' in Trinity High School

Heather McKillop, Principal Teacher of Religious Education

In 2015 our schools were introduced to the encyclical letter Laudato Si. Pope Francis urged us to consider our common home and to reflect on its precarious state. In response to this our schools were urged to consider how we could use the teaching of the church to explore our environment, learning for sustainability, children's rights, equity, justice and peace, stewardship, Christian responsibility and global citizenship. We were encouraged to consider outdoor learning and how we could provide opportunities for our children to use alternative spaces in order to reflect on themes such as prejudice, discrimination, inequality and poverty.

Set back a few years by our global pandemic, here at Trinity High School we are now in our fifth year of our Laudato Si journey. To ensure that we have truly taken on board the message and intention of becoming a Laudato Si school we have ensured that the key themes and messages have been embedded across the school in a variety of curricular areas.



Laudato Si across the Curriculum

As part of our Religious Education programme we have chosen to take several of the Laudato Si themes and incorporate them into pupil learning across the year so that pupils are constantly reflecting on the words of the Pope. This has enabled our pupils to become more aware of Laudato Si as they progress from S1-S6 rather than having a standalone event where our pupils may not reflect on the messages or carry them forward in their lives. By incorporating the Pope's teachings into core RE lessons across the year and over all year groups it means that we are also reaching more staff through the wider and extended Religious Education team.

Our pupils reflect through the following topics:

S1	S2	S3	Senior Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Called to LoveCaring for OthersJudaism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The ProphetsIslamCalled to Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Called to LoveSikhismJustice and PeaceEquality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Called to LoveMoralityThe Human ConditionResponding in FaithThe Body of ChristPrayer and Spirituality

Laudato Si' in Trinity High School

(Continued from page 14)

Sciences:

Across our Science faculty our pupils and staff have a number of ways to reflect on Laudato Si':

- In S3 and Higher Biology pupils learn about climate change. They reflect on the causes, impacts and solutions.
- Our National 5 Environmental Science class learn about water management and resources as well as waste management and the impacts of growing populations on the world. The course also covers human impacts on biodiversity and how humans can positively influence this, for example, through conservation.
- In S2 science pupils learn about decreasing biodiversity due to intensive farming and its impact on soil increasing the need to use fertilisers.
- In S3 Biology indicator species is taught and how their presence or absence indicates pollution/ environmental quality and interrogate data around particular species in response to pollution/increasing temperatures.
- Additionally, pupils look at the effect of loss of organisms in a food web and the wider effect of that on biodiversity within ecosystems.
- In Higher Biology pupils learn about the impact of increasing human population and our farming methods on reducing ecosystem, genetic and species diversity.
- Pupils in our S3 Biology classes have visited the Greenock Cut visitors centre where they use sampling techniques, such as quadrats and pond netting, that are used to assess the biodiversity in an area for conservation purposes. This also involves using the results to assess water quality and the effect of pollution on the pond by analysing the indicator species present.

Geography:

Pupils in S1 conduct a survey in order to identify where litter is the biggest problem within the school and Renfrew town centre. They then completed litter picks to solve this. Our classes regularly engage in class litter picks and pupils have taken part in The Big Clean Up.

Social Education:

In S1 our pupils find out about the 17 UN Sustainable Development goals through their SE lessons. They consider what they think are the most important goals for young people and decide on ways that they can champion these goals and how they can put a plan in place to achieve them.



Laudato Si' in Trinity High School

(Continued from page 15)

The Wider School Community:

Across the wider school community, pupils and staff have had various opportunities to participate in events and initiatives which help them to reflect up the key messages of Laudato Si':

- Pupils have been involved in a Bin it to Win competition. This has involved the whole school community being encouraged to put their rubbish in the bin in order to win prizes.
- Our Eco club have completed courses to make themselves carbon literate.
- We have had a whole school focus on litter and recycling. Our new recycling bins and bags are now in place.
- Highlighted through Called to Love lessons, products like reusable make up wipes and sanitary products like period pants are promoted to pupils as a way to reduce our rubbish.
- Our school has taken delivery of a Coffee cart. Pupils and staff have been trained to make various hot beverages and pupils and staff are encouraged to buy from this. This promotes the idea of supporting local products and businesses. A discount is offered for bringing a reusable cup.
- Pupils are encouraged to bring refillable water bottles to school to reduce the amount of plastic we are using on a daily basis.
- We have implemented Laudato Si as part of our school values and retreat days. Pupils have been using outdoor spaces for reflection and using Gospel passages to reflect on the gift of our outdoor spaces. Pupils have recently enjoyed taking part in sessions where they have thought about sustainable fashion and how to upcycle materials to create new and unique pieces.
- We have taken delivery of a Breathing Space bench in conjunction with our partnership with NHS Breathing Space. This has provided an outdoor space for pupils and staff to reflect and spend time outdoors.
- We have established a gardening group who have planted seeds and wild flowers. They have also painted benches to make our outdoor space attractive where people would want to spend time.



Developing in Faith at Trinity High School

Here in Trinity High we are blessed to have two very active faith-based clubs. We have our mysterious Tuesday group and our Faith Ambassadors. Both groups play an active part in the Faith development of our school. As well as having a large population of practising Christians, we also have many Muslim and Sikh pupils and staff. At Trinity we want people of all faith to feel included, valued, respected and supported.

We have been blessed with an active Chaplaincy group which is made up of members of staff from our different faith groups. This has allowed us to consider the perspective of everyone in our school community which is important as our school prayer states "God our Father, you love **everyone** in our school community."

We are conscious that it is the responsibility of all members of staff in our community to carry out the Catholic mission and to lead by example. Hence, when it comes to planning for our Developing in Faith return, this is not just the job of the RE department.

In order to do this effectively we have taken the approach to triangulate our evidence and therefore take the view points of all stakeholders. This includes staff, pupils and any other relevant stakeholders such as:

- Local parishes
- Parent Council
- Charity partners

Our planning for *Developing in Faith* begins with our school and department improvement plans. Our plans state:

"We are proud to be a Catholic school and ensure that Catholic Education, the development of the individual as a person in the image and likeness of God, is central in everything that we do. The Catholic nature of the school is clearly evident through every aspect of school life. We place emphasis on positive relationships and benefit from a mutual respect between pupils, staff and parents. We enjoy excellent links with our local Parishes and welcome the commitment and spiritual leadership of our Local Priests and school Chaplain."

Therefore, it is the responsibility of all to consider our faith journey and plan accordingly.

All departments consider their response to the following priority:

Improvement Priority 4 – We will continue to develop our community of Faith to ensure everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

This ensures that staff are in continuous discussion about the faith life of the school and will minute their responses. Minutes are shared with the senior leadership team and they are then fed into our standards and qualities report. Using evidence from departmental improvement plans and minutes we are able to take the staff view into account and have clear evidence for rationale and change.

Our pupil focus groups are an important part of gathering evidence and also providing all pupils with the opportunity to have their voice heard. As such, at various points across the year we take time with our pupils to gather their thoughts and opinions on the various questions pertaining to Developing in Faith. In order to do so, a pupil friendly version of the questions are put together and are given to the pupils in order to facilitate a discussion. Our Faith Ambassadors group take responsibility for this task and then plan for any events or activities that arise from the action points.

Finally, we consult with our external partners and agencies on a regular basis. By involving our local parishes, charity partners and parent council we are able to take into account the views of all stakeholders within Trinity High. This is important as it ensures that we give a voice to all members of our school community.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DEVELOPING IN FAITH	DEVELOPING IN FAITH
WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT BEING IN A CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL?	WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU HAVE TO BE A LEADER IN SCHOOL?
HOW DO YOU USE YOUR TALENTS FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS?	WHAT MAKES TRANSITION TIMES VERY GOOD? (E.G. CHANGE OPTIMIZABLE)
WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF PRAYER LIKE?	HOW DOES PARTICIPATION IN HOLY MASS, RETREAT DAYS, FAITH TRIPS AND PRAYER SERVICES IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

St Stephen's Junior and Senior Vinnies: Living Out Faith in Action St Stephen's High School

John Girkins Principal Teacher Religious Education

At St Stephen's, our Junior and Senior Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) groups—known as the Vinnies—are at the heart of our school's commitment to faith in action. Inspired by the values of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, our young volunteers dedicate their time and energy to supporting those in need, demonstrating compassion, kindness, and a strong sense of social responsibility. Having only been instituted as a Conference in autumn 2024, our students and the staff supporting them have already made an instant impact, and we have great hope for the future with further planned charitable events. The greatest joy is that the students themselves have come up with ideas at their regular meetings, led by themselves and with the generous support of our teachers.



Supporting Our Lady of the Mission in Paisley

One of our key projects supported by one of our members of staff this year has been collecting essential toiletries for **Our Lady of the Mission in Paisley**, which supports vulnerable individuals and families. Through the generosity of our school community, we have gathered a wide range of items, including soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and deodorant, ensuring that those in need have access to basic hygiene essentials. This initiative not only provides practical help but also reminds us of our duty to care for the dignity of every person.



Helping St Francis Parish SSVP: Bingo and Lunch Club

The Vinnies have also been actively involved in **St Francis Parish, Port Glasgow**, working alongside their SSVP Conference to support the local community. Our volunteers assist



with the parish **bingo and lunch club**, which provides a warm, welcoming space for elderly and isolated members of the community. A few students even participated in a few rounds of bingo and were so close! They

St Stephen's Junior and Senior Vinnies: Living Out Faith in Action St Stephen's High School

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are practising the art of being quicker off the mark calling out!

By offering companionship, serving meals, and helping with activities, our Vinnies bring joy and a sense of belonging to those who might otherwise feel alone. This Lent, as well as our school supporting SCIAF, our Vinnies and Pupil Chaplaincy captains are taking the lead discussing which charities we will be supporting amongst which will be Mary's Meals, the Cardinal Winning Pro-Life Initiative as well as local organisations. These moments of service remind us of the power of simple acts of kindness and the importance of building a strong, caring community.

Supporting the Port Church Angels Project Food Collections

Hunger and food poverty are pressing issues, locally and globally. That's why during Advent our pupils, staff and especially our Vinnies were dedicated to collecting food donations for **Port Angels**, a local charity that provides food parcels and support to struggling families in Port Glasgow. By rallying the support of our school community, we have been able to donate non-perishable food items such as pasta, rice, canned goods, and cereals. Every contribution makes a difference, ensuring that families facing hardship receive the nourishment and support they need.

We received a beautiful letter from the organisers of the Church Angels project thanking our young people and community which was shared with pupils and staff.

Living Out Gospel Values

Through these initiatives, our Junior and Senior Vinnies are putting Gospel values into action, following Jesus' call to serve others, especially the poor and vulnerable. Their work reflects the core principles of the Society of St Vincent de Paul—compassion, respect, and practical help. These experiences also allow our young people to grow in faith, develop leadership skills, and become role models for others in the school.

We are incredibly proud of our Vinnies and their commitment to making a positive impact in our school, parish, and wider community. Their dedication and generosity show that even small acts of kindness can bring great change.

If you would like to support our work, whether through donations or by getting involved, please get in touch with the school. Together, particularly in this Jubilee Year, we can continue to be a beacon of faith, pilgrims of hope, and giving in love.

United Reformed Church

5 Brown Street
Port Glasgow
PA14 5BP

Registered Charity Number SC000582

19th December 2024

Mrs. J. McDonald
Head Teacher
St. Stephens High School
Kilmacoll Road
Port Glasgow
PA14 6PP

Dear Mrs. McDonald

On behalf of the minister, and congregation of Port Glasgow United Reformed Church, particularly the volunteers who operate our Church Angels Project, I would like to thank the staff and pupils of St. Stephens High School for the extremely generous donation of food for our foodbank. It was very kind of the young people to remember the families who are finding life difficult during the festive time.

We are so grateful for all the support we have received with donations of food and monetary which has allowed us to maintain a variety of food on the shelves and provide special treats during the festive season. Unfortunately in the current financial climate the demand on the foodbank is greater than it has ever been.

Thank you once again; your support is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Wilson



Education is an Act of Hope

Alan Graham, Head Teacher St Joseph's Primary

This was the theme for our CHAPS Conference 2023. We were inspired to come together with all our staff and explore and share that Hope. We pledged, as school leaders, to allocate time on one of our in-service days to bring together all of the Catholic Primary educators in Inverclyde and encourage and celebrate that Hope. We arranged a number of meetings to plan and prepare but they didn't happen. Too busy raising attainment or fire-fighting or curriculum developing or any of the hundred other things we have to do as a matter of urgency.

In 2024 our theme was – Pilgrims of Hope.

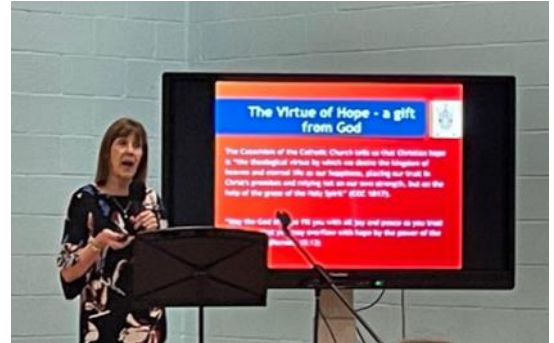
What caught our attention was the verbs. An act is something you do, a pilgrimage is something you undertake. The hope that we are called to represent requires conscious and deliberate action. We recognised that as Catholic Leaders we were called to witness to our Faith and nurture and value that same witness in our staff teams.

So, we committed to dedicate our October In-Service Day, (Yes! A Whole Day!), to our Catholic teachers. Our aim was to create a spiritual oasis where our teachers could get away from the stress of doing even more, with even less and do it even better. We wanted to create a moment where our teachers could STOP! and re-connect with Jesus and the Hope that he gives. Really importantly, we wanted to remind ourselves about the central importance of our role as Catholic teachers and the Hope that we needed to have in order to share that with our young people and their families.

We had to be quite brave in allocating this time. We all had School Improvement Plans to deliver, with aims and outcomes to overtake, all based on valid and worthwhile priorities. However, we had to recognise that as Catholic educators our central priority around which all other priorities orbit is Jesus.

We arranged our speakers and presenters, workshops and Liturgy and created our day as an Act of Hope.

Barbara Couper, the Director of SCES, inspired our teachers, just as she had inspired the Heads at CHAPS, with her funny, moving, inspiring and deeply personal witness entitled "Returning to Our Village Full of Hope."



Education is an Act of Hope

(Continued from page 20)

Roisin Coll, Professor of Catholic Education and Director of The St. Andrew's Foundation for Catholic Education, challenged us in partnership with Anne Marie Mullan, our Diocesan RE Advisor, on, "Becoming a Welcoming School".

Justice & Peace, SCIAF, Missio and Fr. Jonathan Whitworth provided inspiring and enjoyable workshops after an excellent lunch provided by the lovely catering staff of All Saints Primary School.



Our day was rounded off, naturally, by celebrating Holy Mass with Father Matthew Carlin, our Vicar Episcopal for Education, Fr Gerry McNellis and Father Eoin Patton.

So, how did it go? Below are some quotes fed back through the evaluations.

- *Barbara reminded me that we are an important part of our children's village and the importance of each child feeling they are known (and loved) within our school. We have had a stream of new pupils over the last few months and I will work harder to find time to make them feel seen and to be that encounter with Christ for them.*
- *A reminder of the vocation that teaching is and the impact of having hope in children and developing their God-given talents.*
- *This was challenging me to reflect on how visible and real God actually is within our school and within our classrooms. I have often wished that our pupils could be more aware of God's love for them (as I was as a child, it was just a 'given'). How do we instill that in all our children?*
- *Permeating the distinctive Catholic ethos throughout all learning and the school day as well as individual RE lessons. It is a way of life.*

The feedback, written and anecdotal, evidence that we achieved our aim. Our teachers were able to take a moment and reflect on the centrality of their Catholic vocation. We didn't talk about programmes of work, achievement of levels or Es & Os. We talked about our Faith and our relationship with Jesus and what that meant for us in our jobs every day.

Like all aspects of teaching, we are operating in an increasingly pressurised space, where more and more is expected of us. Jesus, our original teacher, knows this and encourages us to turn to him.

"Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." **Matthew 11:28-30**

This was a good start for us. A crucial reminder of what should be held as centrally important. We now need to go on from here and consciously invite Jesus into our classrooms every day. To actively witness to Him in our teaching and relationships.

We will go on now into our Jubilee Year and encourage our children and families to become Pilgrims of Hope in a world which can feel like hope is lost.

SPUC Resources

Emmet Dooley, SPUC Education and Outreach Manager
emmet@spucscotland.org

Welcoming New Life

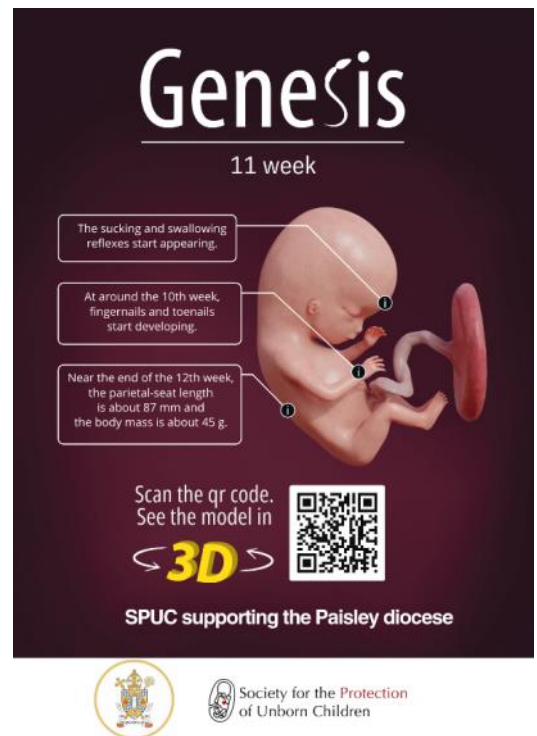
Welcoming new life is one of the signs of hope which Pope Francis highlighted when he announced the Jubilee Year .

“Openness to life and responsible parenthood is the design that the Creator has implanted in the hearts and bodies of men and women, a mission that the Lord has entrusted to spouses and to their love. It is urgent that responsible legislation on the part of states be accompanied by the firm support of communities of believers and the entire civil community in all its components. For the desire of young people to give birth to new sons and daughters as a sign of the fruitfulness of their love ensures a future for every society. This is a matter of hope: it is born of hope and it generates hope.”

This article by Emmet Dooley, Education and Outreach Manager of SPUC, introduces some resources which schools may find valuable.

SPUC has produced a new **Augmented Reality, Genesis resource.**

Simply scan the QR code to download the free app and begin this unique discovery of life before birth.



See video below:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DF9UpqaN7GT/?igsh=ejBvYnl2aWlnaHVy>

This fantastic resource adds so much to our pupils' learning experience and enhances what we do as educators, especially as we look at their first nine months of life before birth. If you wish to order a free sample copy, please email: emmetdooley@spuc.org.uk Classroom sets of 24 are also available for a donation. Recommended donations are £100 for 24 copies.

We also have the Genesis school poster available which was introduced at the Motherwell Mass for Life. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C8udsDpovod/?igsh=MWs5YjNtaWE2MDcwcA==>

SPUC has updated its *Love and Responsibility* brochure to advertise its wide range of talks and presentations. It can be accessed at <https://spuc.org.uk/about-spuc/education/> and on TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Pro-life.

Journals from Jerusalem: Stories from Justice & Peace Scotland's Visit to the Holy Land

Anne Marie Clements, Catholic Social Teaching Engagement Officer
annemarie.clements@justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk

Hope was at the heart of the Holy Land Coordination's visit to Jerusalem in January of this year. There was hope that the fragile ceasefire, which was announced during the group's travels, would hold. Hope that this ceasefire would amount to more than just a temporary pause in hostilities and instead mark the beginning of a genuine and lasting peace process for all who call Israel and Palestine home. Hope that the presence and witness of the Christian Church in the Holy Land may shine as a beacon of light in the darkness.

As a delegate of the Holy Land Coordination, I had the honour of traveling to Jerusalem on behalf of Justice & Peace Scotland, accompanying Archbishop William Nolan as he met with other bishops from across Europe for their annual visit.

The Holy Land Coordination (HLC) is a yearly meeting of bishops, mandated by the Holy See, that is defined by 'four Ps' – Presence, Prayer, Pilgrimage, and Pressure. The bishops, joined by representatives from their associated episcopal conferences and various Christian organisations, go to be present with the Christians who still remain in the Holy Land to pray with them; to encourage pilgrimage to their land; and to advocate on their behalf at home. The Coordination exists to act in solidarity with region's Christian communities and share in the pastoral life of the local Church as it experiences extreme political and social-economic pressure. Above all, the mission of the HLC is to reassure the "living stones", that is the Christians of the Holy Land, that they are not forgotten by their brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.

Who are the Christians of the Holy Land?

Christians in the Holy Land call themselves the "living stones" as an affirmation that they are the remnants of the first Christian communities of the early Church established some 2000 years ago. Just like the ancient stone buildings that commemorate the places associated with the life of Christ, these real "living stones" evidence the unbroken link between their ancestors in the first Christian



Image Credits - Marcin Mazur, CBCEW

(Continued from page 23)

communities, established when the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles at Pentecost, and the Christian communities still present in Palestine, Israel and the surrounding areas today. These Christian families, therefore, have remained in the Holy Land for generations and thus have a unique responsibility for maintaining Christian life and presence in the place where Jesus was born, crucified, and rose from the dead.

Local Christians today belong to various denominations including Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, and Evangelical and while each denomination maintains its own distinct identity, Christian families and associations are often mixed. Most of the Christians throughout the Holy Land are ethnically Arab with communities found throughout Jordan, Israel, Jerusalem, and in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza. They are an integral part of society across the region with Christian schools, hospitals and social projects serving people of all faiths and backgrounds. The Christians of Palestine and Israel face the exact same political, social, and economic challenges impacting all people in these areas. Local churches play an important role in working for justice and peace, and we are called to join them in this effort by virtue of our shared mission from Jesus to be peacemakers (Matthew 5: 9).

Sunday Mass in the West Bank

A significant part of the Holy Land Coordination's visit is the celebration of Sunday Mass with a local parish. On Sunday, 19th January, we travelled to Aboud, a Palestinian village in the West Bank where Christians and Muslims live together harmoniously. We were graciously welcomed by Father Remon Haddad and the Catholic community of the parish of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows.

It was heart-warming to see the flags representing the nations of all the Bishops in the Coordination, which were gathered by the parish for this special occasion, carried in the entrance procession by the Palestinian Catholic Scout Association of St John the Baptist. The people's deep faith and strong sense of community were genuinely inspiring—a true "light shining in the darkness" (2 Peter 1: 19). At home many of us may often take our faith and communities for granted, going to mass on Sunday, ticking a box, not speaking to others gathered beside us, then leaving again to get on with our weekend. Yet the Palestinian Christian communities we encountered remain unwavering in their love for Jesus and in their dedication to maintaining the presence of Christians in the Holy Land despite the political hardships and difficulties they face while living under the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

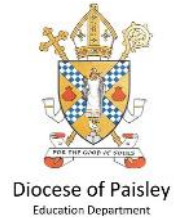
Restrictions on Clean Water for Seminarians

Another trip took us to Beit Jala, a Palestinian Christian town in the Bethlehem area to visit The Latin Patriarchal Seminary which is home to around fifteen Arab Christian students. During a tour of the seminary, its rector Fr Bernard shared insights on how they form men for the priesthood in the very land where Jesus established the Church. On the roof terrace looking out over the surrounding villages, and with a view of the Separation Wall that surrounds the West Bank, he told us about the daily struggle of rationing their water supply to ensure all students have enough. As is the case for most properties in Palestinian towns, the seminary is forced to cope with limited access to clean and safe water. The students have running water once a week. Restrictions on water provision by the Israeli authorities is a common concern for Palestinians yet the Israeli settlements in the West Bank have uninterrupted access to clean, safe running water. When the water does come, it is not of a standard fit for human use. Recent tests conducted on the seminary's tap water revealed harmful bacteria, leading to some students developing skin conditions on their scalps. Earlier this year, one young man received treatment for a liver parasite that was likely contracted from the water.

Stories like these are by no means unique, in fact they are illustrative of the experiences of many of many faiths and backgrounds who are in much need of the realisation of justice and peace for all people who call the Holy Land home.

Justice & Peace Scotland is eager to visit Secondary Schools or parishes to share reflections and stories from their recent trip. For more information and to schedule a free visit, please reach out via email at annemarie.clements@justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk .

Themes for Prayer and Reflection



April

Easter

When schools return after the Easter holidays, we will still be celebrating the Season of Easter which provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the messages of the Resurrection.

Father John Morrison has kindly provided an assembly which can be found in TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Prayers and Assemblies/April-June.

During Lent, many of us would have meditated on the Stations of the Cross. In 1988, Father Sabino Palumbieri proposed the creation of a complementary set of stations, which focus on the appearances of Jesus from the Resurrection and the events which follow up to Pentecost.

Like the Stations of the Cross (Via Crucis), the Stations of the Resurrection (Via Lucis) consists of fourteen stations. There are a number of versions which have slight differences as to the fourteen events which comprise the stations, but most focus on:

- Jesus rises from the dead. (Mt 28:5-6)
- The women find the empty tomb. (Mt 28:1-6)
- Mary Magdalene meets the risen Jesus. (Jn 20:16)
- Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus. (Lk 24:13-27)
- Jesus is recognised in the breaking of bread. (Lk 24:13-27)
- Jesus appears to the disciples in Jerusalem. (Lk 24:36-39)
- Jesus gives the disciples his peace and the power to forgive. (Jn 20:22-23a)
- Jesus strengthens the faith of Thomas. (Jn 20:24-29)
- Jesus appears by the Sea of Tiberias. (Jn 21: 3-13)
- Jesus commands Peter to feed his sheep. (Jn 21:15-17)
- Jesus commissions the disciples and sends them into the whole world. (Mt 28:16-20)
- Jesus ascends into heaven. (Acts 1:9-11)
- Mary and the disciples wait in prayer. (Acts 1:12-14)
- The Holy Spirit descends at Pentecost (Acts 2:2-4)

You may wish to touch on some of these at appropriate points during the Easter season. Some versions are:

[Stations Of The Resurrection \(Via Lucis\) - Catholic-Link](#)

[CM SR booklet 111418.indd \(columban.org\)](#)

[Stations of the Resurrection : Via Lucis — Conference of Religious \(corew.org\)](#)

[23 \(columbans.co.uk\)](#)

Appropriate resources can also be found in the P1-P7 Planners.

(Continued from page 25)

April

The Eucharist

A key plank in the Diocesan Spiritual Recovery plans has been the encouragement of Catholics to return to the celebration of Sunday Mass *#Home to Mass*. *Centred on Christ* (April 2021) contained a feature article on The Eucharist by Bishop John and Father Paul Brady, Vicar Episcopal for Liturgy. It also contained Case Studies from two High Schools on Eucharistic Adoration. Father Joe Balmer described how he enabled children in Primary Schools to experience Eucharistic Adoration (August 2023). In January 2022, St. Paul's Primary School shared its practice in enabling children to attend Mass in the parish during the school week as well as monthly Family Masses. The Family Mass in St Joseph's Parish, Clarkston, was shared in *Centred on Christ* in August 2022. Other schools have also encouraged children and their families to return to Mass and shared their practice at the Joint Meeting of Clergy and Head Teachers on Strengthening Home-School-Parish Links (November 2023).

Schools may wish to focus on the theme of the Eucharist using the PowerPoint assembly on 'Five Loaves and Two Fish' by Father John Morrison, Vicar Episcopal for Youth and Vocations. (Diocesan TEAMS /Education Resources for Schools/Prayers and Assemblies/Themes April to June.)

Perhaps schools could discuss with their chaplains how they could introduce **Eucharistic Adoration** - even on a small scale initially.



May

1 May Feast of St Joseph the Worker

St. Joseph has two feast days. The first is 19 March: Joseph, the Husband of Mary. The second is 1 May: Joseph, the Worker. It would be opportune to highlight the latter feast day which Pope Pius XII established in 1955. It allows young people to relate to St Joseph through their work in school and at home and, like St Joseph, invite God to be part of their endeavours. At this time, when many young people aged 16-24 face unemployment, we think of St Joseph who would have had to search for work when the Holy Family fled to Egypt. Like present day refugees and asylum seekers, St Joseph had to ensure the safety of Mary and the Child Jesus by escaping from King Herod.

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“An aspect of Saint Joseph that has been emphasized from the time of the first social Encyclical, Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*, is his relation to work. Saint Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one’s own labour.” (Pope Francis, *Patris Corde* - #6 A Working Father)

Father John Morrison, Vicar Episcopal for Vocations, has provided a PowerPoint and notes for an **Assembly on St Joseph**. These can be found in Diocesan TEAMS /Education Resources for Schools/Prayers and Assemblies/Themes April to June. In addition, **Missio** has provided resources for Levels 1 and 2 on St Joseph: <https://www.missioscotland.com/schools>



Prayer to St Joseph the Worker

Joseph, by the work of your hands
and the sweat of your brow,
you supported Jesus and Mary,
and had the Son of God as your fellow worker.

Teach me to work as you did,
with patience and perseverance, for God and
for those whom God has given me to support.

Teach me to see in my fellow students
the Christ who desires to be in them,
that I may always be charitable and forbearing
towards all.

*(Extract of a prayer in “Devotions to Saint Joseph” by
Brian Moore, S.J. published by the Society of St. Paul.)*

<https://teachingcatholickids.com/st-joseph-saints-for-kids/>

A Simple Invocation

Perhaps at the end of morning prayers a short prayer could be added:

*St Joseph, protector of the Child Jesus and
Patron of the Church, pray for us.*

or

*St, Joseph, patron of workers, guide me in my
work at school and at home.*

Children’s Prayer to St. Joseph

St Joseph,
watch over me
and care for me
just as you cared for
the child Jesus;
and by your help,
may I come to know
your Son,
and so grow
in strength
and wisdom
and the favour of God.
Amen.

(Continued from page 27)

Devotions to Our Lady

May Devotions are a longstanding tradition in the Church with a focus on our relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is a time when we recall that on the Cross, Jesus said to Mary, “*Woman, here is your son.*”; and to St John, “*Here is your mother.*” (John 19:26-27). Since the time of the apostles, the Church has seen this as Jesus giving His mother Mary to be mother of the Church and to each of us as our mother. (<https://catholic-link.org/>) You may wish to use The Litany of Loreto - <https://childrensrosary.blogspot.com/2012/08/litany-to-blessed-virgin-mary.html>. A hymn that could be included in an assembly - *Hail Mary - Gentle Woman* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RERoQ1biLdE>

Consecration to Jesus through Mary (P7/P6)

Bishop John invites all P7 pupils and their families to join him in a 33 Day Consecration to Jesus through Mary. It will begin on 29 April and end on 1 June. The actual Consecration will take place on 1 June. **You may wish to open this to P6 who could lead Rosary Groups when they progress to P7.**

We still have some books available (free of charge to schools) from the Diocesan Offices (curia@rcdop.org.uk). Full details and hyperlinks can be found in *Centred on Christ*, January 2023.



Rosary for Peace (Aid to the Church in Need)

Each year **Aid to the Church in Need** invites Primary Schools to participate in their **Rosary for Peace (12-16 May)** and the associated **Maisie Milk initiative** as a fun and educational tool to fundraise for Christian refugees and displaced families around the world. <https://acnuk.org/resource/maisy-milk/>

Named after St Margaret of Scotland, the Maisy Milk Rosary for Peace offers young people a unique opportunity to learn how to pray the Rosary and the importance of praying it. High-quality resources make Maisy Milk easy to use for teachers/ youth group leaders while being engaging and informative for young people.

What does the resource pack contain?

1. *An introductory assembly.*
2. *An explanatory assembly.*
3. *Daily meditations and activities.*
4. *When you register, access to the short videos of children from schools in the UK leading us in part of the Rosary every day so we can pray together as a family.*
5. *A free class set of Rosary beads.*

We encourage you to make and decorate your own Maisy Milk from an empty milk carton which you can use to collect coins as you fundraise for ACN.

Rosary Groups

All Saints Primary School shared practice on its Rosary Group in the August 2022 edition of *Centred on Christ*. Information can also be found at www.childrensrosary.org. More recently, Our Lady of Peace Primary has set up a Rosary Group.

(Continued from page 28)

June

Sacred Heart

The Church dedicates the month of June to special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Solemnity of the Sacred Heart this year falls on 27 June. God is Love and the Sacred Heart of Jesus - present on earth in the Blessed Sacrament - is the human manifestation of God's Love for each of us. "The Heart of Jesus is the ultimate symbol of God's mercy." (Pope Francis, 2013)

We are invited in this month to consider the charity of the heart of Jesus and seek to grow in love for Him and for those around us.

Perhaps we could explore with children:

- words which describe the heart of Jesus (e.g. love, compassion, care, forgiveness and mercy);
- what wounds His heart: (e.g. bullying, name -calling, holding grudges, spreading gossip about people, excluding people from your group of friends).
- How we can 'repair' those wounds (e.g. through spending time in prayer, doing things to show we are sorry, performing acts of kindness).

"Dear Sacred Heart of Jesus, I love You so much and I give You my heart. Help me to love my neighbour as a child of God. Help me to love myself as a child of God. AMEN."

<https://www.catholicmom.com/articles/2011/03/05/sacred-heart-of-jesus-lesson-plan>

Holy Spirit

Pentecost Sunday this year falls on 8 June. **Father John Morrison has produced a PowerPoint and notes for an Assembly on the Holy Spirit. (TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Themes for Prayer and Assemblies/ April-June.**

During this period when our P7 Confirmandi are preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation, we remember them especially in our prayers.

God our Father,

Watch over our Confirmandi as they prepare to receive your Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

We pray that they will continue to be strengthened in their relationship with You.

Please guide them on their journey as they draw nearer to You,

Increase in them the fruit of your Spirit:

the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the spirit of love, patience and gentleness,

the spirit of wonder and true holiness.

Amen.

We pray to the Holy Spirit:

That love may fill our hearts so that we are open to others ...

Response: Come, Holy Spirit, help us to transform our world

That all your children may find joy in their lives...

That wars may cease, and peace may come...

That all peoples may learn to be patient and tolerant...

That those who suffer may experience kindness...

That generosity may be given to those in need...

That we may be faithful to the Lord's command to love all our sisters and brothers...

That vulnerable and forgotten people may receive gentleness and respect...

That we may be able to put others first to help them in their need...

"The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control."

Galatians 5: 22-25

CAF+D
Catholic Agency for
Overseas Development



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KSC School Competitions

The Knights of Saint Columba (KSC) are organising the KSC National Youth and Young People's Competition 2024-2025. All young people (4 -18 Years) are specially invited and encouraged to participate in these competitions.

	Deadline
Easter Scene Painting	Monday 28th April 2025
Easter Photography	Wednesday 7th May 2025
Prayer Composition	Tuesday 20th May 2025
Essay Writing	Tuesday 20th May 2025

The respective competition rules and further details can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/KSCYouthYoungCompetition2425>

For more info contact: youth-province1@ksc.org

The Small Steps of Hope

Jesus, I will not wait; I live the present moment by filling it up with love. A straight line is made up of millions of tiny points that are joined together. My life too is made up of millions of seconds and minutes that are joined together. If I take care to ensure that each point is connected with complete accuracy to the next, then the line will be straight. If I live each minute in perfection, my life will be holy. The path of hope is made up of small steps of hope. The life of hope is made up of the short minutes of hope. Just as you, Jesus, always did what pleased your Father. Every minute I want to speak to you, Jesus; I love you, my life is always a new and eternal bond with you. Every minute I wish to sing with the whole Church:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Cardinal Francois-Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan

Diocese of Paisley - Education and Youth Calendar: 2024-25



Month	Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Target Group
APR	23	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	Craigmarloch, St Francis, St John's, St Michael's and St Colm's
APR	24	Thu	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Cadoc's and St Clare's
APR	25-27			Holy Year: Jubilee of Teenagers	School-based	S1-S6
APR	29	Tue		33 Day Diocesan Consecration to Jesus through Mary begins (ends on Monday 2 June)	School-based	P7 pupils
APR	30	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Charles', St Peter's and St Paul's
MAY	1-31			ACN Rosary for Peace (Maisie Milk)	School-based	P1-P7
MAY	1	Thu	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Thomas', St Mark's and St John's
MAY	7	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Catherine's, St Fergus, St James', St John Ogilvie and St Mary's
MAY	8	Thu	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Anne's, St James' and St John Bosco
MAY	14	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	OLM and St Joseph's
MAY	15	Thu	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	OLOP, St Anthony's, St David's, St Fillan's and St Margaret's
MAY	20	Tue	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	All Saints, St Mary's and St Patrick's
MAY	21	Wed	6.30pm	Celebration of Confirmation	St Mirin's Cathedral	St Andrew's, St Joseph's, St Ninian's, St Joseph's and St Patrick's Parish
MAY	24-25			Holy Year: Jubilee of Children	School-based	P1-P7
MAY	29	Thu		Ascension Day	School-based	P1-S6
JUN	tbc			Mass for Pupils from ASN Schools		
JUN	5	Thu	2pm	National Caritas Awards Ceremony	Clyde Auditorium	Caritas Students
JUN	8	Sun	2-5pm	Primary School Day – Pentecost	St Mirin's Cathedral	P4-P7
JUN	9-13			Generation Hope – Paisley Diocese	Cairn Brae, Perthshire	S1-S3
JUN	10	Tue	9.45-3pm	Teaching in Catholic Schools	Cathedral Halls	S6
JUN	11	Wed	4.30pm	Thanksgiving Mass	St Mirin's Cathedral	All staff – particularly NQTs
25 JUNE – 4 JULY				Youth to Lourdes		S3-S6

CLPL (April-June 2025)

Date	Time	Course		Venue
April 2025				
25/04/25	9:30 - 15:30	Paisley Diocese CHAPS Conference	Primary HTs & Acting HTs	Gleddoch House Hotel
May 2025				
07/05/25	9:30 - 15:00	Principal Teachers of Religious Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BGE Course Senior Phase Moderation 	Principal Teachers of R.E.	Diocesan Centre
14/05/25		National Day of Prayer and Professional Development (NARCREA)		Gillies Centre and St Patrick's, Cowgate
28/05/25	15:45 - 17:45	Equalities and Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church teaching Implications of the Equality Act for Catholic schools Practical scenarios 	HTs and Key Staff	Our Lady of the Missions Primary School
29/05/25	13:00 - 15:00	Diocesan CHAS Meeting	Secondary HTs	Diocesan Offices
June 2025				
11/06/25	16:30	Thanksgiving Mass	All Staff	St Mirin's Cathedral
18/06/25	16:00 - 17:30	Leadership in Catholic Schools - Session 5: Sharing Practice	Leadership Course participants	Diocesan Centre

First Fridays for Life

Bishop John invites us to fast and pray to protect the unborn child and for the flourishing of the Pro-Life movement so that our society will build an authentic culture of life. Join your priests throughout the diocese on the First Friday of each month as all of us pray for life. Holy Mass will be celebrated at 7pm; Adoration and Confession from 6pm. Dates for forthcoming First Fridays for Life Novena Masses:

2nd May 2025	St. Colm's, Kilmacolm
6th June 2025	Little Sisters of the Poor, Greenock

Diocesan Family Day with Mary

The next Diocesan Family Event is our Family Day with Mary

on Sunday 18th May 2025 - 2pm-4pm

St Francis Church, 100 Auchenbothie Road

