
FIRST TEACHERS

YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TEACHERS IN YOUR CHILDREN'S LIVES!
OCTOBER 2021



Dear parents and guardians, greetings once more from the Family Life Commission for our Diocese of Paisley! This newsletter aims to share some of how our Catholic faith is being taught and practised in school, and hopes to provide some help as you teach your children to grow in faith at home. As our children's *fundamental and irreplaceable* first teachers in faith and love, most of our teaching is done by example, but it is also important that we talk about our faith and pray together as a family. Every small effort we make here will be well worth it, and although we are often less than perfect in this mission, we can always ask God for help, confident that He will bless our efforts and make up for our failures.

October – Praying the Rosary as a family and with others

When school returns, we are still in October, a month dedicated to the Holy Rosary, which is a powerful way of dedicating our family life to God. If a complete rosary seems too long for our children, saying a decade or even one Hail Mary together is great. Our very own Bishop John is leading the UK Mission Rosary throughout October. Many families found that saying the rosary together with Bishop John during lockdown at the start of 2021 was a really positive experience, maybe you could join with him and other families in this prayer.

Information at [Missio Mission Rosary](#)

At the recent family prayer event held in St. Mirin's cathedral hall, we heard from St. Cadoc's parish children's rosary group how many surprising blessings they have received from simply meeting to pray the rosary for a short time regularly in their local church. Maybe some more of us parents could be inspired to organise a children's rosary group, either at home, in school or the parish.



Some simple guidance on doing this is included on our Diocesan webpage <https://rcdop.org.uk/family-rosary>

November: Month of the Holy Souls

On 1st November we celebrate the feast of All Saints, those who have already reached their true home in Heaven with God, and next day the feast of All Souls, those who are still on the journey to an eternal life of peace and joy. During November, we especially remember to pray for those we have known who have died, that they may reach their final place of rest and happiness. We can do this as a family by praying together the 'Eternal rest' or other suitable prayer.

*Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them, may they rest in peace, Amen.
May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace, Amen.*

Another helpful way to mark this time is to make a 'November List' together as a family of those we know who have died. We can use this to pray in our homes and/or hand in to our parish to be included in all the Masses during November. This activity can be a good way of remembering those who have been important in our own and our children's lives, especially family members, friends and neighbours who have died during recent years. It can bring comfort and shared recognition of our loss and our gratitude for the blessings we received through our departed loved ones, who we hope to meet again in God's kingdom.

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On 24th November [#RedWednesday](#) Aid to the Church in Need remembers persecuted Christians who routinely face detention, violence and abuse for their faith, including legal and structural oppression, such as young people being denied access to Higher Education. The total number of Christians killed for their faith last year rose by 60 per cent to 4,761 – 3,530 of these were in Nigeria. We can pray God will help these persecuted faithful Christians.

Returning to Mass

There are now no restrictions on how many people can attend Mass, and it's a good time to return to Sunday Mass as a family. Although this isn't always easy to achieve, it is the single most important thing we can do in helping our children (and ourselves) grow in faith. We still need to wear a mask and sign in, but don't have to book in advance, so take that step and don't wait to come back to Our Lord in the Eucharist on Sundays.

COP 26 – October 31st to November 12th, Glasgow

In the lead up to COP26 in Glasgow this November, it is good to understand Catholic teaching on the care for creation as a response in gratitude to God for giving us this world to share with each other in love. Our own SCIAF produces great resources on the importance of environmental protection for the poorest people; you can access these resources [here](#). Praying together for the good of all peoples in our common home. perhaps when giving thanks for what we have to eat before meals, would be one way of marking this time together as a family.

Advent and Christmas The First Sunday of Advent falls on 28th November this year, beginning the time of spiritual preparation for Christmas (practical preparations having likely been underway for some time already!) It's getting harder to find a religious Advent calendar these days, but they can be ordered online or bought from your parish bookstall. Another great way to prepare for celebrating Christmas as a great feast of faith, is to have an advent candle or wreath and light it each day with a simple prayer, before dinner or bed. Some (relatively) easy instructions on doing this can be found at rcdop.org.uk/advent-wreath-family-prayers



Advent is also a traditional time for giving alms, or sharing some of our resources with others. Some parishes have an Advent Giving (or Jesse) tree for giving gifts to those less well off, and it can be fun for children to be involved in choosing, wrapping and bringing these gifts to Church on Sunday. There are also the [SCIAF Real Gifts](#) and [Mary's Meals Christmas Gifts](#) for those 'hard to get for' people, or just as a gift to those in need as a family.

Christmas is just not the same without going as a family to Mass. It is a particularly beautiful and comforting experience and filled with joy for young children particularly, although even the 'cool' teenagers often enjoy it too, without letting on of course! Now that COVID restrictions are largely lifted it will be easier to find a time that suits your Christmas schedule, from a Christmas Eve vigil mass or the traditional 'Midnight' Mass (which is often earlier in the evening now) to a choice of Masses on Christmas morning itself. Whatever ways you celebrate the great feast of Our Lord becoming one of us and bringing the promise of Peace and Joy to all, we hope and pray you have a very Happy Christmas and every blessing in 2022.

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