

# Centred on Christ

APRIL 2021



Our Lady of Paisley;  
pray for us

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Dear Colleague,

As we begin the final term in a very difficult school session, it is important to recognise the huge pressures and demands which have been placed on you. You have all worked over and above the call of duty to reduce the impact on children and young people and deserve great credit for doing so. In particular, the Diocese appreciates the many ways you continued to maintain the faith life of your schools and to work with parishes to enable young people to receive the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

In the past year, our churches have been closed for long periods while at other times numbers able to attend Mass have been severely limited. School Masses have been similarly affected. In this context, a major focus of this edition is a reflection on **The Eucharist**. Next session we will also offer draft Guidelines on *Planning School Masses*, a suggestion which arose from a meeting of chaplains. Hopefully, teachers and chaplains can work together to enable young people to rediscover the beauty of the Mass and be enriched by the grace of the Eucharist.

We have sent schools suggestions for **Prayers and Assemblies** for this term: The Eucharist, St Joseph, May Devotions, the Sacred Heart and the Holy Spirit. Fr John Morrison, Vicar Episcopal for Youth and Vocations, has produced assemblies for these themes.

I am extremely grateful to those schools who have provided a range of interesting **Case Studies**, enabling us to share practice across the diocesan family of schools. Similarly, we are delighted to share on our **Twitter account (@DoPEducation1)** the many inspirational ways you have sustained the spiritual life of the school in these difficult times.

During Session 2020-21, we have published several documents which we hope may be of use to you - when we return to more normal circumstances - in taking forward the faith life of the school. They are offered to you to use and adapt to fit your own school's circumstances:

- Chaplaincy in Catholic Schools: A School-Parish Partnership
- Partnership with Parents: From Ideal to Action (including an audit tool and parental survey)
- Listening to Young People: engaging them in planning for improvement.

We will be happy to provide you with PDF copies of these documents. They can also be found in Diocesan TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools.

**The Draft Education and Youth Calendar 2021-22** will be shared with schools to enable you to include key events in your own Calendars. Should government restrictions continue to make large gatherings impossible, we have plans to revert to livestreaming where necessary.

Later this term, we will send you our **Strategic Plan 2021-22** which is based on the targets for the present academic year, building on the work which was undertaken this session and taking forward those action points which were interrupted by the spread of the pandemic. As part of this, we would ask you to continue to reflect on how you can include the recovery of the religious life of the young people in your overall plans.

Please do not hesitate to contact Anne Marie, Stephen or me if we can be of assistance to you.

With every best wish,

*Neil Roarty*

Neil Roarty  
Director of Schools



# The Eucharist

**Bishop John Keenan**

Introducing a sermon on the Eucharist, Fr. Gerard Fuller (i) told a truly extraordinary story of a young boy's love for his friend that has never left me, even though I read it many years ago.

It happened during the Vietnam War when some U.S. artillery rounds went off target and landed in a local village. Fearing the worst, they immediately detached an advance medical corps to deal with possible casualties. As it happened, the local primary school had been hit and some of the children were badly hurt. They needed quick blood transfusions to stabilize them so the medical team gathered the uninjured children together to explain. The U.S. nurse, in her limited French and stumbling Vietnamese, explained that they would need to take blood from them to help save the others. They asked for volunteers and, among them, a little boy called Heng put up his hand, then dropped it, then raised it again. They checked him for blood type, which matched an injured classmate, a little girl. As they placed him on the makeshift bench and inserted the drip into his arm he began quietly to sob. 'Does it hurt?', they asked. 'No', he replied, 'I'm okay'. But as they continued some time he began to shake noticeably. They worried that something was wrong and decided to stop when, at that moment, the backup team arrived with a native Vietnamese nurse at hand who quickly engaged young Heng in rapid dialogue back and forward to find out what was wrong. After a few moments he became calm and settled. The medic turned to the others and explained, 'He thought he was going to die. He thought you meant you needed all his blood to save the little girl's life'. Astounded they asked how he could have the guts to do something like that and the nurse inquired of him. He answered simply, 'She's my friend'.

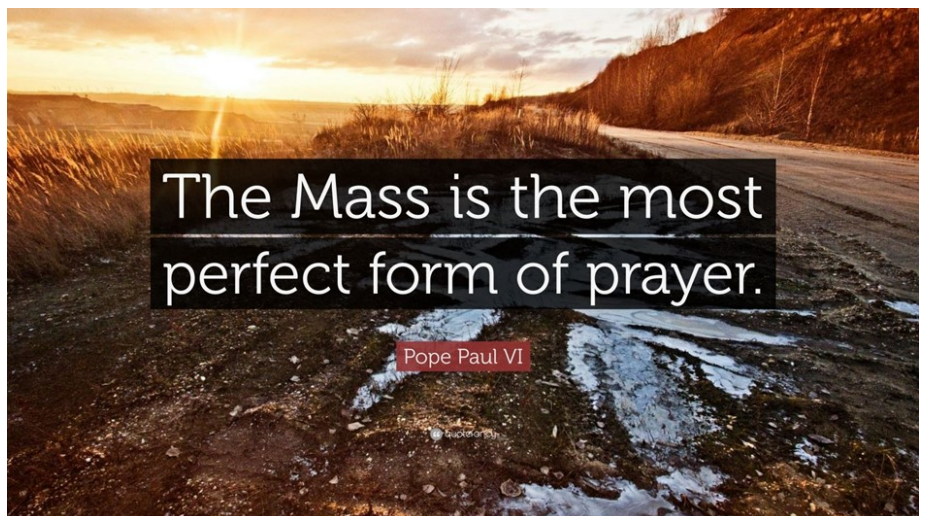
I remembered the story to this day because I have never heard another explain better God's love for us in the Eucharist and in His blood poured out to the end for us, His friends, so that we might not die but have eternal life.

*Stories for All Seasons. Gerard Fuller OMI (The Columban Press, Dublin, 1996)*

## **A short reminder of some of the basics of our beliefs in the Blessed Sacrament Father Paul Brady, Vicar Episcopal for Liturgy**

The Eucharist is the "source and summit of our Christian life", according to the Second Vatican Council. A big claim in so few words! However, it is truly the case. The Mass is the celebration of this sacrament. This is the unbloodied sacrifice once offered by Christ on the Cross for our salvation. Through the Mass, this sacrifice of Christ is then applied to us and for the remission of our sins, and those of the whole world.

As St Thomas Aquinas said, "*The celebration of Holy Mass is as valuable as the death of Jesus on the cross.*" The Mass is not just for us on earth but a celebration in which we join with the saints and angels in heaven and the souls in purgatory.



**The Mass is the most  
perfect form of prayer.**

**Pope Paul VI**

## The Eucharist

(Continued from page 2)

The Church takes the words of Jesus literally when he said- “THIS IS MY BODY, THIS IS MY BLOOD. DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.” At the Last Supper Jesus instituted the priesthood for the Apostles and their successors so we could offer the Mass down through the ages. From the beginning, the Church has obeyed Her Saviour and repeated what He did.

The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ through the word of institution, i.e. the words said by Jesus at the Last Supper, and by the action of the Holy Spirit, changing the bread and wine at its very substance into His Body and Blood. To the senses, and to science, it is still bread and wine. However, with the eyes of faith, these are now the Body and Blood of Christ. This is what we call the Real Presence, i.e. Jesus truly with us.

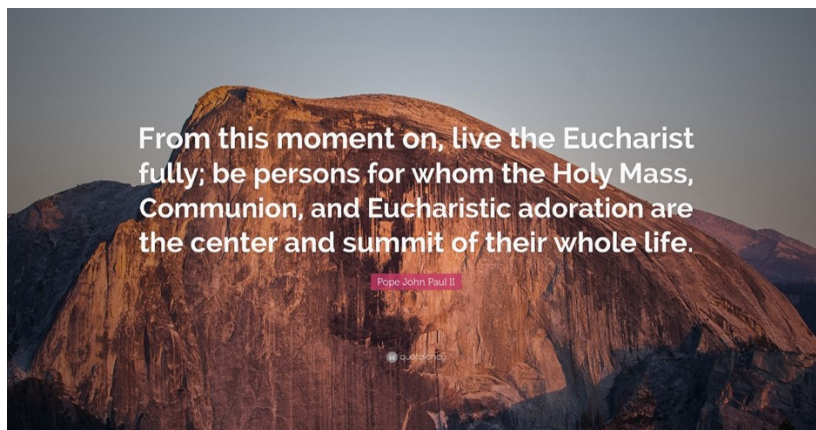
As Catholics, we believe that we encounter the Risen Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Our external attitude and approach to the Eucharist also aids our awareness and understanding of the Real Presence.

Before attending Mass, we are asked to fast from everything except water and medicine, unless for a medical reason, for one hour. This is to prepare our bodies to receive the Body of Christ. As well as preparing our bodies, we could think of how we dress for Mass. In days past, people would don their “Sunday best” to attend Mass. This doesn’t need to be a fashion parade, but it is an outward sign of our inner attitude: that I am making the effort to meet Christ Himself. We dress up for important events in our life, and Holy Mass is one of them.

Before taking our seat in one of the pews, it is our custom to firstly acknowledge the Real Presence of Jesus in the tabernacle by making some gesture of reverence. Traditionally, this is a genuflection - or a deep bow, if your knees can’t take the strain! Once seated, spend a few moments in prayer. Recollect ourselves and bring to mind our intentions for the Mass. An examination of conscience is advisable. Are we in a fit state to receive Holy Communion? If we are in mortal sin, then go, confess that sin before receiving the Lord. Receiving Holy Communion is also BEING in communion with God and His Church. You will notice that at every Mass, the priest prays for the Bishop of the Diocese and for the Pope. This shows that he and the parishioners are “in communion”, i.e. agree with the Bishop and the Holy Father.

In Scotland, Holy Communion may be received on the tongue (the universal manner of doing so), or in the hand. Either way should be done reverently, and with a small bow before reception. On returning to the pew, use this time to thank the Lord for his gift of Holy Communion, adore Him, and offer your prayers to Him. Perhaps St John Vianney can sum up the wonder of the Eucharist for us: *“There is nothings so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us.”*

At the end of Mass, it is always a worthwhile practice to remain in the church, and spend some time in thanksgiving for what we have just received.





## Prayer and Reflection on the Eucharist for Staff

### Father Matthew Carlin

*You may be sure that, of all the moments of your life, the time you spend before the Blessed Sacrament will be that which gives you more strength during life and more consolation at the hour of your death and during eternity.*

(St Alphonsus Liguori)

This service should take place in the school oratory, ideally with the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar in a Monstrance (or Ciborium); alternatively the Blessed Sacrament may remain in the Tabernacle. Where there is no oratory, staff should gather round a Crucifix.

**A hymn may be sung as the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar (e.g. *Godhead here in hiding*).**

**Leader:** Let us spend some time in prayer before Jesus, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. In his work “Confessions”, St Augustine wrote: “You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” Let us allow our hearts to rest for these few moments.

**Pause for a few moments of silence.**

A reading from St John’s Gospel:

Jesus said to the people: “The bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Let us pray.

O God, who have accomplished the work of human redemption through the Paschal Mystery of your Only Begotten Son, graciously grant that we, who confidently proclaim, under sacramental signs, the death and Resurrection of Christ, may experience continued increase of your saving grace. Through Christ our Lord.

**Pause for a few moments of silence.**

A reading from St Mark’s Gospel:

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.”

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them. “Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

## Prayer and Reflection on the Eucharist for Staff Father Matthew Carlin

*(Continued from page 4)*

Let us pray:

O God, who have called us to participate in the Sacred Banquet which your Only Begotten Son, when about to hand himself over to death, entrusted to the Church a sacrifice new for all eternity, the banquet of his love, grant, we pray, that we may draw from so great a mystery, the fullness of charity and life. Through Christ our Lord.

### **Reflection (St Augustine):**

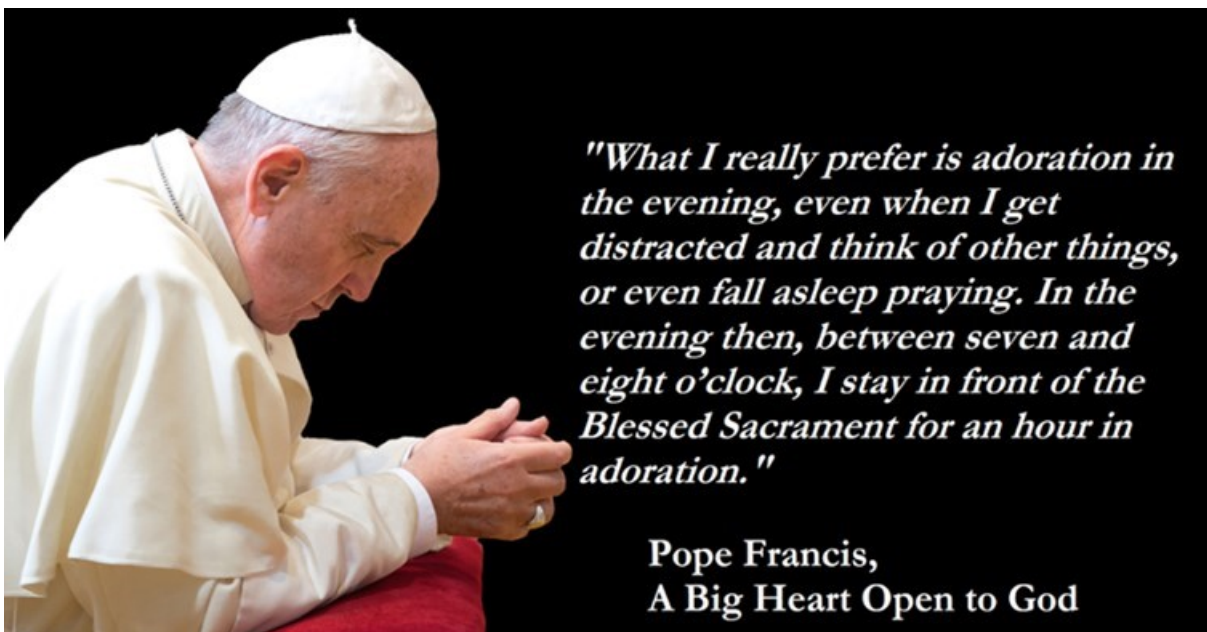
"You ought to know what you have received, what you are going to receive, and what you ought to receive... that Bread which you see on the altar, consecrated by the word of God, is the Body of Christ. That Chalice, or rather, what the chalice holds, consecrated by the word of God, is the blood of Christ. Through those appearances the Lord wished to entrust to us His Body and the Blood which he poured out for the remission of sins. If you have received worthily, you are what you have received, for as St Paul says 'the Bread is one; we, though many, are one body.' So, by bread, you are instructed as to how to cherish unity."

**The remainder of the time of prayer may be kept in quiet reflection, or a Eucharistic hymn may be sung (e.g. *Sweet Sacrament Divine*).**

**Leader:** Let us thank God for the time the we have spent in reflection today by praying in the words our Saviour gave us. Our Father...

**If the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar, a hymn may be sung as it is reposed (e.g. *O bread of heaven*).**

**If the Blessed Sacrament has remained in the Tabernacle during the service, the leader may conclude by saying:** May almighty God bless us, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.



## Case Study: Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

### Notre Dame High School

Over the years we have tried a number of different ways of incorporating Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament into our school life. One of the first ideas we tried was based around the 'Night Fever' model. In case you are unfamiliar, Night Fever was an initiative organised in major cities where Adoration would take place in the Church from 7pm to 11pm on one Saturday every other month. During this time, volunteers would go out into the street and invite people to come and pray before the Blessed Sacrament.

We decided to try this model during some of our Parents Evenings, the Oratory would be open with the Blessed Sacrament exposed and our Caritas pupils would speak to parents as they made their way around their appointments and invite them to visit the Oratory before leaving. During this time the Chaplain would also be available if parents wished to speak to him. This had varying success on the occasions we tried it, and feedback from pupils who visited the Oratory was always very positive.

Perhaps the biggest impact over the years has been our 'Caritas and a Cuppa' programme. This initiative was introduced in 2017 by Kerry O'Donoghue our Caritas Co-ordinator at the time and also the School Chaplain Fr John Morrison. The idea was simple; during the Caritas Year the pupils would meet together four times a year after school. The meeting would begin with a 20-25 minute catechesis session led by a guest speaker and this would be followed by a 15 minute Prayer Service that included Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. For many of our Caritas pupils this was the first time in many years that they experienced Eucharistic Adoration and was something they found very beneficial. This became evident when many included the experience as a highlight in their final submission pieces.

Over the last four years, the Caritas and a Cuppa programme has continued to grow and has been the main vehicle for Eucharistic Adoration within our School. However, in Advent 2019 (and again in 2020) we introduced a weekly Morning Prayer with Eucharistic Adoration prior to the start of the school day at 8.30am. In 2019 this was very well attended by both staff and pupils and many staff expressed their gratitude for allowing them to start their day "in the right way". In fact, many of those who attended each week during Advent asked for it to be repeated during Lent 2020, however this was curtailed due to the closure of all schools. This was offered again in Advent 2020 and was successful again, even with the limited numbers we could accommodate in the Oratory given the current restrictions.

In 2020 we also added another two opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration during Catholic Education Week. The first was a Morning Prayer Service (similar to the aforementioned Advent services) involving staff and pupils. The second opportunity was for all S1 classes. During the week, each S1 class had the opportunity to visit the Oratory and participate in a short prayer service, as part of this service each pupil could complete a short prayer card and place it on the Altar. All pupils fully engaged in these experiences and afterwards spoke about it being a highlight of their day/time in school so far and many have asked for another opportunity at some point in the future. Moving forward, we hope to build upon all of these and eventually extend the class visits to three per year for each class.



Morning Prayer Advent 2020



Prayer Cards placed before the Blessed Sacrament by S1 pupils.



S1 Class participating in Eucharistic Adoration during Catholic Education Week

## Case Study: Eucharistic Adoration

### St Ninian's High School, East Renfrewshire

We are blessed with a beautiful Oratory in our school which we make sure we use regularly for both staff and pupils. A major part of our use of the Oratory is Eucharistic Adoration which consists partly of a Service but also allows time for people to spend time quietly with the Blessed Sacrament.

Each Friday Lunchtime the Oratory is set up for Adoration and is used by staff and pupils. Some will spend most of their lunchtime there and for others it can be a few quiet minutes. We hope, to see the return, in the near future, of parents and other members of our local community who are comfortable coming in for Adoration.



Throughout the year, we offer Adoration as a regular part of our Services including Caritas Gathering Points, Lenten and Advent Reflections as well as marking other events in the Liturgical Calendar. It is good to bring a Spiritual Element to our Parents' Evenings and Information Evenings and the Oratory is well used by parents at these events.

One of our parents donated a number of spiritual books, some with reflections, some with the stories of the Saints which we leave on seats to be used or not used. Some people like to read these books as they sit in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Talking to pupils, staff and parents gives us a variety of response about playing quiet music and reciting the Rosary so we vary this though we do say the Rosary at the start of Adoration each Friday. However, at set services we give our young people the experience of Benediction which some of you of a certain era remember from 5.00pm on a Sunday Evening. The traditional prayers and hymns add to the feeling that something very special is present. While Latin belongs to a past generation, our pupils tell us that they like the traditional prayers and Eucharistic Hymns in Latin - as long as there is a translation.

This quiet time with the Eucharist appeals to all ages from First Years, to Sixth Years, staff, parents and grandparents. The universal appeal is being able to spend some time with Jesus amidst our very busy lives.

David in our Sixth Year writes:

*'The Real Presence of Jesus in the Consecrated Host is very important in my faith life. In the presence of the Eucharist I can reflect on my life and ask God to guide me in what he wants me to do in life. Praying to God is a two way conversation which means that I will get answers from God but in this modern world, full of noise, it can be difficult to hear God's Voice and Eucharistic Adoration help me to put aside time to listen to God'.*



## Case Study: Staff Prayers

### St Mark's Primary School, Barrhead

Every Monday morning, staff in St. Mark's Primary School, Barrhead, take time to pray together before the beginning of the school week.

I started Monday staff prayers in St. Mark's simply because I found it helpful in previous schools I worked in when I had an opportunity to join in prayer with colleagues. It was a blessing to observe some very skilled leaders of prayer in these schools and I have tried to introduce some of their approaches into our weekly sessions in St. Mark's.

As part of our ongoing evaluation, we had selected 'Celebrating and Worshipping' as our main theme from 'Developing in Faith'. The characteristics of this theme are *"a commitment to the spiritual formation of the school community, through the shared experience of prayer and liturgy, and in partnership with local parishes"*. We felt that weekly staff prayers had the potential to improve the shared experience of prayer and, in turn, deepen our commitment to more authentic prayer experiences with the children and wider school community.

The process is simple. We meet at the same time each Monday morning. We try to choose a time that is late enough to allow as many people as possible to join, without being so close to the 9am bell that we are unable to fully concentrate and settle.

*"The aim of prayer is to attain that point where we do the will of God, not that God should do our will. Our prayers do not change the plan of God's love for us, but it is the gifts which God grants in prayer which transform us and which bring us into harmony with His will."* **Enzo Bianchi**

When we first started praying together, we spent some time reflecting on prayer itself. Quotes such as the Bianchi quote above were helpful in challenging our understanding of prayer and in exploring the scope of what might be achieved in a short five minutes together each week. The idea of these five minutes as "transformative" with the potential to "bring us into harmony with His will" is very powerful and can shape the way we approach our entire working day and week. Covid 19 has required us to pray in our individual offices, classrooms or homes rather than being together in one room in school. We are grateful that MS Teams has allowed us to continue praying throughout both lockdowns. However, we look forward to the time when we can gather in the same room again.

I use a range of prayer materials. I have found books such as 'At Your Side' by Raymond Friel and David Wells to be an excellent starting point. I also borrow a lot of reflections and prayers from Father Denis McBride, who I was fortunate enough to listen to on retreat a few years ago, and whose lockdown Masses have been a source of great strength and inspiration. Loyola '3 minute retreats' and the 'Pray as you go' app are also excellent. However, there is no set formula. We find that simply praying the rosary or following other recommended prayer resources from SCES or the Diocese during specific liturgical seasons is as effective. When preparing the prayers and not sure what to do, I pray and I have a look at @Pontifex on Twitter or reflections on that day's Gospel. The right prayer always presents itself. We also pray for a range of intentions as suggested by staff. The power and impact of that prayer for some in our community in recent times has been wonderful and has given hope to many families connected to the school.

I asked the staff to share what they felt were the benefits of praying together. Below is a selection of their thoughts:



## Case Study – Staff Prayers

### St Mark's Primary School, Barrhead

*(Continued from page 8)*

*"Staff prayers provide a moment of calm and quiet reflection on a Monday morning before the busy week begins."*

*"I truly enjoy engaging in the Monday morning prayers, experiencing the moments of serenity and reflection they provide after a busy weekend. It assists a renewed focus on my purpose for God and reminds me that I can rely on the strength and courage of the Holy Spirit to guide me through my work and home responsibilities throughout the week. No matter the challenges I may face that week, I know I'm never alone."*

*"Praying together as a staff on a Monday morning helps me feel supported, calmer and ready to face the challenges of the week ahead."*

*"When reflecting on the Gospel message of Jesus, we are reminded that worship and daily life are not meant to be separate from one another. Our staff prayers help to foreground Gospel values, and allow us to take them into each and every encounter we have with our children, families and colleagues."*

We are considering how we might develop staff prayers in the future. One idea is to encourage more members of staff to lead the prayers, as I have found it really enriches the experience when different voices lead and bring their own unique perspective to the session. It would also be interesting to work with our pupils and parents when restrictions relax so that we can introduce additional opportunities for shared prayer. Finally, we would also like to work with our chaplains to explore how we might develop and strengthen this growing commitment to prayer. We have discussed Lectio Divina as a possible next step for a different point in the week when there is a bit more time to fully contemplate and rest in God's presence in the way that this practice demands.

We often reflect on the words of our Holy Father in our sessions. The closing quote below from 'The Joy of the Gospel' perhaps best sums up what we are aiming for, and we pray that we can humbly seek those "open hearts, desirous of doing good" long beyond the challenges of this current pandemic.

*We can say that God's heart is touched by our intercession, yet in reality He is always there first. What our intercession achieves is that His power, His love and His faithfulness are shown ever more clearly in the midst of the people.....When evangelisers rise from prayer, their hearts are more open, freed of self-absorption, they are desirous of doing good and sharing their lives with others.*

**Pope Francis** (The Joy of the Gospel)

## Case Study: Retreats

### St Luke's High School and NET (National Evangelisation Teams) Scotland

Over the past number of years St Luke's High School has engaged with NET ministries to help with the delivery of our school retreat programme. Whilst we might undertake other arrangements with other groups, we have built up a positive relationship with the team over the past years in supporting the work with our S2 cohort.

NET ministries offer a range of retreats which are designed to engage with different groups of young people. These retreats are faith-filled events where the team of missionaries facilitate games, music, talks and engaging testimonies. They conclude every retreat with a time for prayer, encouraging young people to love Jesus and embrace the life of the Church. The retreats are dynamic, high energy with content to which young people can relate. The idea is that young people can be engaged regardless of what stage they are on their faith journey. Over the past few years, however, we have found their Road Trip retreat to be particularly engaging. Feedback from young people regularly indicate that they find the retreats engaging, fun, active, challenging and meaningful.

NET ministries are flexible in terms of planning and making arrangements and are willing to make their retreats bespoke to the needs of the pupils on the ground. We like to build on the positive experience with the team and we have found that a number of our pupils continue to engage with the team through further organised events. Interestingly, they are often pupils who have come through childhood with no faith formation. The school facilitates further engagement for pupils who want to engage more deeply after the retreat. A clear benefit for all pupils is the experience of high positivity, a sense of bonding and an opportunity to share a faith-filled experience involving sharing and prayer. The NET ministry team members are incredibly talented and committed and make a deep impression on pupils as well as setting positive role models as young Catholics. We will continue to work in partnership with them going forward.

More information is available from <https://netscotland.org/>



## Case Study: Retreats for P4 and P7

### St Peter and St Paul Primaries

St Peter's PS and St Paul's PS worked in partnership with Canon Eddie Cameron, parish priest of both parishes in Glenburn and Foxbar, to plan Retreat experiences as part of the Sacramental preparation programme for P4 and P7 pupils. The Retreats were led by the Salesian Sisters (URSpace team) on an annual basis.

Primary 4 pupils paired up with Primary 4 pupils from St. Pauls and enjoyed a whole day of retreat in St. Peter's Church Hall. Primary 7 pupils also shared a day with Primary 7 pupils from St. Paul's. Staff members were in attendance to support the event and volunteers from the associated secondary school, St. Andrew's Academy, assisted (usually students undertaking the Caritas award). Parish volunteers often assisted with the organisation of the day too. The children attended in comfortable clothing and were provided with lunch and snacks throughout the day. There was no cost to the children or the school for these events – they were gifted by Canon Eddie.

The day consisted of warm up/ice breaker games, workshops and a prayer service. The fun and relevant activities throughout the day helped the children understand the importance of the Sacraments in their lives.

An example of the types of tasks are as follows:

- Making posters thinking about the Saints – create a 'job' advertisement for a Saint
- Making crafts – fruits of the Holy Spirit to hang on school tree

Making bracelets from coloured beads – children choose a bead to associate with each gift of the Holy Spirit, making them personal and meaningful to the children.

The Retreats were evaluated very positively by staff members and by the First Communicants and Confirmandi who attended. Both Headteachers highly recommend them: well organised, spiritual and fun. Fr. John Morrison, Vicar Episcopal for Youth and Vocations, has used them frequently for Diocesan Youth Days throughout the Diocese.

#### What is URSpace?

The Salesian Sisters operate the Retreat Programme using the name URSpace and can be reached by contacting:

**Sr. Gill, Director**  
**0141 389 6777**

The work of URSpace is imaginative and lively, helping young people in Catholic schools and parishes to explore their faith and achieve their full potential, through creative activities, discussions, games and prayer.





## Case Study: Home, School and Parish Liaison - from maintenance to mission.....

### St Anne's Primary and St John Bosco Primary

Like all denominational schools, St. Anne's Primary and St. John Bosco Primary through the years have always tried to ensure we meet the challenges outlined in *"This is Our Faith"* – that we *"are communities of faith and learning whose educational vision is based on the teachings and values of the Catholic Church"*.

Central to the building of communities of faith and learning is the really strong and effective partnership between home, school and parish, and, again like so many other schools, our two schools have worked hard over the years to develop and nurture this partnership. Many schools will recognise practices such as sacramental preparation meetings, class Masses and liturgies, charitable work and events, newsletter communication – the list could go on. For our schools, practices which have served us in the past, and which worked well to support partnership, have continued.

But at the same time as we have continued all that has gone before, the faith landscape around us also continues to change – not just for us, but for our parish too.

Both of our schools are served by the parish of St. Bernadette's and St. John Bosco, led by our Parish Priest, Canon David Boyd. The parish community has responded to that need to adapt positively to the changing landscape, to move from maintenance to mission, and to be a thriving and proactive Christian community serving the Erskine area. The parish website sums up this beautifully:

*"We exist, to invite all people to come as you are, to become joyful disciples of Jesus Christ and make God's love known everywhere."*

#### Trying to raise the bar....

...is easy when others around you are helping! And this was most definitely the experience of our two schools with the parish helping us. It gave our schools the courage and motivation to really look at what we were doing and how this was contributing to the parish, our community and our learners.

We really questioned what we were doing, and how this could be better. In this, we cannot underestimate the impact of a global pandemic – the necessity to do things in a different way give us new ideas and approaches.

We began with our school mottos – for St. John Bosco (or SJB for short!) the school motto of *"Sharing Jesus Beliefs"*, and for St. Anne's the motto of *"Love One Another"* was our beginning point. In what ways could we make each motto come alive in our schools, for them to become the lived experience of all in our school community?

Working closely with Father David and the parish, we began to look at ways of really reaching out. This began with our family support for sacramental preparation. In the past this would have been very much an evening in the school where we would give information to parents, with input from our chaplain. With the help of Father David and the Alpha Team in the parish, the format of sacramental preparation became far more parish led, supported by the school, with parents and carers invited to evenings based on the Alpha course approach. Rather than simply hearing information, our parents and carers were able to talk and to share experiences, using video resources to explore their own understanding of faith in order to help their children.

From this, we worked again with the parish Alpha team to promote Alpha courses in our school. Alpha courses, run by the parish team, were offered before and after school to try to provide as flexible an approach to suit families as possible. Although the numbers were small to begin with, it was heartening to see that some of our parents and carers felt able to join. The parish continue to help us to help our families in faith formation through the parish Life groups, continued Alpha courses and access to Formed resources. Working together to promote and share all that is available to our families and parish members is really helping us all to reach out to families.

## Case Study – Home, School and Parish Liaison - from maintenance to mission.....

### St Anne's Primary and St John Bosco Primary

*(Continued from page 12)*

At the same time as trying to support our families and to reach out, the children's ministry team in the parish invited our schools to work with them to try to engage more of our children. From the work of the Children's Ministries team, Kids Church in the parish was developed. Kids Church initially was a dedicated time after Mass on Sunday to go online and listen to the word of God in a child friendly way and using fun activities and more contemporary songs. Like anything, at first numbers were quite low, but with perseverance from the team, and continued weekly promotion from our schools via Twitter, website and weekly reminders in school, numbers have week on week increased – at one point, over 200 children engaged with the Kids Church zone on the parish website! Kids Church has now evolved further and children can access activities, songs and themes via the parish website at a time which suits them best. Each week in school, we continue to ensure that our weekly Community Prayer inputs link to learning in Kids Church and that there is a continuity between learning at home, in the parish and in school.

For school Masses, Father David always makes sure that Mass is accessible and fun for our children, with lots of songs and videos (similar to those used in Kids Church) which capture the children's imagination and appeal to their musical tastes! Although we can't gather together at present in our church building, it is lovely to see our children in school enjoying online mass - and smiling!

The idea of reaching out has continued, and with each liturgical season, we continue to look at how we can do things differently.

In October, the month of the Holy Rosary, COVID19 forced us to think about how we could gather different "bubbles" of children to continue our devotion to Our Lady. This resulted in our Daily Rosary, led by our Pope Francis Faith Award pupils, being taken outdoors. We set up socially distanced points for each class "bubble" to stand, and areas for parishoners and parents to join in. Each day, as we continued to say the daily Rosary, more and more people who had noticed us the previous day joined in – it was very much a "Sister Act" moment when the choir first sang! In previous years, our daily Rosary said each morning in October in the school had approximately 10-15 children at most. This year, our numbers increased to approximately 60 children on a regular basis, and in this, the majority were our upper school pupils. Strategically placing the gathering points for the Daily Rosary near to the upper school entrance doors made a difference!



Praying the Rosary at St Anne's PS

In December, when we could not have our Christmas nativity and concerts, and where gathering large groups was not permitted, we again planned with Father David how we could reach out to our children, families and community. Each day during Advent, we had a daily "Thought for the Day" and used Microsoft Team to deliver this across the whole school community. We posted each "Thought for the Day" in our Google Classrooms, so that the children could share their learning at home with their families. As part of our outreach to the parish community, our senior pupils created art work of the nativity scene, and sent this to the parish outreach team who in turn sent this to parish members who were isolated or alone. This simple act of letting someone know our children were thinking of them was really powerful, and we were very humbled by the words of thanks we received.

## Case Study – Home, School and Parish Liaison - from maintenance to mission.....

### St Anne's Primary and St John Bosco Primary

(Continued from page 13)

As a final preparation for Christmas, each child in the school either brought their Baby Jesus from their home crib, or created one in school. In the last week of term, Father David led a beautiful blessing service in the school playground to bless each figure of the baby Jesus. This was the first time since March 2020 where for both schools, the whole school physically gathered (in a socially distanced manner!). It was so lovely and fitting that our first coming together was for the birth of our Lord!



St John Bosco PS – Blessing of the Baby Jesus Crib Figures

The success of both our “Thought for the Day” and the outreach picture project during advent has influenced our

planning for Lent. Each day during Lent we have our “Daily Lenten Prayer” which is posted in our Google Classrooms. Each presentation for the daily prayer has the Gospel reading, a short and child friendly reflection on the gospel, and prayer for the children to say with an adult at home. Over the coming weeks, our P1-P3 children will create Easter artwork to again send out to isolated parish members to let them know we are thinking of them at Easter. And of course, since we cannot be together indoors for our Lenten reflection service, we can build on the success of the blessing service at Christmas and take this outdoors!

Each month, our partnership with the parish community continues to deepen and evolve. Most recently, Key Worker and vulnerable children attending our “hubs” have been doing a daily mile, and their steps are contributing to the parish virtual pilgrimage to Calvary. Inspired by their example, other classes in the school are now joining in, and we hope to be able to help our parish to meet their target of arriving (virtually!) at Calvary

before Good Friday. The parish pilgrimage team give us weekly updates, and we are able to share with our children progress and points on the journey where the pilgrimage stops to “visit” and pray.

From our liaison with the parish pilgrimage group, we now have made great connections with other parish members who will help us improve our garden areas in the school as part of the Lenten activities where they are trying to “do” rather than “give up” during Lent. In turn, this has then helped us to think more about our approach to Laudato Si Schools, and how we can encourage all in our school community take action to look after our common home.

So, for our schools, the last few years have felt really positive, and that partnership between home, school and parish has deepened and become far more pro-active. We have seen real benefits for our children, families and community and really feel that we have moved from maintenance to mission by keeping it simple, and by following our school mottos – “Sharing Jesus Beliefs” and “Loving One Another”.



Outreach Project - Nativity Artwork from both schools



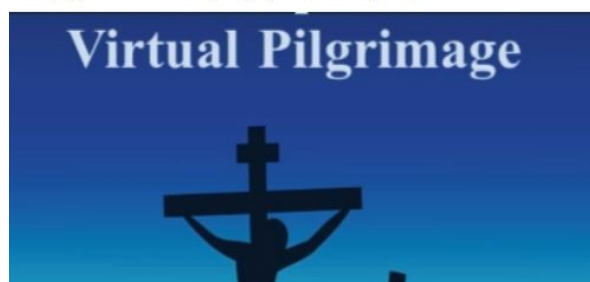
Bishop John Keenan

18h · 🌐

By Sunday night we had accumulated 262 miles from individuals and St. Anne's primary school in Erskine. We have included a few slides of the stages we have passed since Ash Wednesday.

The journey is almost 3700 miles, please share your mileage from daily walks or activity with us. Perhaps we can walk and pray together - virtually and safely.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx...>





## Case Study: Aid to the Church in Need Group

### St Andrew's Academy



Students have the opportunity to become ACN Ambassadors in their school community and join the wider community of ACN groups across our Scottish schools. Students at St. Andrew's Academy, Paisley did just that in 2018 and members have been growing ever since! They have hosted our 'ACN Syrian Children's Art Exhibition' and taken up our challenge to become '#RedWednesday Champions' organising activities which include a Mass for persecuted Christians, Wear Red Day and a yummy Bake Sale! At the 2019 ACN Youth Rally, Eilidh Flanagan had the opportunity to speak to Iraqi students via skype. Eilidh asked "What they are most hopeful for in their future?" The group have become ACN Ambassadors and within their school community have used the ACN concept of Prayer, Information and Action whilst fundraising throughout the year for their chosen project country, Syria.

#### **Why not start an ACN Group in your school?**

Contact: Clair Sweeney: Schools & Events Coordinator in Scotland

[clair.sweeney@acnuk.org](mailto:clair.sweeney@acnuk.org)

## U.N. Climate Change Conference COP 26 and Laudato Si

As part of the Laudato Si School journey, there will no doubt be a focus on the COP26 Conference in Glasgow in November. The August 2020 edition of *Centred on Christ* had a major focus on Caring for God's Creation that would still be relevant. It can be found in *TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Centred on Christ/Files/Centred on Christ August 2020*. The Primary Advisor also circulated a PowerPoint Assembly on *Caring for God's Creation*. (*TEAMS/Education Resources for Schools/Prayers and Assemblies/Caring for God's Creation*.)

## Approval Applications and References

All teaching posts in Catholic schools require Church Approval. Teachers should apply for Approval **at the same time as they apply for the post**.

Rev Joseph Burke  
Teacher Approval  
Diocesan Centre, Cathedral Precincts  
Incle Street, Paisley PA1 1HR  
Email: [approvals@rcdop.org.uk](mailto:approvals@rcdop.org.uk)

**Please note that applications for posts in St Ninian's High School and Our Lady of the Missions Primary School should be sent to the Archdiocese of Glasgow in whose territory they are located:**

Archdiocese of Glasgow  
Teacher Approval  
196 Clyde Street, Glasgow G1 4JY  
Email: [approval@rcag.org.uk](mailto:approval@rcag.org.uk)

## Diocesan Education Department Twitter

Thank you to all those schools who follow our Twitter account and 'like' our posts, enabling us to share the many good things you are doing in terms of the life of faith. It is so heartening to see Christ at the centre of your schools. If you haven't already done so, please follow us:

**@DoPEducation1**



### Diocesan Contacts

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Jack Nellaney	Church Representative	renfreweducation@rcdop.org.uk

### Diocesan Education Calendar: 2020-21

Month	Date	Day	Time	Event	Location	Target Group
MAY	10-14			ACN Rosary for Peace	School-based	P1-P7
MAY	13	Thu		Ascension Day	School-based	P1-S6
MAY	23	Sun	2-6pm	Primary Pentecost Day	St Fergus, Paisley	P4-P7
JUN	8	Tue	9.45-3pm	Teaching in Catholic Schools Conference	Cathedral Halls	S6
JUN	9	Wed	4.30pm	Thanksgiving Mass	St Mirin's Cathedral	Primary & Secondary NQTs, their Mentors and HTs