



# NORES NEWS

December 2018 – The month dedicated to The Coming of Christ (The Immaculate Conception)

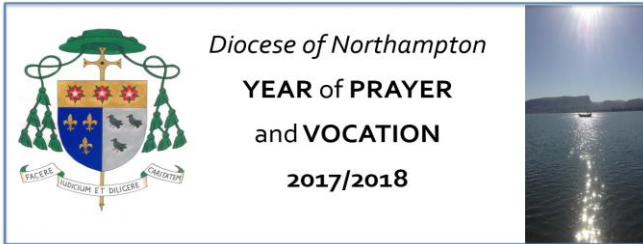
Diocese of Northampton, Office for RE, Evangelisation, Catechesis & Schools

SUPPORTING CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND FORMATION

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## From the Episcopal Vicar

Mgr Kevin



After twelve months of prayer and reflection we celebrate the end of YoPaV – our diocesan time of deepening our prayer life and our understanding of being called by God in our baptism to serve him in the holy Church.

Obviously that never stops – but this year has been an opportunity to take more time than usual to do pray and think. This has been helped by the many resources and supporting events and initiatives across the schools and parish communities. Our sincere thanks to all who have given so generously of their time and talents to support YoPaV!

To mark this Bishop Peter has invited the Pope's Ambassador to the UK to celebrate Mass with him in our Cathedral on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, at 11.30am. Everyone is invited to join together as the diocesan family for this great occasion, and to welcome Archbishop Edward Adams to the diocese

What is important is to think how we continue to be a people of prayer and respond to God's call. The resources

for school and parish can certainly be used again for the corresponding months, and all those other ideas that you have used yourselves. Linking them into the Year for *Missio* will be very appropriate as well as beginning to think about how we will keep 2020 as a Year of the Word of God, called for by our bishops.



**ADVENT** challenges us each year – especially in the context of the Black Friday shopping spree and everything else that the world holds dear for Christmas. We need to find ways of ensuring that we help the message of Christmas find its rightful place in our preparations for Christmas without being seen as some form of spoilsport brigade.

One thing to do is to encourage Christmas cards which tell the Christmas story. You can also demand stamps with the Virgin and Child from your post office. They should have them, but if not go to [shop.royalmail.com](http://shop.royalmail.com) Look up [biblesociety.org.uk](http://biblesociety.org.uk) for their Christmas church resources. Well worth thinking about.

Bless your **ADVENT WREATH** but please make sure it has only four candles, one for each week. Somehow a central candle has crept in probably for commercial reasons! The Wreath goes after the Fourth week of Advent to be replaced by the crib!

### ADVENT WREATH BLESSING

Lord our God, we praise you for your son Jesus Christ: he is Emmanuel the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us, he is the Saviour of every nation. Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation. May he come quickly and not delay.

### BLESSING A CHRISTMAS TREE

Holy Lord, we come with joy to celebrate the birth of your Son who rescued us from the darkness of sin by making the cross a tree of life and light. May this tree, arrayed in splendour, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts through Christ our Lord. AMEN

### BLESSING A CRIB

God of every nation and people from the beginning of creation you have made manifest your love. When our need for a Saviour was so great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy and love. Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Saviour of all and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. AMEN

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION & CHAPLAINCY *Alex Heath*

**Advent Resource** For many years the Catholic Church in England and Wales, has observed Bible Sunday on the Second Sunday of Advent and created resources for both Bible Sunday and for Advent as a whole. Most recently this has been with the considerable and invaluable support of *Bible Society*. There is an invitation to participate in and promote **Journey with Jesse** created by *Bible Society* and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. This Advent resource specifically focuses on the ancient tradition of the Jesse Tree. We are encouraged to delve into our Bibles and read about the people and events that lead to Jesus' birth, about his own genealogy, and then decorate our Christmas trees with the signs and symbols of these Scriptural texts. Free copies of the Jesse Tree resource are available to encourage this creative way to read the Scriptures as part of our Advent preparations. Fleur Dorrell, the Scripture Development Coordinator is receiving requests for these resources. (Fleur.Dorrell@biblesociety.org.uk) I have ordered some which I have made available during the YOUCAT for kids sessions.

### YOUCAT for Kids Sessions

Following the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Youth Catechism (YOUCAT) a wonderful new resource aimed at younger children, YOUCAT for Kids is now available. This is a great new tool for catechists, and for parents and carers as they pass on the faith to children. YOUCAT for Kids sessions have already taken place in some Pastoral Areas and will take place in each of the following Pastoral Areas below over the coming months. During these 90 minute sessions there will be the opportunity to:

- Browse the YOUCAT for Kids
- Be guided through a method of using the YOUCAT for Kids.
- Have the opportunity to purchase a copy of the YOUCAT for Kids at the reduced price of £10 (please bring £10 cash or a cheque made payable to R.E. Service).
- Hear about support and training for catechists.

There is no charge for the event itself. Booking however is essential as capacity is limited at some of the venues and to help us with ordering sufficient numbers of YOUCAT for Kids books. Please book early to secure your place via the NORES office on admin@nores.org.uk.

DATE & TIME 2019	VENUE for the PASTORAL AREA
Tuesday 22 January 7.30pm-9pm	St Thomas Aquinas Church. Bletchley (M. KEYNES)
Friday 25 January 7.30pm-9pm	NORES, , 33 Westbourne Road Luton LU4 8JD, (LUTON)
Monday 28 January 7.30pm-9pm	Holy Redeemer Church. R (SLOUGH)
Friday 1 February 7.30pm-9pm	St Aidan's RC Church (SOUTH-EAST BUCKS)
Saturday 2 February 11am-12.30pm	Our Lady of Grace Church (SOUTH BUCKS)
Monday 4 February 7.30pm-9pm	Our Lady of Lourdes Aylesbury (AYLESBURY)

Full addresses of venues can be found on the Church finder section of Diocesan website [www.northamptondiocese.org](http://www.northamptondiocese.org)

What a pleasure it has been for our school volunteers to be invited into so many schools this term for a Harvest Assembly. "Brighten Up" was an inspirational theme for so many of our children. Well done and thank you to everyone who took part! Don't forget to send in any monies you have raised or fab photos you've taken!

As term moves inexorably towards Christmas, CAFOD has a number of resources which you may find useful. There are lovely, thought provoking, presentations linked to Advent with CAFOD'S Advent Calendar, Advent Service and World Gifts which are designed for both Primary and Secondary age groups. These might give you some ideas for individual class reflection as well as a focus for the pre-Christmas season. Don't forget that your local school volunteer will be only too pleased to present the assemblies for you! Thinking ahead-I know you don't want to think about the new year, but Lent will be upon us before we know where we are. Do you want a visit/workshop from your school volunteer to start the season? If so, please get in touch so that dates can be arranged at what is always a very busy time for our volunteers..

Some news... we moved from Princes Risborough. Please note the new details: **CAFOD Northampton Volunteer Centre, Damien House, 23 High Street, Great Missenden HP16 9AA. Tel : 01494 863 777**

**Wishing you a very Blessed and Joyful Christmas!**

## MISSIO NEWS

*Fr Wayne Coughlin*



The season of Advent is a time of joyful expectation. However, this can be lost as we rush towards our celebration of the Incarnation. **Perhaps this Advent, in your own pilgrimage with Jesus and as a school, you can find time each day to ponder the wonder of the season?** There are lots of ways of doing this, for instance, create a Jesse Tree to illustrate the account of salvation from Creation to the Nativity of Jesus. Wonderfully, in Bedford we shall build this each Sunday of Advent as our young people will bring forward seven plaques at the Sunday Mass representing a Biblical theme to hang from the 'tree'. Our newsletter will contain an explanation of each plaque and there will be loanable resources for families to take home and learn more about this ancient Catholic tradition! There will also be an opportunity for people to make a financial donation at the Jesse Giving Tree; this year it will support our parish youth project and **"Mission Together" (an aid agency for children which is part of Missio) which is celebrating its 175th anniversary.** Thus the monies collected at the Jesse Giving Tree and then the Christmas Crib will help us support young people in our town and across the world.

**"Mission Together" has created lots of new liturgies, assemblies, craft activities and an Advent Calendar to help schools journey through the Advent season** (see the website for details). In this way, "Catholic Schools can be at the heart of the New Evangelisation." See - Reclaiming the Piazza: Vol. 1: Catholic Education as a Cultural Project / Vol. 2: The Catholic School and the New Evangelisation *The Presbytery, 2 Severn Way, Bedford. MK41 7BX • (01234) 352607*

## PRIMARY RE

Anne Marie McIntosh

**New Standards in RE** Following our day with the RE Subject Leaders I have decided to leave RE assessment as it is for one more term. Then by Easter we will have end of year standards for each year group (rather than end of phase) and clear guidance on how and when we will assess them.

**Inset** Thank you very much to all of you who came along to the *Amoris Laetitia* inset recently. Whilst it was only a snap shot of the Pope's document on Love in the Family I hope it has given you some food for thought and discussion.

**Missio** Since 1922, *Missio* has been the Catholic Church's official charity for overseas mission. They work to bring the hope of the Gospel to many parts of our world where there is turmoil, poverty and uncertainty, and where the Church is new, young or poor. The children's branch of *Missio* is called *Mission Together* (previously *Holy Childhood*). Have a look at their website [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk) or go straight to <https://missiontogether.org.uk/> There are lots of ideas for Advent – lessons, assemblies and an Advent calendar. We will be having a Year of *Missio* beginning in the new year. We will send out monthly activities from January culminating in a *Missio* themed Schools' Mass next October.

**RE Subject Leader Day** Our next day together will take place on Thursday 21 March 2019 and then in the Pentecost Term we will be joined by our secondary colleagues and school Chaplains on Friday 7 June 2019. This day will be led by CJM Music.

### **Come and See**

The next Come and See day will take place on Thursday 7 February 2019. This will focus on Preparing for the Pentecost Term.

Then in that term we will run another day on Thursday 27 June 2019 Preparing for the Advent Term. These are standalone days so any member of staff can come to one or both of them. Its great CPD.

### **A Prayer for Christmas Day**

*Loving God, on this Christmas Day we give thanks that Jesus your Son has come into our world bringing us gifts of peace and joy.*

*Bless us as we sit together at this table for our Christmas meal.*

*Bless the food we share and help us to remember those who are hungry.*

*Be with our neighbours and our friends, all who are lonely, sick or away from home. We pray for our loved ones who have died that they may now sit at your table in heaven.*

*May we bring your peace and joy to all those we meet.*  
*Amen*

With every good wish for a happy and holy Christmas and a relaxing break.

## SECONDARY RE AND THEOLOGY

Paul McHugh

### **Pope's Catechesis on the Ten Commandments**

The Pope's catechesis on the Decalogue is now coming to its close. If nothing else, these Wednesday audiences remind Christians and all people of good will to revisit and reflect anew upon the 'Ten Words'. These audiences are all to be found on the Vatican's website by clicking on 'Audiences' on the home page. There is plenty in this series of catechetical teachings to provide discussion starters in a classroom. In general, the Pope's catechesis on the Decalogue forces us to consider the meaning of the 'Ten Words' God gave to Moses and Israel far beyond their letter to the very heart of what it is to live in humility, truth and love in the sight of God.

For example, apart from the fifth commandment, breaking which other commandment can be a form of killing, according to the Pope? Answer: 'You shall not bear false witness'. The Pope says: "Be careful! Those who gossip are like terrorists because their tongues throw a bomb and then they calmly walk away, but what they say with that bomb destroys the reputation of others. Do not forget: gossiping kills." And in the Pope's catechesis on the Fifth Commandment, there is this remarkable statement: "Not loving is the first step to killing; and not killing is the first step to loving."

Another topical example, was the recent ban on expensive designer coats by a school in Birkenhead justified? Though some have called the ban 'absolutely ridiculous', the school justified its ruling as a way of 'poverty-proofing our school environment' and stopping 'poverty-shaming'. A discussion about this could, for example, be related to the Tenth Commandment about covetousness, to the Fourth Commandment about honouring parents (since schools act *in loco parentis*), to the First Commandment against idolatry (in that showing off can be a form of self-worship) and perhaps even to the Eighth Commandment about not bearing false witness (in that the young are attracted to brands which sell a dream rather than a reality). And the consumerism of which brand-worship is a symptom is not unconnected with the fact that Sunday is now less and less a day set aside for worship and rest and more like a working, shopping day like any other day.

As we enter the season of Advent, the Pope's down-to-earth catechesis can help us examine what truly drives us. As a time of repentance, hope and expectation, Advent should force us to reflect on what is false and what is true in culture. Catholic schools are uniquely situated to challenge a culture which proffers an Advent-free, Christ-free Christmas. If December is just so many shopping days to Christmas, then something is wrong. And yet this year, Selfridges in London gave itself the dubious distinction of being the first department store in the world to open its Christmas shop - on August 1, '145 days early'. This sort of thing,

though it makes 'business sense', can easily become the enemy of that patient expectation that should mark Advent.

The Aramaic 'Maranatha' often means 'Come, Lord Jesus!' This echoes the prayer right at the end of the Bible: 'Amen; come, Lord Jesus'. To pray this truly is to yearn for what the world cannot give. It is to yearn for Christ. Just as Christians remember the coming of the Christ child into our world as a tiny infant, they also wait in joyful hope for the Second Coming of the Christ, as glorious as the first was humble.

**'Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man'.**

From the Gospel of the First Sunday of Advent (Lk 21:36)

## From the DIRECTOR of SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Collette Curtis

**Recruitment to reserved posts in schools** A number of questions have been asked to clarify the position on appointing leaders to posts within our schools. I enclose an extract from the document *Christ at the Centre*.

The importance of the role of teaching staff is acknowledged by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales: "The preservation and development of the quality and distinctive nature of Catholic schools depends on the faith, practice and commitment of the teachers in our schools, working with their Governing Authority."\* The Bishops require that the Headteacher or Principal, Deputy Headteacher or Vice-Principal, Chaplain and Head of RE/RE Co-ordinator must be practising Catholics.

*\*Memorandum on Appointment of Teachers to Catholic Schools and Academies- September 2012*

This requirement is enshrined in Canon Law and therefore not an issue for discussion or interpretation. School leaders are aware of the need to identify and nurture colleagues with leadership potential and we need to work together at school and partnership level and across the Diocese to provide opportunities for these colleagues to gain experience and expertise. In addition, we need to reach out to Catholic teachers working in schools outside of our schools.

Please ensure that you alert the Diocese if you are recruiting to any reserved post, we are happy to support you in the process and represent the Diocese in the interview.

Revised application forms for all posts are available on the CES website as are the updated contracts and policies. These have been through consultation with the unions.

### Developing Catholic Education in the Diocese

Discussions are continuing with leaders across the Diocese on the development of Catholic education in our schools. The key drivers for the discussions are: School Improvement

- There is inequality and inconsistency in the ease of access to school improvement across local authorities and MATs
- We are in a strong position with strong leaders, governors and talented teachers within our schools to support one another
- Ensuring no school is isolated

### Leadership and Governance

- The current policy of 7 smaller MATs requires 7 Chief Executive Officers and 7 Chief Finance Officers. This raises the question of reducing the burden of compliance by working together and finding opportunities for efficiencies
- Providing opportunities for staff to develop leadership through working together

### Finance and Resources

- Looking for opportunities of economies of scale in order to provide more funding for school improvement

If you are currently a voluntary aided school and would like to discuss any implications for your school of the proposals or just want to ask questions. I am happy to come and discuss this with the head and chair of the school please email me at [curtis@nores.org.uk](mailto:curtis@nores.org.uk)

**Changes to LCVAP from September 2020.** Just to alert you to the end of LCVAP after the next Academic year. The funding will be allocated according to pupil numbers as it is currently but will be devolved through the Diocese. More details will be provided during the school year.

**Workload Advisory Group** The Workload Advisory Group report and government response have now been published. You can find them here, together with an open joint letter to school leaders:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-advisory-group-report-and-government-response>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-workload-in-schools-joint-letter-to-all-school-leaders>

## PRAYING WITH OUR SCHOOLS

**PRAYER INTENTIONS** – *ask the school to pray with the Pope for his intentions for December* that people, who are involved in the service and transmission of faith, may find, in their dialogue with culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time.

### FEAST DAYS –

pray for the schools who celebrate their feast day–  
8th December St Mary's Primary, Caddington

Our Lady's Primary, Amersham

## DATES for YOUR DIARIES 2018/19

### Schools Inset meetings on Love in the Family:

3 Dec	Luton 2	St Mary's Caddington
4 Dec	Aylesbury	St Edward's Aylesbury

Please book via the NORES office:

[admin@nores.org.uk](mailto:admin@nores.org.uk) 01582 723312 Ext 6

