

Youth Matters

Diocese of Ferns Resource for Post Primary Schools

Sept/Oct 2020

Dear fellow catechist,

I hope this message finds you well.

The return to school this year is as surreal as was the early closedown. Like all sectors of society, you find yourself trying to operate in what is a much changed environment, a world where many of the old patterns and practices are suspended, and a work place where vigilance and repeated safety messages abound.

I write to you with a twofold purpose:

1. To thank you for the accompaniment and reassurance that you afforded our young people since the beginning of the pandemic. A trying time for all, it certainly has had its impact on our young in terms of education, social interaction, lifestyle and indeed 'meaning of life' as they struggle to adapt and understand.
2. To extend to you a word of encouragement and wish you well as you return to the task as a front line and very necessary beacon, one charged with giving direction, hope, encouragement and purpose. The current climate makes this role all the more challenging as old assumptions are under pressure, questions abound in a climate of uncertainty and yet 'needs must' as we try to negotiate our way together in a caring manner, through new and uncharted waters.

I'm mindful of words used some years ago by the late Saint John-Paul:

'What really matters in life is that we are loved by Christ and that we love Him in return. In comparison to the love of Jesus, everything else is secondary, and without the love of Jesus, everything is useless.'

It's a stark quote, but one that is very clear in the direction in which it points us. All will work out in time but what do we hold onto as we journey there?

Pope John-Paul points in the direction of friendship with-and trust in- Jesus Christ, our sure hope and unchanging point of reference as so much about us remains fluid and uncertain.

As we begin 2020, I wish you well as you live out your role as 'beacon' in our schools and communities. Rest assured of the confidence of Jesus in you as you undertake not only a vital role among the young, but also a life giving and uplifting one in this new 'normal' - which hopefully will be less long lasting—than it is all too easy to fear.

With every good wish that you stay safe,

+ Denis Brennan.



The Way Forward

The Diocese is currently preparing The *Way Forward*, a three year plan for youth development which will commence with a recruitment campaign for over 100 voluntary Youth Ministers whose role will be to support the John Paul II Awards, *support school/parish projects, support RE teachers/Chaplains* and their parish clergy, etc. Diocesan resources are also being developed at this time in the area of Prayer Space Projects, Pilgrimages, Retreats, Liturgical Calendar to be launched in 2022. Details on these resources and this exciting project will be presented at the next Diocesan Inservice.



As part of The Way Forward, we are engaging with *Transition Year Focus Groups* (no larger than groups of 6 from participating schools). These groups will be instrumental in providing a 'youth voice' in the types of faith formation engagements young people are suggesting. These focus groups will meet at least once. If your school would like to participate please see contact details below. This is a great opportunity for TY students to be involved in the future planning of their school, parish and Diocese.



Inter-Diocesan Seminar

Normally each year we travel to Kilkenny to the Inter-Diocesan Seminar, however this year we will meet via zoom in early 2021. Although we will miss the opportunity for personally connecting, it will no doubt make the opportunity more accessible in other ways. This year's seminar will include the following speakers and themes:

Michael Conway: **Person, Power, and Privilege**: Education in the Catholic Tradition.

Noel Kavanagh: A dynamic, interactive method of facilitating inquiry in the Classroom.

Monica Brown: **I Am With You Always**—Mindfulness and Meditation for Young People.

Soul Seekers

Of the six textbooks written for the new NCCA specification, the *Soul Seekers* series was written specifically for Catholic schools and designated colleges. It also meets the standards of the NCCA specification and prepares students for either the exam or non-exam routes for the specification. Veritas will "swop out" the existing two volumes series for a revised one-volume text (with workbook) for the next academic year. ["Buy First Year and Second/Third Year textbooks in 2020 and we will replace them in 2021 with one book covering all three years" - Veritas] You can contact Ciara Dunne of Veritas at Ciara.dunne@veritas.ie for further details.

Trócaire

Trócaire has produced a new resource for this year's "Season of Creation" (September - mid October) based on the 2015 encyclical of Pope Francis *Laudato Si* (On the Care of our Common Home). While the resource was written for parish groups, it could work equally well in Second level schools, especially senior cycle - really in any group motivated to address the ecological crisis. The resource illustrates the key concepts of the encyclical with events from the past five years, including the current pandemic. Seven Power-points make up the module, along with ancillary resources. Note the speaker's information that accompanies each slide. This resource is available at: <https://www.trocaire.org/resources/>

LAUDATO SI'

ON CARE FOR
OUR COMMON HOME



POPE FRANCIS



Social Justice Websites

www.whycare.ie—Jesuit Centre for Faith & Justice

www.trocaire.org—Trocaire—development resources

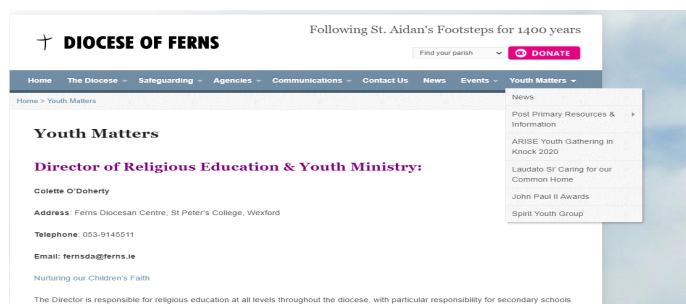
www.bothar.org—Aid agency Bóthar

www.marysmeals.ie—Aid—fundraising initiatives

www.svp.ie—St. Vincent de Paul resources

Www.goalglobal.org—Development resources

Diocesan Online Support



As indicated above, please log onto <https://ferns.ie/youth-matters/> for diocesan support covering topics such as the liturgical and international calendar of events, Catholic School Week Resources and useful websites. Information is updated regularly. You will also find information on Facebook Page ; Ferns Diocesan Advisor Shared Space <https://www.facebook.com/groups/489829325062210>.



Useful Websites

- **The Religion Teacher**: www.thereligionteacher.com
- **Faitharts (religion and the arts)**: www.faitharts.ie
- **Diocese of Ferns Adult faith formation and News**: www.thehookoffaith.com
- **The Chosen** is the first-ever-multi-season TV show about the life of Jesus (Free) www.youtube.com/channel/UCBXOFnNTULFaAnj24PAeblg
- **Support in Liturgical events**: www.liturgy-ireland.ie
- **Season of Creation**: www.catholicbishops.ie/2020/07/15/season-of-creation-2020/
- **Religion Teacher's Website**: www.rtai.ie
- Regularly has **relevant info re JC Spec** and RE related information for schools: www.icatholic.ie
- **Vatican News** (full of podcasts and resources for the liturgical year): www.icatholic.ie
- **Saint of the Day**: www.catholicireland.net/saint-day/
- **News and Resources**: www.ceist.ie
- **RE Resources**: www.leceiletrust.ie
- **Inspirational movie clips**: www.wingclips.com
- **Inspirational quotes and stories**: www.appleseeds.org



The Season of Creation has a special significance for the Catholic Church, particularly since Pope Francis established 1 September as an annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

The Season of Creation or Creation Time, is marked throughout the Christian world from 1 September to 4 October (Feast of St. Francis of Assisi) and celebrates the joy of creation as well as encouraging awareness-raising initiatives to protect the natural environment.

Resources for the Season of Creation 2020 from the Laudato Si' Working Group on <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2020/07/15/season-of-creation-2020/>

Resources from the Vatican can be sourced here: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/events/season-of-creation.html>

'Looking Up!' Pilot Project

Loreto Wexford have taken up the challenge along with 24 other schools throughout Ireland to Pilot the new TY Programme entitled 'Looking Up!' The programme, which is the collaboration of Elphin Diocese and Jesuit Secondary Schools in Ireland, is a Transition Year Religious Education Module which will support students to reflect on their learning to date vis-à-vis the person of Christ, and how He is represented in art, culture, history, other world faiths, their families (for some), school and communities. The Module aims to assist students to come to a personal answer to Christ's question "Who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:13-20). We look forward to Ciaran McBride of Loreto Wexford keeping us up to date on its progress. Well done to Siobhan O'Donoghue of Loreto Wexford who is co-writer of the Module.



POPE JOHN PAUL II AWARD

All John Paul II Award Ceremonies will take place this year within each school. Each school will receive an outline for the Ceremony to be adapted to each school's set up. We are so proud of each of the participant's endeavours and we hope that each ceremony reflects that pride. We are also very proud of our three Papal Award participants and look forward to publicising their achievements. We will be building on the success of the John Paul II Awards in the coming years.

If your school would like to find out more about running the John Paul II Awards please email Colette O'Doherty on fernsda@ferns.ie.

Colette is available to call to your school and provide a Presentation on the Award along with some fabulous stories on past participants. This Award is open to Transition Year Students. Also all participating schools are being offered a 3 hour Retreat for their participants entitled 'I AM'.



John Paul II Participants 2019/2020 receiving their Awards last November from Bishop Denis Brennan in St. Aidan's Cathedral Enniscorthy.

Junior Cycle Religious Education in the Catholic School



This document developed last year by the Council of Catechetics of the Irish Episcopal Conference is such a wonderful read. It is rich in its approach to the general principles which should underpin a Catholic schools approach to JC RE.

It reminds us that religious education promotes the holistic development of the person and seeks to further the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, religious and moral development of students. RE provides a particular space to encourage and engage with the deepest and most fundamental questions and should enable a relationship with God.

I have posted copies to the RE Co-Ordinators but if you require further copies please ring this office on 053-9145511.



If you would like to discuss any of the topics in this Newsletter or find out more please contact:

Colette O'Doherty;

Diocesan Director of
RE & Youth Ministry

053-9145511/087-9474513

fernsda@ferns.ie

Diocesan Inservice—Care of the Religion Teacher



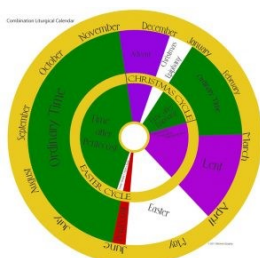
This year we are hoping to have our Diocesan Inservice in Our Lady's Island with the emphasis placed on 'Relaxation & Retreat'. This year we want to focus completely on self care of the Religion Teacher. We are aware of the pressures and we hope that this opportunity will provide you

with the space to breathe.

We will also use the opportunity to tell you about the Way Forward and give you a flavour of some of the projects in the pipeline for 2022. Obviously in line with procedures at the time, this event will only go ahead if possible.



LITURGICAL SUPPORT



During the year there are landmarks for various liturgical celebrations. In addition to providing information on the Diocesan website ferns.ie, we aim to provide practical ideas for those who prepare the liturgy as well as :

- News on liturgical happenings.

- Pastoral help on liturgy matters including links with other websites.

In the meantime check out <http://www.liturgy-ireland.ie/>.

VALUE BASED FUNDRAISING IDEA!

Mary's Meals sets up school feeding programmes in some of the world's poorest communities where poverty and hunger prevent children from gaining an education. It is a simple idea that works. They partner with local communities and schools to provide a daily meal in a place of learning to attract chronically hungry children into the classroom where they receive an education, their route out of poverty.



It costs just €18.30 to feed a child for a whole school year!!

How wonderful for our young people to engage in such a project that leaves them knowing that they are personally responsible for feeding one child for a full year!! Watch this wonderful video with Actor Gerard Butler when he put Hollywood on hold to visit Liberia and see Mary's Meals in action for the first time. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXMm81UTTb>. For more information visit marysmeals.ie.



Person of Commitment



A budding actress leaves her career and the open doors to

fame behind to give her life to God. Some might see this as a total failure. *But was it?* Those who knew Sr. Clare speak in this film. After her tragic death in the 2016 earthquake in Ecuador, the failure might be seen as having reached its devastating end. Yet, many think that the story doesn't end there. Thanks to the Servant Sisters' archives with over 15 years of photos and videos of Sr. Clare's life, **HM Television presents this documentary to show you the real-life story of this Sister who gave her ALL to God, keeping NOTHING back.** Watch this inspirational film for free on <https://www.sisterclare.com/en/>.

Since her death in

2016, people

around the world

have begun praying

to Sr Clare, asking

for her intercession,

while her grave in Derry City Cemetery has become a place of pilgrimage.



AUTUMN REFLECTS GOD'S PROVIDENCE

I am surrounded by a peaceful ebbing
as creation bows to the mystery of life;
all that grows and lives must give up life,
yet it does not really die.

As plants surrender their life,
bending, brown and wrinkled,
and yellow leaves of trees
float to my lawn like parachute troops,
they do so in a sea of serenity.

I hear no fearful cries from crea-
tion,
no screams of terror,
as death daily devours
once-green and growing life.
Peaceful and calm is autumn's swan
song,
for she understands
that hidden in winter's death-grip
is spring's openhanded
full-brimmed breath of life.

It is not a death rattle that sounds
over fields and backyard-fences;
rather I hear a lullaby
softly swaying upon the autumn
wind.

Sleep in peace, all that lives;
slumber secure, all that is dying,
for in every fall there is the rise
whose sister's name is spring.

Edward Hays, Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim

