

Centred on Christ

JANUARY 2025

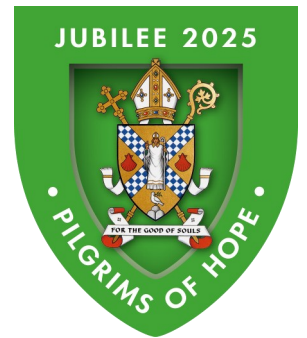


Our Lady of Paisley; pray for us

Dear Colleague,

Pope Francis inaugurated the Jubilee Year in St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve when he opened the Holy Door. The Jubilee will end on 28th December 2025.

The Theme of the Jubilee Year is 'Pilgrims of Hope'. In the Bull of Indiction, '*Spes Non Confundit*' – 'Hope does not Disappoint' – Pope Francis declared that "Christian hope does not deceive or disappoint because it is grounded in the certainty that nothing and no one may ever separate us from God's love." He called on Catholics not only to strengthen their own sense of hope, but also to "be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind." Pope Francis outlined several important signs of hope for our world today.



- The desire for **peace** in our world, which once more finds itself immersed in the tragedy of **war**.
- **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.
- We are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind. He specified **prisoners** who daily feel the harshness of detention, lack of affection and, in more than a few cases, lack of respect for their persons.
- Signs of hope should also be shown to the **sick**, at home or in hospital.
- Signs of hope are also needed by those who are the very embodiment of hope, namely, **the young**. Sadly, they often see their dreams and aspirations frustrated. It is sad to see young people who are without hope, who face an uncertain and unpromising future, who lack realistic prospects after finishing school. Without the hope that their dreams can come true, they will inevitably grow discouraged and listless. The Jubilee should inspire the Church to make greater efforts to reach out to them.
- Signs of hope should also be present for **migrants** who leave their homelands behind in search of a better life for themselves and for their families. A spirit of welcome, which embraces everyone with respect for his or her dignity, should be accompanied by a sense of responsibility, lest anyone be denied the right to a dignified existence.
- The **elderly**, who frequently feel lonely and abandoned, also deserve signs of hope. He also mentions **grandparents**, who represent the passing on of faith and wisdom to the younger generation.

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- He asks 'with all his heart' that hope be granted to the billions of the **poor**, who often lack the essentials of life. We must not close our eyes to the poor around us: the people we meet each day who are homeless or lack sufficient food for the day. It is scandalous that in a world possessed of immense resources, destined largely to producing weapons, the poor continue to be the majority of the planet's population, billions of people. Let us not forget: the poor are almost always the victims, not the ones to blame.
- Another heartfelt appeal is directed to the more affluent nations. He asks that they **forgive the debts** of countries that will never be able to repay them. More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice. It is made all the more serious by a new form of injustice namely, that '**a true ecological debt**' exists, particularly between the global North and South, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time.

How can we use the Jubilee Year to enable children, young people and ourselves to nurture the virtue of hope; to be signs of hope for others and perform small acts of hope; to experience 'a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus'; to experience forgiveness and hope in the Sacrament of Confession?

Every diocese in the world has been asked to have a **Jubilee Cross**. We are extremely grateful to St Luke's High School who created this beautiful cross which has the names of all the parishes in the diocese inscribed on it.



This term will see the initial **CLPL on Equalities and Inclusion** for Head Teachers and key staff which has been developed by members of our Equalities and Inclusion Working Group. Details are on the CLPL programme in this newsletter. We would also welcome any good practice from schools to add to the examples already on TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Equalities and Inclusion.

We look forward to the next meeting of the **Diocesan Parent Forum** on Monday 24 March at 7pm in the Diocesan Offices.

The annual **Joint Clergy-Head Teacher Meeting** will take place on Thursday 13 March (13:15-15:00) in the Cathedral Halls, enabling us to share practice on school chaplaincy and build on the initial plans for strengthening Home-School-Parish partnerships that had been outlined at the meeting last session.

Mary's Meals is launching a new pilot project for Secondary Schools around the world, helping pupils to make a meaningful difference to others while building skills in leadership, teamwork, and research. Schools will gain recognition for their involvement and have opportunities to share good practice.

george.morehead@marysmeals.org

Details of **KSC Youth Competitions** can be found on Page 20.

Best wishes,

Neil Roarty

Neil Roarty

Director of Schools



Lenten Prayer Service for Staff

Monsignor Joe Burke

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Let us pause for a moment to place ourselves in the presence of God.)

Let us pray.

Almighty God, loving and merciful Father of us all,

Help us to use this time of Lent to come closer to you. As we prepare to celebrate the great wonders of your love and the ultimate sacrifice of your Son for us on the cross, may the Holy Spirit guide our hearts and minds, raising them to you so that we may come with genuine joy and gratitude to the redeeming Easter mysteries of love.

Guide us to use this time well so that we may place ourselves in your loving embrace. Guide us and all in our school to know, love and serve you always.

Through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit; God, forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

The Prodigal Son

At that time: the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable: 'There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me." And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"

'And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound." But he

Lenten Prayer Service for Staff

(Continued from page 3)

was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, "Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!" And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."'

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection on the Gospel

The parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the most famous stories Jesus told and it focusses on one of the central themes of Lent: turning back to God. As with all of His parables, the Lord wants to speak to the hearts of those listening. This means He wants to speak to YOU today. Open yourself to listen to what He is saying to you.

The father, of course, in the parable represents God the Father and we are directed to ponder the heavenly Father's love for us as well as our attitude towards Him. The younger prodigal son represents so many in our world whose attitude is selfish and self-centred. The younger son wants to please himself, pleasure himself, and do exactly and only what he wants to do. He is more than happy to come to his father and ask (or even demand) what he needs. Totally entitled in his own mind, he has no real concern for his father or elder brother but only for himself. And when he is given what he wants, there is no gratitude but instead, he simply heads off, caught up in himself and his desires.

How many people approach God in that way today? They go to Him when they need or want something but then pay no heed to Him the rest of the time. They offer God a one-off prayer, expecting God the Father to listen to them and provide for them but then ignore Him or think little about Him the rest of the time. Have you ever done that? Have you had that attitude towards God?

Even if this is the case, the parable tells us we should not despair—it is never too late to sort our relationship with God! The prodigal son squanders everything his father gave him before coming to his senses. When he does, however, there is a genuine change of heart. That humble change of heart and returning to the Father in Heaven is exactly what Lent is supposed to be about. The son realises and recognises the pain, the hurt, the disappointment he has caused his father who loves him so much. Genuinely contrite, he returns home, not even knowing if he will be accepted or rejected. He is acutely aware of his guilt and shame. The journey home must have been a long and difficult one for him! But he had nothing to fear. A beautiful line in this parable often overlooked is that "while he was still a long way off", his father saw him and ran to him. This implies the father was scanning the horizon every day, waiting and longing for his lost child and how beautiful and joyous is the reunion!

Jesus tells us this is exactly how it is with God our Father. He is all loving, merciful and forgiving to the wanderer who returns to Him. He longs for us to come back to Him when we have strayed. He is waiting for us but it has to be our choice. We have to genuinely and sincerely want Him. Is that the case with you? Do you genuinely and sincerely want that relationship with God? He cannot be fooled—He knows who is half-hearted and who is sincere but the ones who sincerely choose to return to Him, who recognise with humility their own weakness and sinfulness, receive the beautiful, loving embrace of God!

Lent prepares us for the wondrous celebrations of Easter when we remember everything God has done and continues to do for us, even to the point of dying and rising from the dead—for US! The Lenten season encourages us to think about our relationship with God and to turn back to Him if we have strayed. It is never too late!

He is waiting for you with open arms, inviting you to come closer but it has to be your choice. Will you take up His invitation?

Lenten Prayer Service for Staff

(Continued from page 4)

Prayers of Intercession

Let us place all our needs, prayers and cares into the hands of our loving Father who is always there for us.

1. For the holy Church of God. May she always be a beacon of light, hope and the mercy of God.
Lord, hear us.
2. For ourselves and each other. May we use this holy time of Lent to turn from the empty and false promises of this world back to our loving and merciful Father.
Lord, hear us.
3. For parents and all in charge of young people. In all their trials, joys and sorrows, may they place their children and those in their care into God's hands.
Lord, hear us.
4. For children. May they be guided by the Lord every day and so come to know, love and serve Him in their lives.
Lord, hear us.
5. For all who work in our school. That the Holy Spirit and our own school patron saint may inspire and help us in the wonderful work of educating young minds and hearts.
Lord, hear us.
6. For all the people of God. May we be willing to forgive others as we have been forgiven by God.
Lord, hear us.

Loving and merciful Father, please hear and answer our prayers made aloud or in the silence of our hearts. We offer them through your Son, Christ our Lord.

Amen

Concluding Prayer

Almighty, ever-living God,
your love for us is everlasting.
Help us to take up your
invitation
to return to your loving presence
as we prepare to celebrate the
great mysteries of our
redemption.
Through Christ our Lord, your
Son,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.
Amen



Pilgrim Passport

St Anthony's Primary School

Following discussion at the National CHAPS Conference, St Anthony's Primary, in conjunction with Father Matthew, has developed an innovative way for children and young people to participate in the Jubilee Year with a focus on the theme of pilgrimage and the virtue of hope.

The *Pilgrim Passport* consists of a number of "steps" which represent a stage on a pilgrimage from St Mirin's Cathedral to Rome. While it may not be possible for many of us to make the pilgrimage to Rome, we can carry out small 'Acts of Hope'. Once each stage on the journey is completed, St Anthony's will issue a Jubilee Year badge.




Theme/Virtue (Hope as overarching theme)			Action	"Act of Hope"
1	Paisley (St Mirin, Our Lady of Paisley)	Hope, setting out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for diocese, Bishop John; Support diocese 	Invite Bishop John to celebrate Mass
2	Whithorn (St Ninian)	Mission, preaching/teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for missionaries; Support Missio 	Support Missio (October)
3	Canterbury (St Thomas a Becket)	Courage, witness, martyrdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for persecuted Christians; Support Aid to the Church in Need 	Support ACN (November – "Red Wednesday")
4	Compostela (St James)	Pilgrimage, detachment,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for homeless; migrants; Support SVDP, Jesuit Refugee Service¹ 	Visit or learn about charities that support the homeless/refugees. Charity event
5	Fatima (Our Lady of Fatima; Saints Francisco, Jacinta, Lucia)	Penance, prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray the rosary; Support Mary's Meals 	Pray the Rosary (May)
6	Assisi (St Francis, St Clare)	Humility, poverty, charity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for religious, clergy; Support SVVP 	Collect food for foodbank (or similar)
7	Rome (St Peter)	Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for Pope; Support Pope's charities; support SCIAF (e.g. Talented Fundraisers)² 	Write a letter/poem/song for Pope Francis about Hope

¹ <https://jrs.net/en/home/>

² <https://www.sciaf.org.uk/talented-fundraisers>

Jubilee Prayers - Pilgrims of Hope



THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless
cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both
humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen.

Francis

Diocesan Jubilee Prayer for Children

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for loving me so much. Help me to remember that you are always with me and that your love for me will never end.

In this Jubilee Year, help me to be a Pilgrim of Hope to others, sharing your love and hope with my family, friends and everyone that I meet. I pray that I will be ready to follow your example of helping others by showing love, kindness and fairness to all and caring for the precious gift of our common home.

Fill my heart with your joy and peace and keep me close to you always.

Amen

Diocesan Jubilee Prayer for Young People

Father in Heaven,

Help us in this Jubilee Year, as Pilgrims of Hope, to increase our Faith in You to place our Hope in You and to Love You more.

We place our hope in You in the certainty that nothing and no one can ever separate us from Your love.

Help us in this Jubilee Year, as Pilgrims of Hope, to grow closer to You and to experience your merciful love.

May we be Signs of Hope for our world by:

- being peacemakers;
- welcoming new life;
- praying for those deprived of their freedom;
- caring for the sick;
- welcoming migrants escaping danger and looking for safety;
- encouraging the young and valuing the elderly;
- reaching out to the poor at home and across the world;
- caring for Your Creation and working for justice in the developing world.

To you our God,
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen.



The Venerable Margaret Sinclair

Mike Hughes (School Liaison Ven. Margaret Sinclair Committee)

The Margaret Sinclair School Pack is an extremely valuable resource, containing a wide variety of materials for RE lessons in Upper Primary classes or early Secondary.

The pack contains lesson plans linked to RERC core learning from *This is Our Faith*. Lessons include:

- What makes a Saint?
- Saints of Scotland
- Background on Margaret Sinclair's life
- Glossary of Catholic terminology
- Frequently used prayers.

Other resources include:

- Pupil worksheets and extension sheets which can be photocopied and notes for teachers to aid in leading class discussions.
- A3 poster.
- Two textbooks on Margaret Sinclair, written by author, academic and retired headteacher Dr John Watts:
 - A Beautiful Fragrance
 - The Story of Margaret Sinclair in Words and Pictures
- DVD of Stephen Callaghan's play *The Margaret Sinclair Story*.



The pack can be obtained from Pauline Book & Media, 36 St Enoch's Square, Glasgow G1 4DF – 0141 226 3391 – glasgow@pauline-uk.org (RRP £50).

These resources can be used well in conjunction with a visit to the beautiful and historic St. Patrick's Church in Cowgate in Edinburgh. The Margaret Sinclair committee can provide tours and talks about the church, the small museum and shrine. A member of the committee can visit schools as part of preparation for a visit to Edinburgh.

Contact Marion to arrange either of these visits: 07960 158044 or email marion.bh@btinternet.com. (Maybe an idea for a pilgrimage as part of the Jubilee Year?) Marion can also help if schools wish to buy additional copies of the books or the DVD in the pack.

Other contacts:

office@margaretsinclair.scot

margaretsinclair.scot

Pilgrimage to Saint Patrick's in Edinburgh

Saint Peter's Primary School

On Wednesday 23rd October 2024, Primary 7 pupils from Saint Peter's Primary School were invited to take part in a pilgrimage to Saint Patrick's in Edinburgh to learn about Venerable Margaret Sinclair. To prepare for the visit, pupils researched facts about Margaret. The children have been exploring the lives of saints while selecting their chosen saint names for their Confirmation in April so were really keen to hear about the life of Margaret Sinclair.

During the visit, they enjoyed learning about the historical aspect of the trip and the life of Margaret who died between the two World Wars in November 1925. The children are currently studying World War 2 as a class topic and were interested to learn about the differences during the time when Margaret was alive to this present day. Children were asking questions and comparing the items in the museum to life now. The children enjoyed Mike and Marion's tours around the church and onto the Royal Mile to see where Margaret lived. Children were amazed to hear about the troubles that Catholics had to deal with during the early 1900s.

Pupils were peaceful and respectful throughout the pilgrimage. Class teacher Caitlin Maclean felt very proud of the children as they all took time to reflect and enjoy the quiet atmosphere in Saint Patrick's. Children stood respectfully at the shrine and said their own special intentions as Isabella, one of our pupils, lit a candle. Following this, we participated in the Mass at 12.30pm. Pupils were in awe at the paintings in the church and some couldn't believe that they dated back to 1707.

Children would like to continue learning about Venerable Margaret Sinclair as they prepare for their Confirmation. We would like to offer our thanks to Marion, Mike, Father Thomas, and Pat Hallan (our community parish link member) for organising our visit.

Quotes from the children:

"The stained glass was jaw droppingly amazing!" (Zara, P7)

"I just felt more peaceful – the visit made me feel more relaxed and calm." (Sam, P7)



Primary 7 Venerable Margaret Sinclair Pilgrimage

St Fergus' Primary School Paisley

On Wednesday 4th September 2024, the Primary 7 pupils of St Fergus' Primary School, took part in a pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Church in Edinburgh with their Parish Priest, Fr. John Morrison. St. Patrick's is over 200 years old and is a National Shrine to Maragret Sinclair, a humble lady who grew up in Cowgate, Edinburgh, and who could become Scotland's next canonised saint.

The children completed various activities led by the team at St. Patrick's Church. The first activity included a tour of the church, where the children learned about the various statues and paintings within the church, as well as venerating the relic of Venerable Margaret. The children found this activity very interesting and were eager to find out more about the history of Margaret and the church by asking lots of questions throughout this experience. The team at St. Patrick's were more than happy to answer the many questions asked by our Primary 7 pupils. During the tour, the children also took part in a prayer service at different areas of the church. All the children had the opportunity to light a candle and sing hymns, as well as completing some personal reflection during the dedicated prayer time.

Next, the children had the opportunity to visit the Maragret Sinclair Museum, located inside St. Patrick's. Everyone loved learning about Maragret Sinclair and seeing the relics and personal belongings on display. The quiz about Margaret Sinclair, provided by St. Patrick's, was a great addition to the visit.

Before Mass, the children were shown a presentation dedicated to Margaret Sinclair and how Edinburgh would have looked during Margaret's lifetime. This fascinated our children.

The Primary 7 pupils were welcomed into Mass by Fr. Peter Kelly and the parishioners of St. Patrick's. Following Margaret's example of reverence for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, everyone knelt at the communion rail to receive Holy Communion. The children spoke fondly about this part of Mass when they returned to school.

After returning from the pilgrimage, the children were keen to carry out more research on Venerable Margaret Sinclair. They created a class shrine to Margaret, using some of the items gifted from St. Patrick's Church.

This was a wonderful experience for our young people as they prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. It was a true blessing for our children to learn about how ordinary, humble people can become followers of Jesus through their everyday lives and actions.

Thoughts from our Primary 7 children:

"I like learning about her (Margaret's) story and why she is an important part of St Patrick's history. I enjoyed singing hymns and praying at different areas of the Church." Ula, P7 pupil.

"The stained-glass windows in the Church were beautiful." Tejas, P7 pupil.

"I liked learning about Margaret Sinclair's life in the museum." Hollie, P7 pupil.

"The Church was beautiful inside and out. Everywhere was spotless." Cecilia, P7 pupil.

"I liked kneeling to receive Holy Communion." Aleksander, P7 pupil.

"You can see that she (Margaret) is very cherished in the Church. I learned that Margaret lived a very holy life." Sophie, P7 pupil.



Developing in Faith

St John's Primary School, Barrhead

Pilgrims of Hope - Developing as a Community of Faith Strengthening Home and School Parish Links

Within St John's Primary School, we share in cluster values of Love, Faith and Understanding. As we have been celebrating the themes of Pilgrims of Faith and Pilgrims of Hope over the past two years, we have been exploring what this means for us as a school and parish community. For us, the theme of pilgrimage reminds us that the journey is what matters. We feel called to be a people who walk through life alongside one another, growing together in faith and our gospel values and connecting with each other as part of one universal church. What this looks like within a busy school and parish is something that has been developing in many different ways over recent months and years.

A very special way where we all work together as parish, school and family is through the celebration of our pupils' receiving the **Sacraments** each year. Before celebrating their First Confession and First Holy Communion, our Primary 4 pupils all attend weekly Catechesis classes in St John's Church, Barrhead. When it comes to preparing our pupils it is very much a partnership between parents, our Catechesis teachers and the school staff themselves. Our Primary 7 pupils celebrate their Confirmation alongside the Cluster Primary schools in St Mirin's Cathedral each May. The support of our Diocesan Education Team is truly invaluable in helping our parents and pupils prepare to receive the power of the Holy Spirit in a new way.



Image Descriptions (top left to bottom right)

*Lunchtime Sanctuary Space; Primary 2 Stage Mass; Marian Grotto created by family as part of Travelling Rosary;
Religious Education Class with Father Joe McGill
Primary 3 Stage Mass; Visit from Legion of Mary members; First Holy Communion in St John's Church Barrhead*

Developing in Faith - St John's Primary School, Barrhead

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We aim to link with our parents and families through several different events throughout the school year. We have monthly Stage Masses for each year group. For this event, parents are invited to join their children during the school day to attend a mass which is led with involvement by the pupils. Afterwards we invite the parents to join with teachers and our local priests, Monsignor John Tormey and Father Joe McGill for an informal 'tea and chat' in order to experience fellowship and community as a wider body.

Every year during the months of October or May, we host a **Rosary group** and **Sanctuary Space** which takes place during lunch time. This is a space for quiet reflection, prayer and peace during the middle of the school day that pupils can choose to visit during their lunch break. Our Pastoral Pupil Committee, with the support of the Legion of Mary members from our local parish, St John's in Barrhead, are responsible for these events,. In addition, over the past year, Margaret, from the **Legion of Mary** has brought in a number of relics to the school and taught the pupils about these. The pupils have learned about the powerful link they are to holy men and women who can inspire and teach us as we strive to become saints.

We enjoy an excellent working relationship with our local parish and benefit from the support of Monsignor Tormey and Father McGill. This year they have been coming into the school weekly to teach **religious education lessons**. Each week they visit a different class and teach the pupils on topics they are covering within class. It's a brilliant opportunity for the pupils to get to know Father Joe McGill better, and our pupils favourite point of the lesson is always the time for questions at the end. As educators we are always really impressed by Father Joe's answers to questions like; 'How come God didn't keep the dinosaurs?' and 'Did the disciples ever go to Confession?'

Our **Travelling Rosary** which is organised by Paisley Diocese is also a very popular event within the school year. Pupils take turns bringing home a statue of Mary and sharing in a family prayer in the evening using the prayer cards made for the purpose. Children sometimes create small Grottos at home and send in pictures for the school to share more widely.

In addition to the events mentioned, we also have our annual Christmas Nativity Performances which are always extremely well attended by family and community members. Once a month a group of pupils attend First Friday mass. Parent volunteers support the children as they walk to the local church and participate in the service. Our school choir attends all Sacramental services for Primary 4 and 7 each year and lend their beautiful singing voices to the celebration. We are always very grateful for the parents who enable their children to support this. Within our Parent Council we also have a representative from the local church, St John's, who speaks on behalf of the church and ensures we are aware of Parish events, which we then are able to promote within our Assemblies and Newsletters. In Barrhead we are extremely blessed to be part of such a vibrant faith community and are excited to continue to grow in this as we continue to explore our theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope' during the year ahead.

SCIAF Resources



As we begin this Holy Year of Jubilee and mark SCIAF's 60th year of serving the poor and vulnerable, we ask you to support the WEE BOX appeal to help us to continue our shared mission of working for a green and just world.

This year's appeal focuses on conflict, peace and care for families in Colombia. Despite its vibrant culture and dramatic landscapes, violence lurks around every corner in the poorest region of Colombia, Chocó. Conflict displaces families, forces children into crime and leaves communities dominated by armed gangs. People face relentless conflict, poverty and isolation, and feel forgotten by the world.

However, thanks to your support, SCIAF stands with those in Chocó, advocating for justice and peace, providing shelter for displaced communities and offering support.

This Lent, you can ensure no one is left behind – in Colombia and around the world. Read more about this year's appeal at sciaf.org.uk/weebox



Sign up for The Big Lent Walk

Over Lent, join the global Pilgrims of Hope in marking the Jubilee Year by walking a virtual route from Scotland to Vatican City! Walk 2000 miles together as a school or a class while learning about our European Saints and Blessed Servants of God along the way! Find out more at sciaf.org.uk/biglentwalk

SCIAF Education

This Lent we invite you to use your WEE BOX to learn, pray and act for global justice. Find all our resources at sciaf.org.uk/resources

WEE BOX Classroom Resources

Links to Laudato Si' Schools, Rights Respecting Schools, LfS, and more.

WEE BOX videos

Watch with your class to find out how SCIAF respond to the needs of the world, as part of the global Catholic Church.

WEE BOX Prayer Resources

Connected to TIOF and focusing on Jesus and the Global Church as our example, as well as Catholic Social Teaching themes like Justice & Peace, and the Preferential Option for the Poor.



Stations of the Cross

Use the SCIAF Stations of the Cross booklet and PowerPoint with your class.

Debt Justice Campaign Action

In this Jubilee Year, you can use your voice to create real change for our sisters and brothers overseas – restoring hope in some of the poorest communities in the world. We're calling on the UK government to play its part in the global fight to cancel unsustainable and unjust debts. Find our more sciaf.org.uk/debtjustice

Jubilee 2025

Join the journey as Pilgrims of Hope! The Jubilee Year is a landmark moment in the life of the global church. Find Jubilee prayers and resources for teachers at sciaf.org.uk/resources

Tiny Feet Club

emmet@spucscotland.org

Welcoming new life is one of the Signs of Hope for the Jubilee Year.

“Consequently, the Christian community should be at the forefront in ... working for a future filled with the laughter of babies and children”.

The Tiny Feet Club is an opportunity for pupils to learn about how amazing their first nine months of life before birth. The Tiny Feet resource can be used as a 20 min lesson or in a club setting. Use of Tiny Feet Club resources is FREE! For access to the Tiny Feet Club teacher's packs and all of the Tiny Feet Club resources on the website contact: emmet@spucscotland.org



When Spring and new life comes, how about your P6 and P7 pupils exploring how human life begins using augmented reality booklets and poster? See link below.

- [Genesis resource.mp4](#)

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:

7th February 2025	St Joseph's Clarkston
7th March 2025	St John the Evangelist
4th April 2025	St Charles Borromeo, Paisley
2nd May 2025	St. Colm's, Kilmacolm
6th June 2025	Little Sisters of the Poor, Greenock

Themes for Prayer and Assemblies



Diocese of Paisley

Education Department

January

The Childhood of Jesus

While Christmas trees and decorations have all been packed away, the Church continues to celebrate the Christmas Season after the start of the new term.

The tradition of keeping the **Christmas nativity scene** until the Feast of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple on 2 February has been revived in recent years. Perhaps within the school or classrooms, teachers could continue to display the Crib until this date.

On Sunday 5 January, the Church celebrates **the Feast of the Epiphany**. The Magi brought gifts that revealed Jesus identity and mission: frankincense for God, Gold for a King and Myrrh for His humanity and death. Perhaps we could discuss with the children and young people what gifts **we** would give Him. How could we use our God-given talents to serve Him and our neighbours?

- Spending some more time in prayer and going to Mass.
- Giving time to someone who is lonely.
- Using our talents to the best of our ability.

The season of giving doesn't have to end at Christmas!

During the start of our new term, we could focus on **the Childhood of Jesus**: His life was ordinary, built around home and family, village and friends. He had to learn to live kindly in family life, accommodating His needs to the rest of the house. He took faith and the big questions of life seriously, going to the synagogue every week. We know He could read as He read the scroll of Isaiah, so He went to school. We do not know for definite if He could write. He had to negotiate growing up and so He got lost in the Temple being preoccupied with His life and vocation. This caused tension with His parents who still had care of Him. In the end it was resolved in mutual respect and giving each other space. He had to experience death in the family with the passing of St. Joseph and how to take on work as a carpenter and family responsibilities.

How does this relate to the lives of our pupils – their relationships with family and friends, their spiritual growth, their education, their sorrows and losses, and their vocation in life? What is God calling them to do? A reflection and prayer service on the Childhood of Jesus has been prepared by Sister Maria McGuire of the Daughters of Wisdom. It can be found on TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Prayers and Assemblies/Themes January to March.

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February/March

Lent

The Season of Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday** on 5 March and brings to our attention the three main pillars of Christian spirituality: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving.

Prayer

We know that during Lent schools and chaplains make a special effort to enable young people to draw closer to God in preparation for Easter. In addition to Mass and other liturgies, schools may wish to consider a focus on The Sign of the Cross, the Stations of the Cross or the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary.

The Sign of the Cross

First-century Christians began making the Sign of the Cross as a reminder and renewal of what happened to them when they were baptised "*In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*". Many footballers and athletes make the Sign of the Cross before an event or after scoring a goal. Why? The Sign of the Cross is a prayer in its own right, not just a sketchy introduction or a casual end to prayer. This prayer starts out, "*...in the name...*" What does this mean? The answer is everything we do, our entire life, is of concern to God; everything we do should be in His name. In making the Sign of the Cross, footballers and athletes place their trust in God and thank Him for the blessings He has given them; and that is true for us too.

Perhaps during Lent, especially on Fridays when we recall Our Lord's suffering and death on the Cross, we could focus on the Sign of the Cross in our classroom prayers. We should encourage the children and young people – and ourselves – to always make it with reverence and devotion – and not merely a habit carried out without thinking about it.

Father De Ravignan, a 19th century French priest, always made the Sign of the Cross with reverence and devotion. A Protestant clergyman had gone to hear him preach. When he saw how reverently and thoughtfully Father de Ravignan had made the Sign of the Cross, he said, "He has preached already; the sermon is finished and we might go." What might that 'sermon' have been that the clergyman 'heard' by observing the priest?

The Sign of the Cross is **a sign of love**. It reminds us that God has loved us so much that He gave Himself up for our sakes to suffer on the Cross, and that we must love Him with our whole hearts.

The Sign of the Cross is **a sign of hope**. By making this Sign we express our hope that, through the Cross, God will redeem us and continue to bless us.

The Sign of the Cross is **a sign of faith** in God. It is like a short form of the Apostles' Creed. We state our belief in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We proclaim our faith in what God has done - the creation of all things, the redemption of humanity from sin and death, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit in our own lives. When we bless ourselves we are reminding ourselves of God's presence and opening ourselves to his action in our lives.

Greeting the Gospel

Why do we make Signs of the Cross on our foreheads, lips and heart when we prepare to listen to the Gospel at Mass? We cross our forehead so that the Word of God may be in our thoughts and purify our minds. We cross our lips so that our speech may be holy and incline us to share the Gospel with others. And we cross our hearts to invite God to strengthen our love for Him and others. All of this is so that we might know, proclaim, and love Jesus Christ all the more. (Life Teen: <https://lifeteen.com>)

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Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross, which follow the path of Christ on Good Friday from His meeting with Pontius Pilate to being laid in the tomb, are a popular devotion in parishes during Lent, particularly on Fridays.

A meditation on the Stations of the Cross for upper primary and lower secondary pupils has been prepared by Fr John Morrison, Vicar Episcopal for Youth and Vocations and can be found in TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Themes January to March. It focuses on three main characters: Pontius Pilate, Simon of Cyrene and Veronica. It can be delivered as part of an assembly or within the classroom. If the latter, the presentation contains activities as well as reflections and prayers.

Other forms of the Stations can be found on various websites:

<https://thekidsbulletin.com/stations-of-the-cross/>

https://wau.org/resources/article/re_stations_cross_kids/

<https://cathfamily.org/childrens-station-of-the-cross/>

<https://acnuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Primary-school-stations.pdf>

<https://cafod.org.uk/News/UK-news/Stations-of-the-Cross>

https://www.archwinnipeg.ca/media/youth/docs/youth_resource-1238107982.pdf

https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20130325_1.htm

Fasting

Why do we 'fast' during Lent? The forty days of Lent is modelled on the forty days Christ spent fasting in the desert before embarking on his public ministry (Mt 4:1-11). We are asked by the Church to imitate Christ by using Lent as a time of spiritual discipline before the Easter celebration of Christ's triumph over sin and death.

St Augustine said our prayer is like a bird wanting to fly to God. To do so, it needs the two wings of fasting and almsgiving, signs of humility and charity.

You may wish to discuss with classes ideas for fasting during Lent. Some suggestions for fasting for children and young people can be found at: <http://www.nicksenger.com/csc/101-practical-fasting-ideas-for-lent>.

Almsgiving

In the Old Testament, Tobias stated: "Prayer and fasting are good, but better than either is almsgiving accompanied by righteousness ... It is better to give alms than to store up gold; for almsgiving saves one from death and expiates every sin. Those who regularly give alms shall enjoy a full life" (Tob 12:8-9).

Almsgiving is a form of prayer because it is "giving to God" — and not mere philanthropy. It is a form of fasting because it demands sacrificial giving — not just giving something, but giving up something, giving till it hurts: <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/religion-and-philosophy/spiritual-life/introduction-to-lent-almsgiving.html>

Jesus presented almsgiving as a necessary part of Christian life: "when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (Mt 6:2-3).

As always, it is important that Catholic schools place their charity work within the context of 'Faith into Action'.

(Continued from page 17)

Diocesan Youth Events

Please share details of Youth Events with pupils and parents.

MAR	9	Sun	2-5pm	Primary School Day – Lent	St Mirin’s Cathedral	P4-P7
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Classroom Resources

ACN Scotland

ACN has produced Stations of the Cross for Primary pupils in PDF, PowerPoint and YouTube video. Similarly, for Secondary, Stations of the Cross resources comprise a PDF commentary, PowerPoint slides and a narrated YouTube video. We encourage you to remember suffering Christians around the world and keep them in your prayers during this time. ACN will add to its Lent Resources: [Aid to the Church in Need | Resources \(acnuk.org\)](#)

Mary’s Meals (marysmeals.org.uk)

Mary’s Meals suggest sharing the Mary’s Meals prayer with children as well as encouraging them to get involved in their campaign ‘**Move for Mary’s Meals**’ <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/move-for-meals> which is a great opportunity for a class to get outdoors and support Mary’s Meals. They also provide speakers for schools.

Prayer for Mary’s Meals

Our Father,

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us for the times when we take more than our share of the bread that belongs to all.

Let us help You fill the starving with good things, not with scraps from our table.

Teach us how to share what is not ours to keep.

Clothe us with Your love that we may complete each good work You created us to do.

Place in our hearts Your compassion for each starving child and use our little acts of love so that they starve no more. Amen.

Mary’s Meals is launching a new pilot project for Secondary Schools around the world, helping pupils to make a meaningful difference to others while building skills in leadership, teamwork, and research. Schools will gain recognition for their involvement and have opportunities to share good practice.

george.morehead@marysmeals.org

Missio

Lenten resources can be found at: <https://www.missioscotland.com/resources> Missio has also updated its **Lenten Calendar**. One of its key prayer resources is the **Mission Stations of the Cross**. This link also gives you access to a drop-down menu for each individual season or theme; for example, Confirmation/Pentecost and Missionary Saints.

The wider primary school section is at: <https://www.missioscotland.com/primary-schools> which contains information about past projects, country files, games, assembly requests (the more of them the merrier) and Five Star Schools.

Resources for secondary schools can be found here: <https://www.missioscotland.com/high-schools>

Contact: gerard@missioscotland.com

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Feast of St Joseph (19 March)

Patron Saint

St Joseph is the patron of the Universal Church. He is the patron of a happy death (*to die in a state of grace and in friendship with GOD, so as to be assured of our eternal salvation*), families, fathers, expectant mothers, travellers, immigrants, craftsmen, engineers, and workers. He is also the patron of the Americas, Canada, China, Croatia, Mexico, Korea, Austria, Belgium, Peru, the Philippines and Vietnam.

<https://www.churchpop.com/2015/06/21/8-little-known-facts-about-st-joseph-the-foster-father-of-jesus/>

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.

An Assembly on St Joseph is on TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Themes January to March.

The Annunciation

The Church celebrates the Feast of the Annunciation on 25 March, when we recall Mary's 'Yes' to God. Mary's deep faith enabled her to respond to God's call. God is calling each one of us to do some special work for Him.

- How can we create space in our lives to hear what God is calling us to do?
- Do we have Mary's courage to respond to God's call?
- Do we have Mary's generosity to respond to God's call?
- How can we use our God-given talents to bring peace, justice, compassion and hope to our world?

Father John Morrison has prepared a reflection for P1 and P2 which can be found on TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Prayers and Assemblies/Themes January to March. Other suggestions would be to pray the Angelus on that day. Traditionally, the Angelus bell rings daily at noon and 6pm, reminding us of God's love for us. We also remember Mary's example of openness to God's will: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/prayers/the-angelus.html>

Alternatively, we could focus reverently on the *Hail, Mary* reminding pupils that much of this prayer is taken from the words of the Angel (Luke 1:26-38) and Elizabeth (Luke 1: 39-56).



Diocesan Contacts

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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
1. Nativity Scene Painting	Monday 3rd February 2025
2. Easter Scene Painting	Monday 28th April 2025
3. Easter Photography	Wednesday 7th May 2025
4. Prayer Composition	Tuesday 20th May 2025
5. 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

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



Month	Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Target Group
JAN	19	Sun	2-5pm	Primary School Day	St Mirin's Cathedral	P4-P7
MAR	5	Wed		Ash Wednesday	School-based	All schools
MAR	9	Sun	2-5pm	Primary School Day – Lent	St Mirin's Cathedral	P4-P7
MAR	13	Thu	1.30-3.30pm	Joint Meeting of Clergy and HTs: Strengthening Home-School-Parish Partnerships	Cathedral Halls tbc	HTs and Clergy
MAR	24	Mon	7pm	Diocesan Parent Forum	Diocesan Offices	PC Chairs and Church Representatives
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

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



Month	Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Target Group
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

Diocesan Family Day with Mary

The next Diocesan Family Event is our Family Day with Mary on Sunday 18th May 2025
2pm-4pm
Venue to be confirmed



CLPL (January-March 2025)

Date	Time	Course		Venue
January 2025				
10.01.25	09:30 - 12:00	Principal Teachers of Religious Education: Senior Phase	Principal Teachers of RE	Diocesan Centre Cathedral Precincts Incle Street Paisley PA1 1HR
15.01.25	16:00 - 17:30	Sacrament of Confirmation – core curriculum - Session 2 Continue to develop understanding of the Diocesan Sacrament of Confirmation Guidelines	Teachers NEW to P7 and interested staff	Diocesan Centre
22.01.25	16:00 - 17:30	Sacrament of Confirmation – core curriculum - Session 2 Continue to develop understanding of the Diocesan Sacrament of Confirmation Guidelines.	Teachers NEW to P7 and interested staff	All Saints P.S. Blairmore Road Greenock PA15 3JS
28.01.25	15:45 - 17:45	Equalities and Inclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church teaching <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Biblical anthropology: principles; ii. Equality, dignity, solidarity in the tradition of the Church iii. Recent magisterial statements iv. Saints who witness to human dignity • Implications of the Equality Act for Catholic schools • Practical scenarios 	HTs and Key Staff (Inverclyde)	Notre Dame HS
29.01.25	16:00 - 17:30	Leadership in Catholic Schools - Session 3 - Mission, Vision and Values in Catholic Schools	Teachers who wish to develop their leadership skills and/or to develop the leadership capacity in others.	Diocesan Centre
February 2025				
5.02.25	15:45 - 17:45	Equalities and Inclusion	HTs and Key Staff (<i>East Renfrewshire</i>)	St Ninian's High
12.02.25	15:45 - 17:45	Equalities and Inclusion	HTs and Key Staff (<i>Renfrewshire</i>)	Cathedral Halls
13.02.25	13:00 - 15:00	Diocesan CHAS Meeting		Diocesan Offices
14.02.25	13:15- 15:15	Preparing for Local Authority Interviews Supporting NQTs in the Catholic sector to prepare confidently for interview.	Inverclyde NQTs	Inverclyde Academy Cumberland Rd, Greenock PA16 0FB

CLPL (January-March 2025)

Date	Time	Course		Venue
19.02.25	16:00 - 17:15	Primary RE Co-ordinator Meeting	Primary RE Co-ordinators	Diocesan Centre
21.02.25	09:30 - 11:00	<u>Preparing for Local Authority Interviews</u> Supporting NQTs in the Catholic sector to prepare confidently for interview.	Renfrewshire NQTs	Diocesan Centre
25.02.25	10:00 -11.30	<u>Preparing for Local Authority Interviews</u> Supporting NQTs in the Catholic sector to prepare confidently for interview.	East Renfrewshire NQTs	TBC
26.02.25	16:00 - 17:15	Primary RE Co-ordinator Meeting	Primary RE Co-ordinators	Diocesan Centre
26.02.25	16:00 - 17:30	Leadership in Catholic Schools - Session 4 – Self-Evaluation of Leadership in Catholic Schools	See above.	Diocesan Centre
27.02.25	16:00 - 17:15	Primary RE Co-ordinator Meeting	Primary RE Co-ordinators	All Saints P.S.
March 2025				
March 25		Lenten Reflection Service	Primary and Secondary Teachers	See pages 3-5
5.03.25	16:00 - 17:30	Sacrament of First Eucharist To support teachers new to P.4 in preparing children for the Sacrament of First Eucharist.	Teachers NEW to P4 and any interested staff	Diocesan Centre
6.03.25	16:00 - 17:30	Sacrament of First Eucharist To support teachers new to P.4 in preparing children for the Sacrament of First Eucharist.	Teachers NEW to P4 and any interested staff	All Saints P.S
12.03.25	16:00 - 17:30	God's Loving Plan To develop understanding of the principles and key messages of God's Loving Plan.	Teachers NEW to P6 or P7	All Saints P.S.
13.03.25	13.15 - 15:00 <i>(Lunch from 12:30)</i>	Joint Clergy & Head Teacher Meeting	Head Teachers & Clergy	Cathedral Halls
19.03.25	16:00 - 17:30	God's Loving Plan To develop understanding of the principles and key messages of God's Loving Plan.	Teachers NEW to P6 or P7	Diocesan Centre
April 2025				
25.04.25	9:30 - 15:30	Paisley Diocese CHAPS Conference	Primary HTs & AHTs	Gleddoch House Hotel