



Catholic Schools Week 2013

Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2013

Resources for the Post-Primary School
Community: School & Parish

Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News
27 January–2 February 2013

Table of Contents

Getting Ready

Céad Fáilte/Welcome	1
Planning for Catholic Schools Week 2013	2

Parish Resources

How to Celebrate Catholic Schools Week in Your Parish Sunday, 27 January, Parish Newsletter	4
--	---

School Resources

The Catholic School	6
Thoughts for the Day	7
Sharing the Good News During Catholic Schools Week 2013	8

Classroom Resources

Monday: Church – We Gather	9
Feastday of St Thomas Aquinas	11

Tuesday: Liturgy – We Pray	13
Create Your Own Liturgical Calendar	16

Wednesday: Word of God – We Encounter	17
St Aidan of Ferns	19
Grandparents' Day	20

Thursday: Laity – We Participate	21
Feastday of Don Bosco	22

Friday: Interfaith – We Reach Out	24
Feastday of St Brigid	25
Feasts for Feasts!	26

School Resources

Year of Faith	28
Prayer Service for Catholic Schools Week	29
Board of Management/Governors and Staff Reflection	31
Prayer for Teachers	32



Céad Fáilte / Welcome

The theme of Catholic Schools Week this year brings two important realities together. The first is the community of faith and the second is sharing the good news.

Share the Good News is the title of Ireland's national directory for catechesis. It is a guide for the journey of faith from early childhood to mature adulthood. It is full of images, stories and plans for how all of us can share the good news in the various communities of faith of which we are a part. You should dip into it sometime, not least into the sections that deal with schools during this week.

There are many communities of faith. The family home is the most important community of all, where the seed of faith is first sown. In the school community this seed is nurtured and grows, but in teenage years it is also challenged and can be subjected to caricature and ridicule. During adult years people often feel inadequate in expressing their faith in a society that leaves little space for God. So it is that we all need a community of faith that is bigger than home or school. For most of us this will be the parish.

When a parish is working well it is truly a remarkable witness to faith. The parish is defined by geography but it lives by faith: from the celebration of Mass to all of the other sacraments; from the welcome given at baptism to the support of the bereaved; from the unseen, voluntary labour to the care of those in need; from praying every day to working for justice; from a sense of local life to being part of a universal church.

The Catholic Church worldwide is celebrating a Year of Faith. During Catholic Schools Week 2013 we are asking parishes and schools to reach out to each other in a spirit of faith. Over the past few years many parishes and schools have celebrated this week together. But some have not. In particular, I ask parishes that haven't participated in Catholic Schools Week in previous years to do so this year.

The good news is that the seed of faith has been sown in our lives. Jesus revealed much about the reign of God through the parables that he told. Amongst the most important are those that speak of a sower sowing seeds. Some seeds fell in thorns and were choked. Some fell in a drain and were drowned. Some fell in shallow earth and perished. And some fell in rich soil and yielded thirty, sixty, even a hundred fold. People often read these parables in a moralistic way – making judgements about the quality of people. But the true meaning of these parables is that the Word of God will not be frustrated by anything human: while many seeds may not bear fruit, the true seed of the Word of God will yield a rich harvest in unexpected ways in our personal lives, in our families, in our parishes, and, yes, in our schools. The task of Christian faith is not to bemoan all that is wrong with us and our lives, but to have the eyes to see that even in the midst of a sad and difficult world the seed of God's Word is bearing fruit in ways that we could never have imagined.

Let's celebrate the good news of our Christian faith during this week in the communities that are our homes, our schools and our parishes. You will find many useful suggestions in this booklet to help you.

Michael Drumm

Chairperson

Catholic Schools Partnership

Planning for Catholic Schools Week 2013

This book provides resources to help celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2013. There are materials for use with the following groups:

- Students in the classroom
- Staff members
- Parents
- Members of Board of Management/Governors
- The wider parish community.

Two copies of this book have been sent to schools and one copy to all priests ministering in parishes. The different resources for the five target groups above have been colour coded for each category.

Planning Meeting

The purpose of holding a planning meeting is to decide which elements of the resources your particular school community and parish will highlight during the week. By inviting representatives from the staff, Board of Management/Governors, Parent Association/Council, parish team, parish pastoral council and school chaplain to this meeting you will be able to ensure the best possible celebration of Catholic Schools Week in your school and parish community. The agenda for this meeting might look like this:

The Theme of Catholic Schools Week 2013: Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News.

The Parish and the Catholic Schools Week 2013

Consider marking the beginning of Catholic Schools Week within one of the parish Masses on Sunday, 27 January.

Liturgical resources and suggestions for such a celebration of the Eucharist can be found on page 4.

The parish might also get involved by:

- helping to create a display celebrating the way in which Catholic schools act as a community of faith in sharing the good news.
- hosting a discussion on the importance of Catholic education during Catholic Schools Week.



The School and Catholic Schools Week 2013

Each day of Catholic Schools Week 2013 has its own theme and resources for classroom activity. This meeting might consider the events that will involve the whole school and perhaps the wider parish community.

The School Environment

How will visitors to your school know that Catholic Schools Week is taking place? Take this opportunity to identify areas of the school where sacred spaces, religious images and display boards might be updated, enhanced or added in preparation for the celebrations. Parent Associations might be invited to help in this endeavour. See suggestions on page 5.

Staff and Board of Management/Governors and Catholic Schools Week 2013

A reflection for staff and Board of Management/Governors to help them to reflect on their work in Catholic education can be found on page 31. There is also a series of statements about the Catholic School on page 6. Consider how they best describe your school at staff, Board of Management/Governors and Parent Association/Council meetings in the coming months. Encourage members of Board of Management/Governors and Parent Association/Council members to be present at all events planned for Catholic Schools Week 2013.

Resources

It is our hope that you find the material included in this year's resource pack helpful as you celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2013. Copies of this resource are available to download *as Gaeilge* on www.catholicbishops.ie/catholicschoolsweek. Some elements of the resources have been translated into Polish and are also available on the website. This resource pack has been prepared by Gary Abrahamian, Sean Goan, Karen O'Donovan, Tom Ryan and Orla Walsh in consultation with the Steering Committee for Catholic Schools Week 2013.

How to Celebrate Catholic Schools Week in Your Parish

Catholic Schools Week 2013 begins on Sunday, 27 January, the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. Over the past four years parishes throughout the country have responded with great generosity and creativity to the invitation to take time during this week to celebrate the contribution made by Catholic Schools to their communities. This can be done in a variety of ways: during the Sunday Liturgy, by joining in the activities in the parish schools and by creating opportunities for the parish community to connect with the school community. Two copies of the Catholic Schools Week Resource are sent to schools and one copy to all priests ministering in parishes. They will arrive during the week beginning 7 January. There are many different ways in which parishes might choose to celebrate Catholic Schools Week and the following are just some suggestions that might help.

Sunday, 27 January

Celebration of the Eucharist for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

If you have a **Liturgy Group** make sure that they are made aware of Catholic Schools Week as early as possible so that they can be involved in preparing the liturgy for this Mass. Encourage them to ensure that Catholic Schools Weeks becomes part of the annual life of the parish. It will always begin on the last Sunday in January.

- Consider how best the schools in your community might become involved in this Sunday's celebration of the Eucharist. Arrange a meeting with the principals and teachers in the weeks prior to Catholic Schools Week and discuss the various ways that the work of Catholic Schools can be highlighted and celebrated during the liturgy on that day. Invite a member of the Liturgy Group to this planning meeting.
- The readings, Prayers of the Faithful etc. for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time can be found in the December/January edition of *Intercom*. There are also homily notes for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time in the January edition of *The Furrow*. Consider who best might proclaim the Word at the Mass – a staff member, member of the Board of Management/ Board of Governors? Some of the children might sing the psalm and Alleluia. Encourage the children preparing for Confirmation to write and read a Prayer of the Faithful.

The theme for this year's is **Catholic Schools: The Community of Faith Sharing the Good News**.



Parish Newsletter

- Ensure that Catholic Schools Week is brought to the attention of the wider community by placing a note in the parish newsletter. Include specific public activities planned in your parish. Sample text might read as follows:

Sunday, 27 January marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2013. The purpose of the week is to highlight and celebrate the wonderful contribution that Catholic schools make to our local communities and society in general. This year's theme is **Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News**. Our parish is joining in the celebrations by ...

Pupils from the school might distribute the newsletter on this Sunday.

Display Area

Consider working with the school to create a display showing the ways in which the parish school/s are **Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News**. This display could depict their work with local and national charities, their contributions to the local community and any other relevant activities.

Boards of Management

Boards of Management in the Republic of Ireland will be very recently formed and this might be an ideal opportunity to thank those who have served on the previous Board and acknowledge and congratulate the new members.

The Pastoral Council

- Bring Catholic Schools Week to the attention of the Pastoral Council and ask them how the parish might best celebrate it this year. Consider the possibility of hosting an evening on the importance of Catholic Education in Ireland today.

The School

- The chaplain might take the opportunity this week to **visit as many classrooms as possible**. The Catholic Schools Week Resource will help you to find a focus for your visit as it offers a theme for each day's work.
- Encourage schools to participate in **Grandparents' Day** on 30 January.
- Visit the staffroom this week. You might even bring a cake or a box of biscuits!
- Use the reflection for staff and Board of Management/Governors on page 31 to help all concerned reflect on their work in Catholic Education.





The Catholic School ...

- Has at its heart the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ
- Builds an environment of care and concern for others that is rooted in Catholic social teaching
- Creates a safe and happy learning environment where every child is encouraged and enabled to develop to their full and unique potential as human beings, made in the image and likeness of God
- Seeks educational excellence while remaining faithful to their distinctive vision and approach
- Is an inclusive and respectful community, welcoming students of all denominations and of none
- Acknowledges the role of parents as the first teachers in the ways of faith and provides opportunities for their participation in the life of the school
- Works in partnership with parents and the parish community to keep the light of faith burning brightly
- Provides religious education programmes that confirm and deepen the child's understanding of the Catholic faith so that every child will be as articulate in their faith as in all other areas of the curriculum
- Nurtures the child's appreciation and understanding of the sacramental life of the Church
- Displays the symbols of our rich Catholic faith tradition
- Spends time as a school community in reflection, prayer and ritual, celebrating the Eucharist and other sacraments, to develop the spiritual life of each person in the school community.

Based on *Vision 08: A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland* (A Pastoral Letter of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference)



Catholic Schools Week 2013
Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2013



Thoughts for the Day

Monday

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2013 is **Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News**. The context for our celebration this year is the Year of Faith announced by Pope Benedict, in which he calls upon Catholics all over the world to take time to reflect upon their faith so that they may deepen their understanding of and love for Jesus Christ, who reveals to us the infinite compassion of God. In our school we are not just an organisation or a company; we are in fact a community and what unites us is our shared interest in teaching and learning based on a Christian understanding of what it means to be a human being. Let us use this week to reflect upon and celebrate who we are as a community that has its roots in a good news story – the story of Jesus Christ who came that we might have life in its fullness.

Tuesday

It is very difficult to celebrate good news or exciting events on your own. Where's the fun in celebrating your favourite team's victory if there is nobody with you? We need to gather with others for the things that really matter to us, and that's why for two thousand years Catholics have gathered for prayer every Sunday – it is to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. It is a time to remember all the ways we are blessed, to find hope and to experience the care and compassion of a community that has at its centre an awareness of the presence of the risen Christ. When we are in school we are busy with work, study and all the demands that are part and parcel of everyday life. So we can easily forget to make prayer a part of that life and that is why it is important to take a little time to become aware of God's presence and to allow the habit of prayer and reflection to become part of who we are.

Wednesday

Even in our technological era books are very much a feature of school life – whether they are e-books or printed pages we learn much from the wisdom that others share with us. Through books we come to understand new ideas and cultures, and gain insights that can change our lives. In recent years, especially since the Second Vatican Council, the Bible is a book that is being rediscovered by many Catholics. We have come to understand that the Bible is a place where the human story and the story of God come together. Through its stories, prayers and reflections our lives are touched by the Holy Spirit who brings us to awareness that the Word of God is alive and active and is a force for good in our lives leading us leading us to a knowledge and love of Christ.

Thursday

One of the best images for our community of faith is that of the body – we are the body of Christ and although we are different, each of us has our part to play, our gifts to use for the good of others. School is a great place to show how this works in action. We are not just staff who teach and students who learn, rather we are a community, where each person has a role to play and talents to share, and when we find ways of doing that the community is made stronger and we all come to a greater awareness of our own worth. This vision is based on the values that Jesus taught his followers, not just by his words but also by his deeds. During this Catholic Schools Week and this Year of Faith let us try to be true to that vision.

Friday

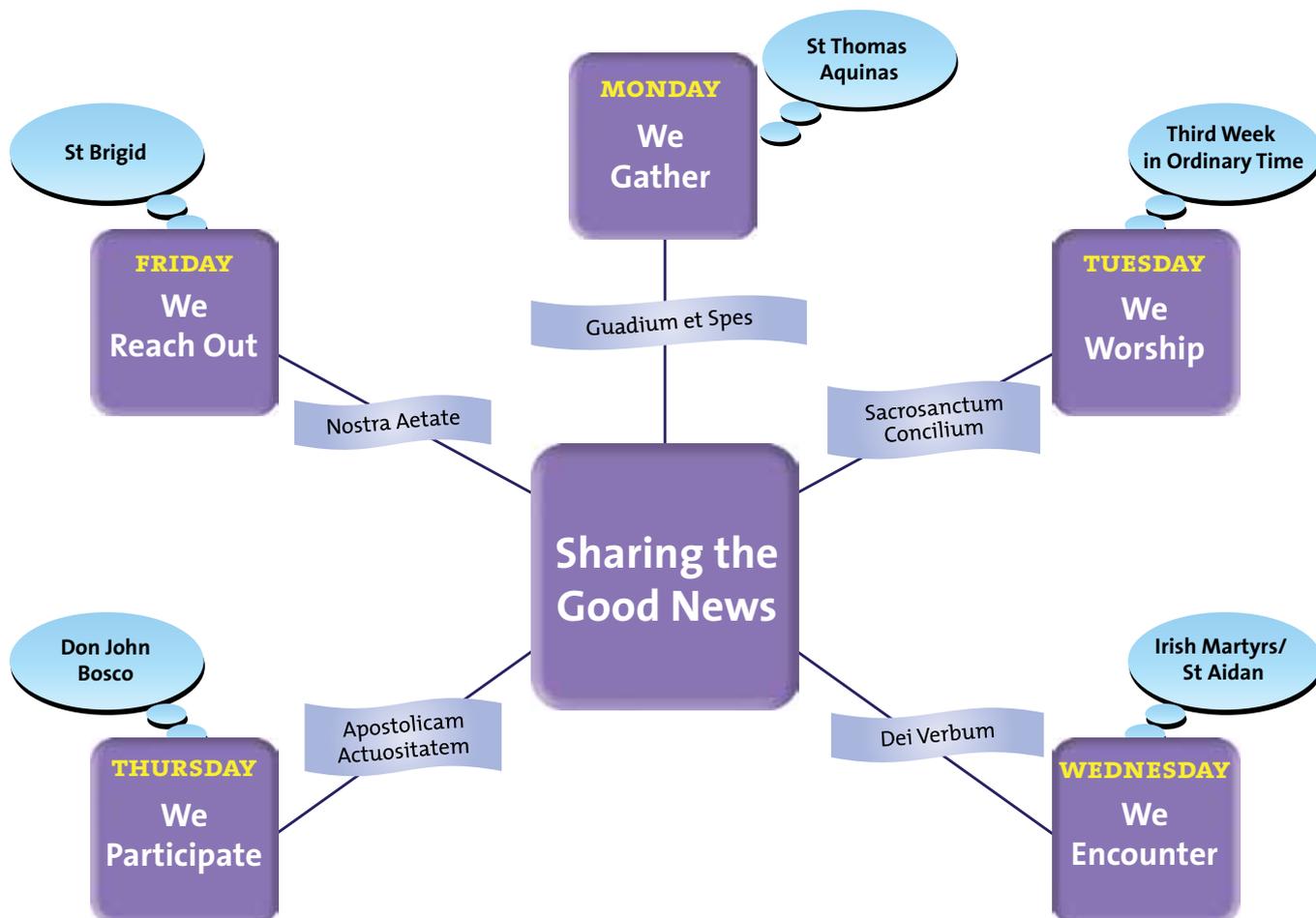
Today is the Feast of St Brigid and the first day of spring in our tradition. It is a day to be grateful for the many ways in which we are blessed. Brigid recognised the presence of God in her life in two particular ways: she could see God in nature and in the poor. Nature points to the wonder, beauty and mystery of the divine presence, inviting us to learn from its seasons and rhythms. Every spring offers the hope of renewal and speaks of the God of life who wants to shed light in our hearts. Brigid also recognised that in Jesus, who was born poor among the poor, God is speaking to us and challenging us to reach out to those in any kind of need and to those on the margins. If our school community is closed to such people then we are failing to share the good news that everyone is invited to God's table.



Sharing the Good News During Catholic Schools Week 2013

This year we are offering our school communities the opportunity to reflect together on key elements of our faith life, so that we can become better witnesses to God's love for the world made known through the good news of his Son, Jesus Christ. It is a wonderful opportunity to respond to Pope Benedict's invitation to the Year of Faith, which is being celebrated all around the world. Our themes for the week all stem from the joyous outpouring of the Holy Spirit that took place during Vatican II fifty years ago. Each day we reflect on different ways of sharing the good news and we celebrate the saints whose witness to the good news still has relevance for today.

- How we gather as a Church (Monday 28 January): The Feast of Thomas Aquinas
- How we pray together (Tuesday 29 January)
- How we encounter God in the Scriptures (Wednesday 30 January): St Aidan
- How we participate in our community (Thursday 31 January): St Don Bosco
- How we reach out to others of different faiths (Friday 1 February): St Brigid



In the Catholic School when we share the good news we do so as part of a community of faith that includes parents and the parish. For a deeper understanding of how these parts fit together please consult the wonderful insights and objectives offered by *Share the Good News: The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland*, published by Veritas in 2010.



Monday, 28 January

Day 1: Church – We Gather

***Gaudium et Spes* – Decree on the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World**

The document from the Second Vatican Council *Decree on the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* is an overview of the Catholic Church's teachings about humanity's relationship to society, especially in reference to economics, poverty, social justice, culture, science, technology and ecumenism. The dignity of the human person is the fundamental concern of Catholic social teaching. We exist for the purpose of entering into the experience of loving communion. Human beings are not meant to live in isolation but are meant to live in community with each other. We find ourselves precisely in the act of giving ourselves away to another and receiving the gift of another into our lives. Sociability is a key hallmark of the Catholic view of the human person: 'for by our innermost nature the person is a social being' (*Gaudium et Spes*, 12). This understanding of the person lends itself to a view of community as natural and necessary if persons are to achieve their full stature. Human dignity can be realised and protected only in community.

The parable of the Good Samaritan is known to most of us: a traveller waylaid by bandits and left for dead is bypassed by countrymen and clergy able to help, but too concerned for their own safety or affairs. Only a lowly Samaritan, with no reason to aid his enemy, stopped to help. Moreover, the Samaritan risked his life transporting the traveller to safety, and even paid for his recovery. Jesus said to the people surrounding him: 'Go and do likewise.'

Read: Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'



You Tube 'What About Now' by Daughtry: <http://youtu.be/roDXSHSEuoo>

FOR YOU TO DO 1

- Write a modern-day version of the Good Samaritan story to convey the importance of each individual's role and participation in our communal, global fight against poverty and injustice.
- Reading and responding to the signs of the times is an urgent call of living our faith today. Love of God and love of neighbour are one. Discuss ways your school responds to social justice issues in the world.

At Vatican II, the Bishops began their document on *The Church in the Modern World* with a description of the Church community as follows: 'The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well ... That is why they cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history' (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1)

Like the Good Samaritan, Catholics exercise solidarity in compassion, and also by forming community with those who are suffering or are different from us. It implies also a mutuality of respect in relationship and elimination of inequality.

One thing that can be difficult for young people of faith today is figuring out how that faith should be played out in the world. How should it change them? How will it affect their lives? What should they do that they didn't do before? What should they not do that they did before? How should they respond to certain things? Catholics are called to let their faith make a powerful difference to the world around them.

Following the Asian tsunami, Pope John Paul II said: 'In assuring my prayers for the victims of the catastrophe and for their families, I note favourably the solidarity efforts which are developing in every part of the world.'

FOR YOU TO DO 2

- Can you think of other occasions when solidarity was shown in times of natural disaster or conflict?
- Have you or your school lived out solidarity in your own community – with other faith groups and marginalised people?
- Does your school or parish have justice and peace groups?

Group Work

The aim of this activity is to get you thinking about life and the world and thinking about what your Catholic faith has to say about it all. You will need sheets of card and coloured pens.

Working in groups of 2–4, you are all going to be given newspapers and magazines. Look through them to find situations which our Catholic faith has something to say about. So, for instance, you might find a situation where somebody did something which as Catholics we might believe is wrong. Or you might find a situation which Catholics might feel drawn to help out with. Alternatively, you might find a situation where people have done something which, as a Catholic, you think is really good.

When you find something that you think is relevant, cut it out and stick it to one of the sheets of card. Use the pens to make a few notes around it explaining why you chose it.

Feastday of St Thomas Aquinas

Thomas was the son of the Count of Aquino and was born in the family castle in Lombardy near Naples, Italy. Thomas was one of nine children and was very clever; he felt that his mind was a gift from God.

His parents hoped that he would become a Benedictine abbot some day. The family castle was in Rocca Secca, just north of Monte Cassino where the monks lived. Thomas was sent to school at the abbey when he was five and he was educated by the Benedictine monks there. When he was eighteen, he went to the University of Naples to finish his studies.

There he met a new group of religious men called the Order of Preachers. Their founder, St Dominic, was still living. Thomas knew he wanted to become a priest and felt that he was called to join these men. So he secretly joined the Dominican order in 1244.

His parents were angry with him. When he was on his way to Paris to study, his brothers kidnapped him and kept him a prisoner in one of their castles for over a year. During that time, they did all they could to make him change his mind.

One of his sisters, too, came to convince him to give up his vocation. But Thomas spoke so beautifully about the joy of serving God that she changed her mind. She decided to give her life to God as a nun. After fifteen months, Thomas was finally allowed to follow his call.

St Thomas wrote so well about God that people all over the world have used his books for hundreds of years. His explanations about God and the faith came from his great love for God. His writings touched the hearts of people because he was not trying to impress anyone, he just wanted with all his heart to offer the gift of his life to Jesus and the Church.

St Thomas is one of the greatest Doctors of the Church and is considered the universal patron of universities, colleges, and schools.

Around the end of 1273, Pope Gregory X asked Thomas to be part of an important Church meeting called the Council of Lyons. While travelling to the meeting, Thomas became ill. He had to stop at a monastery at Fossanova, Italy, where he died. It was 7 March 1274. He was only forty-nine.



Panis Angelicus

Most of us have heard the beautiful hymn *Panis Angelicus*. Did you know that this hymn was written by St Thomas Aquinas? The words mean ‘bread of angels’. The Latin root for bread is *pan*. In the Slavic languages the word *pan* means ‘Lord’. For example, in Polish *Pan Jezus* means ‘Lord Jesus’.

Looking deeper into the word and its Greek origins, *pan* means ‘all’ or ‘every’. For example, we are familiar with such words as ‘panacea’ for cure-all. Still another meaning for the word *pan* comes from its French connection. The French word for bread is *pain*, a direct derivative of the Latin *pan*, but with a new dimension added because of our English word ‘pain’ means suffering or hurt.

When you take a minute to reflect, all of these connotations of the word *pan* come together when we gather to celebrate the Eucharist. Jesus gives himself to us in the form of bread. Jesus is our Lord, the one sent by God, the one who is fully human and fully divine and suffered the pain of death on the cross for us. In the Eucharist we find all fulfilment. As Christians we know that when we celebrate the Eucharist together we are entering into communion with God, ourselves and each other, we find peace and communion in the words of St Thomas Aquinas, the *Panis Angelicus*.

You Tube Take a few minutes to look up and enjoy a rendition of *Panis Angelicus* on YouTube and answer the following questions.

Latin Text

Panis Angelicus fit panis hominum
Dat panis coelicus figuris terminum
O res mirabilis! Manducat Dominum
Pauper, pauper, servus et humilis
Pauper, pauper, servus et humilis

English Translation

The angel's bread becomes the bread of
humanity
The heavenly bread the culmination of all
symbols
Oh, miraculous thing! The body of the Lord will
nourish
The poor, poor, and humble servant
The poor, poor, and humble servant

FOR YOU TO DO

1. Name five new things you have learned about St Thomas Aquinas.
2. In your opinion, do you think that Thomas was a quiet and obedient son? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Why do you think St Thomas Aquinas's writings are so well known and respected?
4. Write a short paragraph explaining the meaning of *Panis Angelicus*.
5. What does the hymn tell us about the Eucharist?



Tuesday, 29 January

Day 2: Liturgy – We Pray

Sacrosanctum Concilium – The Constitution on Sacred Liturgy

It is fitting that the theme for the 50th International Eucharistic Congress was inspired by the 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council – ‘Become What You Receive’. The aim of the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy was (a) to **adapt** more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; (b) to **foster** whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; (c) to **strengthen** whatever can help to call all humankind into the Church’s fold (SC, 1). So, the big question that needs to be asked is: have we been successful in achieving all that was aimed for fifty years ago? In his video message to the International Eucharistic Congress at the celebration of the *Statio Orbis*, Pope Benedict XVI said, ‘it is clear that a great deal has been achieved; but it is equally clear that there have been many misunderstandings and irregularities’.

What does the word ‘liturgy’ mean? It comes from a Greek word meaning ‘public duty’ (of the Church). Therefore, it is not simply about the celebration of the Eucharist (or the Mass), but includes all **rites**, ceremonies, prayers and sacraments of the Church. It does not, however, include private **devotions**. It is important to note though that silence plays a very important part in liturgy. Liturgy is a combination of words, actions, symbols and silence. It happens only when we gather together as a **community of faith**. And because Jesus Christ is present, and we the people (the Body) are present, ‘no other action of the Church can equal its **efficacy** by the same title and to the same degree’ (SC, 7).

Sacrosanctum Concilium states that ‘Liturgy is the **summit** toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is the fount from which all her power flows’ (SC, 10). Another document of the Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, states that taking part in the celebration of the Eucharist is ‘the **source** and summit of the Christian life’ (LG, 11).

The liturgy underwent some major changes during the Second Vatican Council. By virtue of our baptism, we have a **duty** and an **obligation** to partake in **all** liturgical celebrations in a ‘**full**’, ‘**conscious**’ and ‘**active**’ way (SC, 14). Therefore the most important aim of all liturgical celebrations should be how to facilitate **active participation**. The liturgy is where God speaks to us and we respond in music and prayer. One of the main ways that we know to engage in active participation in liturgical celebrations is through the use of the **vernacular** – we may use our own language. Before the Second Vatican Council, Latin was the language of liturgical celebrations. Biblical services were also encouraged on weekdays or during certain seasons in the liturgical year, which can be led by someone other than the priest. When dealing with the topic of the **Divine Office** it explicitly states that it is a public prayer, with morning and evening prayer being the two ‘hinges’ of daily prayer in the Church. Therefore, parishes ought to consider the celebration of Divine Office.

The **sacraments** are referred to as the ‘sacraments of faith’ (SC, 59) because not only do they open the faith life of the Church to people who partake in them, but they also continue to **nourish, strengthen** and **express** it’. These sacraments enable the building up of the Body of Christ. The sacraments **sanctify** our daily lives.

And so, in addition to the celebration of the sacraments, the Church celebrates the liturgical year which ‘unfolds the whole mystery of Christ’ (SC, 102) but also celebrates Mary the Mother of God, as she is ‘inseparably linked with her son’s saving work’ (SC, 103). The highlights of the liturgical year begin with Advent and move into Christmas. The next big season is Lent, which is followed by Easter and then Pentecost. But the liturgical year also celebrates the lives of the **saints** and **martyrs** who showed the power of their faith in their daily lives. Indeed, even the celebration of Catholic Schools Week takes a brief look at the lives of the saints and martyrs, whom we remember during this week.

The celebration of the Eucharist is one of the most important liturgical celebrations in the life of the Church. The Council states that ‘By the tradition handed down from the apostles, which took its origin from the very day of Christ’s resurrection, the Church celebrates the **paschal mystery** every eighth day, which is appropriately called the Lord’s Day or Sunday. For on this day Christ’s faithful are **bound** to come together into one place. They should listen to the word of God and take part in the **Eucharist**, thus calling to mind the passion, resurrection, and glory of the Lord Jesus and giving thanks to God who “has begotten them again through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, unto a living hope” (SC, 106). We are left in no doubt as to how we celebrate the Eucharist and why we ought to do so. While commentating on the *Statio Orbis*, Fr Thomas Rosica of Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation, stated that ‘the Eucharist is a person and his name is Jesus’. This reiterates the Second Vatican Council inspired theme for the 50th International Eucharistic Congress – ‘Become What You Receive’.

Music holds a very important part in liturgical celebrations. In fact, the council goes so far as to say that ‘the musical tradition of the universal Church is a **treasure** of **inestimable** value, greater than that of any other art’ (SC, 112). Music adds beauty to the celebration but also allows for the active participation of all the **faithful**. Music should allow everyone to play an active part in all liturgical celebrations. Sacred art is also given a special role. As something made by human hands, sacred art ought to turn our minds ‘toward God’ (SC, 122).

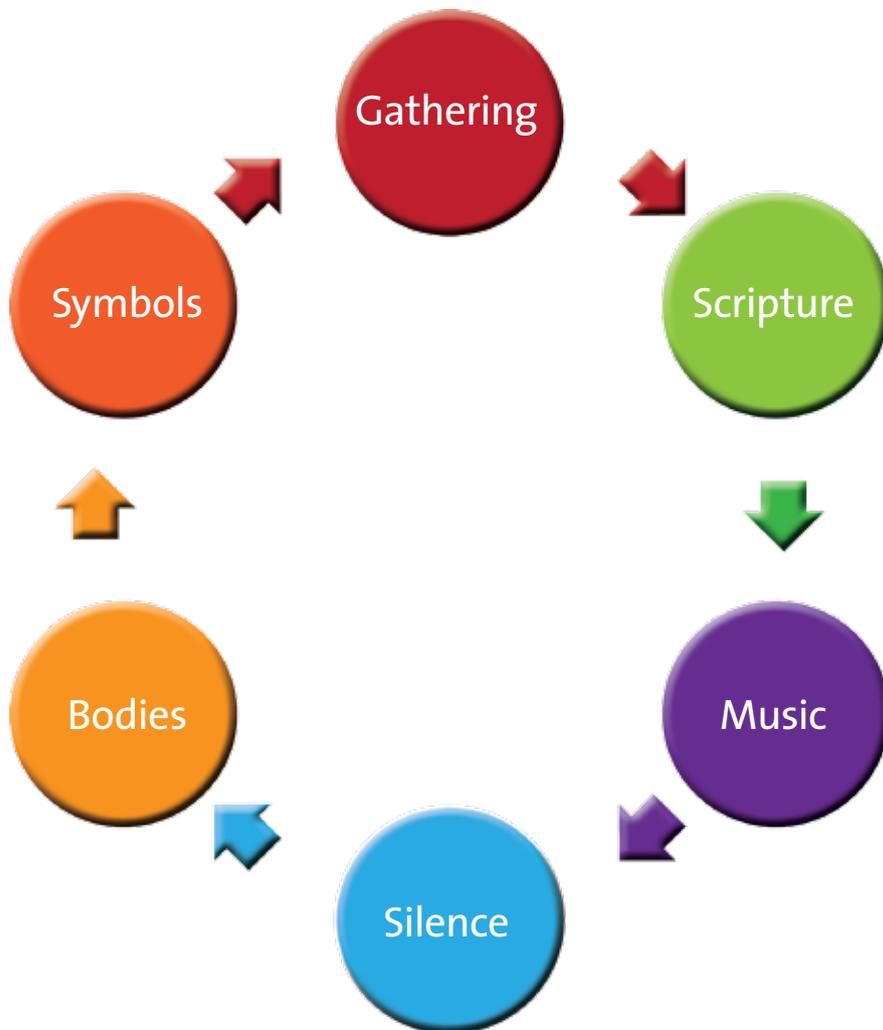
Modern Day

Reporting from Croke Park on the 17 June 2012, Fr Thomas Rosica commented that ‘This **temple** of football and rugby was transformed into an outdoor cathedral.’ Over 75,000 people from over 120 countries gathered in Croke Park to celebrate the *Statio Orbis*, or the final Mass of the International Eucharistic Congress 2012. In his homily, Cardinal Ouellet said that ‘Faith is the most precious gift we have received with baptism. Let’s not keep it private and fearful! Let it grow as a splendid tree through sharing everywhere.’ And so from the 10 – 17 June 2012, Dublin celebrated liturgies that allowed our faith to grow in a public and unfeared way. It began with the opening ceremony and celebration of the Eucharist on day 1, with a theme of ‘gathering’. Throughout the week there were daily celebrations of morning prayer, an Ecumenical Liturgy of Word and Water, a Liturgy of Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, and on day 4 there was an Evening Eucharistic Procession. The idea of a Eucharistic Procession still exists around the country on the Feast of *Corpus Christi*. This is when the Blessed Sacrament is placed in a monstrance and processed through a village, town or city. Over a PA system, prayers and music are led.

There were also many talks over the course of the week. One such talk on liturgy, given by Julie Kavanagh, outlined the foundational principles of **ritual** and **liturgy**. She stated that liturgy is ‘embodied ritual’. This means that we are bodily people and these bodies ‘do’ liturgy. She quoted the late Aidan Kavanagh to point out that ‘liturgy is the Church caught in the act of being itself’. Liturgy is action as well as being words and symbols. Liturgy is where we meet Christ. We meet Christ through scripture, the Eucharist and the priest, but also through the people who gather. What was the overall affect of the 50th International Eucharistic Congress? Archbishop Diarmuid Martin stated that the IEC ‘awakened in our hearts something which went way beyond our plans and expectations’.

FOR YOU TO DO

1. Before beginning this article, ask students what the first thing is that comes into their minds when they hear the word 'liturgy'.
2. With the help of a dictionary and the teacher, define all the highlighted keywords in the passage.
3. Make a list of the words in this article that you would only use when talking about the topic of 'liturgy' or 'Church'.
4. Having read the article prepare, as a class, an outline for a liturgy of your choice, staying true to the spirit of this article. Students should research the outline of some existing rites in order to inform them before they begin this plan. Use the strengths of the group to compile this liturgy. (Music students, choir members, art students, poets etc. should all exercise their talents.) The following keywords are essential to bear in mind when planning any liturgy:



5. Reflect on how the 50th International Eucharistic Congress impacted on you, if at all. Senior students may have studied the 1932 Eucharistic Congress in a history context. Think about some ways in which this congress differed from the last.
6. Reflect on the part liturgy plays in your life. Consider the role it plays and the role you may like it to play. At what times in your life do you attend/seek liturgies?

Create your own Liturgical Calendar

First you are going to calculate the dates of the different special days in the liturgical year and then you are going to create your very own liturgical calendar.

Step 1: Find Christmas day and count back 4 Sundays to find the date of the first Sunday of Advent

Date:

Step 2: In order to work out the date of Easter Sunday, you must find out the date for the first full moon after the Spring Equinox. Easter Sunday is the following Sunday. So, if the first full moon after the Spring Equinox is 31 March, find the date of Easter Sunday (if this date falls on a Sunday then that is the date of Easter)

Date:

Step 3: Now, take the date for Easter Sunday, and subtract 46 to get the date for Ash Wednesday

Date:

Step 4: Take the date of Easter Sunday, and find the date of the Sunday before. This is the date for Palm Sunday

Date:

Step 5: Next, take the date for Palm Sunday and go to the following Thursday. This is the date for Holy Thursday

Date:

Step 6: The day following Holy Thursday is Good Friday

Date:

Step 7: Now take the date of Easter Sunday and add 40 days. This is the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord into Heaven

Date:

Step 8: Take the date of Easter Sunday and add 50 days. This is the Feast of Pentecost

Date:

Step 9: Lastly, look at Christmas Day 2014. From here, count back 4 Sundays and find the date for the first Sunday of Advent for the next liturgical year

Date:



Wednesday, 30 January

Day 3: Word of God – We Encounter

Dei Verbum – Decree on Divine Revelation

Fifty years ago, the biggest meeting to take place in the long history of the Catholic Church was taking place in Rome. It was called the Second Vatican Council. It wasn't a short meeting either, in fact it lasted for three years and brought about important changes in the Church that very much influence the kind of Church we are today. The changes came about as a result of important documents that were prepared, debated and finally approved by the bishops attending the Council. One of the most important documents they produced was called *Dei Verbum* (The Word of God). This document sets out how Catholics are to understand the central place of the Bible or sacred scripture in their faith.

Let's take a little time to think about what we believe about the Bible as Catholics. Consider the following statements and answer true or false to each one:

	True	False
The Catholic Church teaches that the Bible is literally true		
A Catholic Bible only has the New Testament		
The Catholic Church believes not only in scripture but also in tradition		
The Old Testament is never read at Mass		
Catholics believe God is present in his word as well as in the Eucharist		

If you have answered any of the above incorrectly take a little time to find out what the Catholic Church actually teaches on this particular point.

At the heart of a Catholic understanding of the Bible is the idea that through the word of God we can come to an encounter with God. We can experience God, not as some distant figure from the past, but as present to us now and giving us life. Let's consider three passages from the Bible that speak about the word of God:

Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away.

It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?'

No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe. (Deut 30:10-11)

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Is 55:10-11)

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Ps 119:105)





St Aidan of Ferns

As a small boy, Aidan was held as a hostage by the High King of Ireland, Áedh Mac Ainmuirech of the Cenél Conaill.

He founded a monastery in Ferns, County Wexford, and became the first bishop of Ferns.

Aidan studied to become a monk under St Finnian of Clonard.

St Aidan is known for his many miracles showing his generosity and kindness. One story tells how people dressed as beggars asked Aidan for help; but knowing what they had done, Aidan gave away their clothes to some more deserving poor, and sent off the imposters with neither clothes nor alms.

He fasted on barley bread and water for 7 years and recited 500 psalms every day.

He pulled two young men, feared dead, from the water alive.

In 580, Aidan returned to Ireland, going to the coast of Wexford. Here he served in the area around Ferns



One day, while out studying and praying, a deer ran in his direction, wanting protection from a dog. He put the tablet on which he was writing on the head of the deer and it became invisible until the dog passed.

When he wanted to build the monastery, he blessed the hands of an untrained man and he became a great builder and decorator for St Aidan's monastery.

He died on 31 January 631. A bronze reliquary in which his relics were kept in the 11th century is preserved in Dublin.

FOR YOU TO DO:

St Aidan's work today ...

Can you find a news story from the last week where someone protected an animal in distress, performed a heroic rescue, or encouraged/helped an untrained person gain new skills or get a job?



Grandparents' Day – We Share the Good News at Home

This year, Wednesday of Catholic Schools Week is the day for the school community to celebrate and pay tribute to grandparents and the role they play in handing on the faith to their grandchildren and in supporting the community of faith at home and in the parish.

Write a Poem, Prayer, Story

National Grandparents' Day in Ireland is celebrated in September every year. More details can be found at www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.com. The people who organise this event would very much like to receive prayers/poems about grandparents to include in their celebration. You might like to spend some time today inviting the students to write a story/poem/prayer about their grandparents. These will be brought to the altar during Mass in Knock Shrine at the Grandparents Day celebration next September. Prayers and poems can be posted to Catholic Grandparents Association, The Mall, Castlebar Street, Westport, Co. Mayo. (Tel: 098- 24877)

Good News Card

Make cards containing the words

'Thank you for being and sharing the Good News for our family'

These can be taken home to grandparents or posted if they live elsewhere.

A Special Kind of Love

There's a special kind of love that grandchildren have for their grandparents.

It's filled with respect for their wisdom and accomplishments. With gratitude for the values the values they've given us, with delight in the stories of our family that they remember and share. It's a special kind of love that's built on a lifetime of caring and giving. It's the kind of love that's felt for you my dear grandparent today and always.

Courtesy of the Grandparents Association, Westport, Co. Mayo

Thursday, 31 January

Day 4: Laity – We Participate

Apostolicam Actuositatem – Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity

On 18 November 1965, the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity was published. In this document those who participated in the Second Vatican Council outlined the role of the lay apostolate in the mission of the Church. One particular area identified was that of **Charitable Works and Social Aid**:

Wherever people are to be found who are in want of food and drink, of clothing, housing, medicine, work, education, the means necessary for leading a truly human life, wherever there are people racked by misfortune or illness, people suffering exile or imprisonment, Christian charity should go in search of them and find them out, comfort them with devoted care and give them the helps that will relieve their needs. (Ch 2, paragraph 8)

From the beginning, and inspired by his mother 'Mama Margaret' who sold her home and all her earthly possessions to spend the last ten years of her life in devoted service to the little inhabitants of the first Salesian home, Don Bosco encouraged lay people to participate in his mission and apostolate.

Today lay people can participate in the work of the Salesians by volunteering to work with:



DON BOSCO

a) **Don Bosco House**. A home founded in Dublin by the Salesians to provide residential care and support for young people who are unable to live with their families.

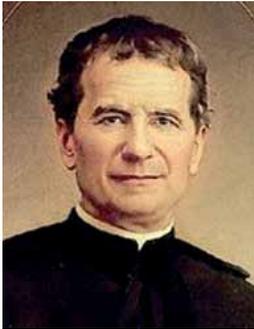
Or



b) **Savio Volunteers**, which provides opportunities for adults to participate in the Salesian mission of 'educating the young' by sharing their talents with the young and the poor in Salesian communities worldwide.

FOR YOU TO DO:

1. Log on to the Salesians of Don Bosco Irish Website at www.salesiansireland.ie and read the stories of the volunteers.
2. Download an application form to join either the lay volunteer programme at Don Bosco House or Savio and see for yourself what is needed to participate in this aspect of the apostolate of lay people.
3. Discuss why you would or would not like to be involved in these programmes.



Feastday of Don Bosco

The Life of Don Bosco (1815 – 1888)

John Bosco was born on 16 August 1815, to the east of Turin in Italy. From a very early age he decided that he would dedicate his life to helping young people. He was ordained in June 1841, and began his work for the poor youth of the city of Turin.

Turin in the 1800s

Back in the early decades of the 1800s, social problems abounded in the city of Turin and its surrounding areas. The industrial revolution had begun and many young people were flocking into the city looking for work in factories. They were often used as cheap labour, and there wasn't work for everybody and many were disappointed.

Money was scarce, accommodation was dreadful and crime escalated. The prisons were filled with boys and young men in particular. Only the elite could afford education, and in 1848 there were, in the city of Turin, 30,000 illiterate young people – about 40% of the population.

Into that situation came John Bosco. Part of John's work as a priest was to visit the prisons around Turin. Here he experienced first-hand the misery of many vulnerable teenagers. Their plight made a deep impression on him. He knew something had to be done about the situation. But what and how?

He adopted a novel approach. He mixed with the roughest of young people. He played cards with them in pubs and invited them to be his friends. This scandalised many of his fellow priests. Some of them actually thought his behaviour so insane that on one occasion they tried to commit him to an asylum. Overcoming problems and prejudices took time.

The Mission of Don Bosco

However, John's unique ability to be at ease with the young who were homeless, illiterate and in need, spurred him on. He progressed from Sunday catechism classes in a local field, to a daily trade school in an adapted shed. Young people flocked to him for education and shelter. He fought for the rights of apprentices. His fame and his work spread. People began to see John Bosco not as someone deranged, but as an extraordinarily holy man. He was making the seemingly impossible, possible.

As his work grew, many young men came forward to help him. They became the first members of his religious congregation known as 'Salesians'. These young men became the core group who would further his work. Many lay people, including his mother 'Mama Margaret', also came to help in his work. Currently, there are over 400,000 lay people working as part of the wider Salesian family. John, with the help of Mary Mazzarello, later founded the Salesian Sisters to work for girls.



Why the name Salesians?

John Bosco had a great admiration for St Francis de Sales (1567–1622). Francis, who was born near Geneva, was patron saint of Piedmont and Savoy – John Bosco admired his joyful, optimistic spirituality and simplicity of life. St Francis used a simple metaphor to sum up his work when he said: ‘you catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than a barrel full of vinegar’. In other words, love is stronger than violence or force of any kind. Because of the gentleness of his approach, John Bosco chose St Francis as a patron of the congregation, hence the name Salesians.

Francis and Don Bosco both knew that ‘all starts from Jesus’ and ‘all leads back to him’. Love is the beginning, love is the end, love is the way. John Bosco’s work and message spread throughout the World. He himself worked tirelessly throughout his life for the young people of Turin and beyond, until his death on 31 January 1888 at the age of 73.

In 1934, Pope Plus XI canonized St John Bosco as saint of the Catholic Church. And in 1988 Pope John Paul II called him ‘Father and Teacher of Youth’.

The Salesian Logo

The Salesian logo of Don Bosco and the Salesians walking with the young through the world is made up of two superimposed images:

1. In the background a stylised ‘S’ (Salesians) in white is formed within a sphere like a globe marked to the right and left by two cuttings between the hills/dunes – images of journey, divided world etc.
2. The second image is an arrow pointing upwards resting on three perpendicular legs, on top of which are three closed circles making a stylised image of three people: the first of these in the middle and taller than the others is the point of the arrow, and the other two appear as though being embraced by the central figure.
3. The three stylised figures with the arrow pointing upwards can also be viewed as a simple dwelling with a sloping roof (the arms) and with pillars holding it up (the bodies of the three people).



FOR YOU TO DO:

Project a large image of the Salesian logo and ask the pupils to discuss or write a reflective piece on how the logo reflects the life story and mission of Don Bosco.

For reflection and use in a discussion on the Salesian Logo.

- a) Don Bosco used his first Oratory or place of refuge for young boys as a model for all Salesian mission work in the world. For the youngsters it was a home that welcomed, a parish that evangelised, a school that prepared them for life, and a playground where friends could meet and enjoy themselves.
- b) It had been said that if you come on somebody who is dying of hunger, instead of giving him a fish, teach him how to fish. But the contrary is also true: if you come upon somebody dying of hunger, give him a fish so that he may live long enough to learn how to fish. From the beginning, Don Bosco and his Salesians have tried to offer young people a balance between food, accommodation, education in Catholic faith, professional training and work protected by a legal, binding contact with employers.

Friday, 1 February

Day 5: Interfaith – We Reach Out

Nostra Aetate – Decree on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian religions

‘The Church believes that Christ who is our peace has through his cross reconciled Jews and Gentiles and made them one in himself’. (Eph 2:14-16)

We recognise that people belong to different kinds of families have different coloured skin, different likes and dislikes, different political opinions and different experiences of life. So too, each religion has its own history, set of beliefs, moral code and acts of worship. The following chart summarises the main differences between the five major world religions. Although there has been a lot of conflict between religions in the past, today all the major religions are working to understand one another better and to build a world where people can live together in peace.

Religion	Christianity	Islam	Hinduism	Buddhism	Judaism
Followers	2100 million	1600 million	900 million	400 million	18 million
Sacred text	Bible	Qur’an	Vedas	Tripitaka/ Mahayana/ Sutras	Tanakh (Torah)
Moral code	Two Great Commandments Beatitudes	Five Pillars	Doing good and meditation	Four Noble Truths/Eightfold Path	Ten Commandments
Place of Worship	Church/ Chapel/ Cathedral	Mosque	Mandira	Temple	Synagogue

Interfaith dialogue is the term we use to describe different religions talking to one another. Interfaith (or interreligious) dialogue is different from ecumenism because it refers to dialogue between all of the world religions, not just the Christian churches.

Catholic Leadership on Interfaith Dialogue

World Day of Prayer *Pope John Paul II*

During the World Day of Prayer in 2002, Pope John Paul II led two hundred other religious leaders in prayers for world peace in Assisi, the birthplace of St Francis.

The members of each community of faith had travelled to Assisi from the Vatican’s seldom-used rail station in a seven-car train supplied by Italy’s state-run railway. Pope John Paul II said that he wanted to use the ‘peace train’ to help all participants of the World Day of Prayer to feel equal.

Building Together *Pope Benedict XVI*

A World of Peace and Fraternity

Continuing, then, the work undertaken by my predecessor, Pope John Paul II, I sincerely pray that the relations of trust which have developed between Christians and Muslims over several years, will not only continue, but will develop further in a spirit of sincere and respectful dialogue, based on ever more authentic reciprocal knowledge which, with joy, recognises the religious values that we have in common and, with loyalty, respects the differences.

Interreligious and intercultural dialogue is necessary for building together this world of

peace and fraternity ardently desired by all people of good will ... I am profoundly convinced that in the current world situation it is imperative that Christians and Muslims engage with one another in order to address the numerous challenges that present themselves to humanity, especially those concerning the defence and promotion of the dignity of the human person and the rights ensuing from that dignity.

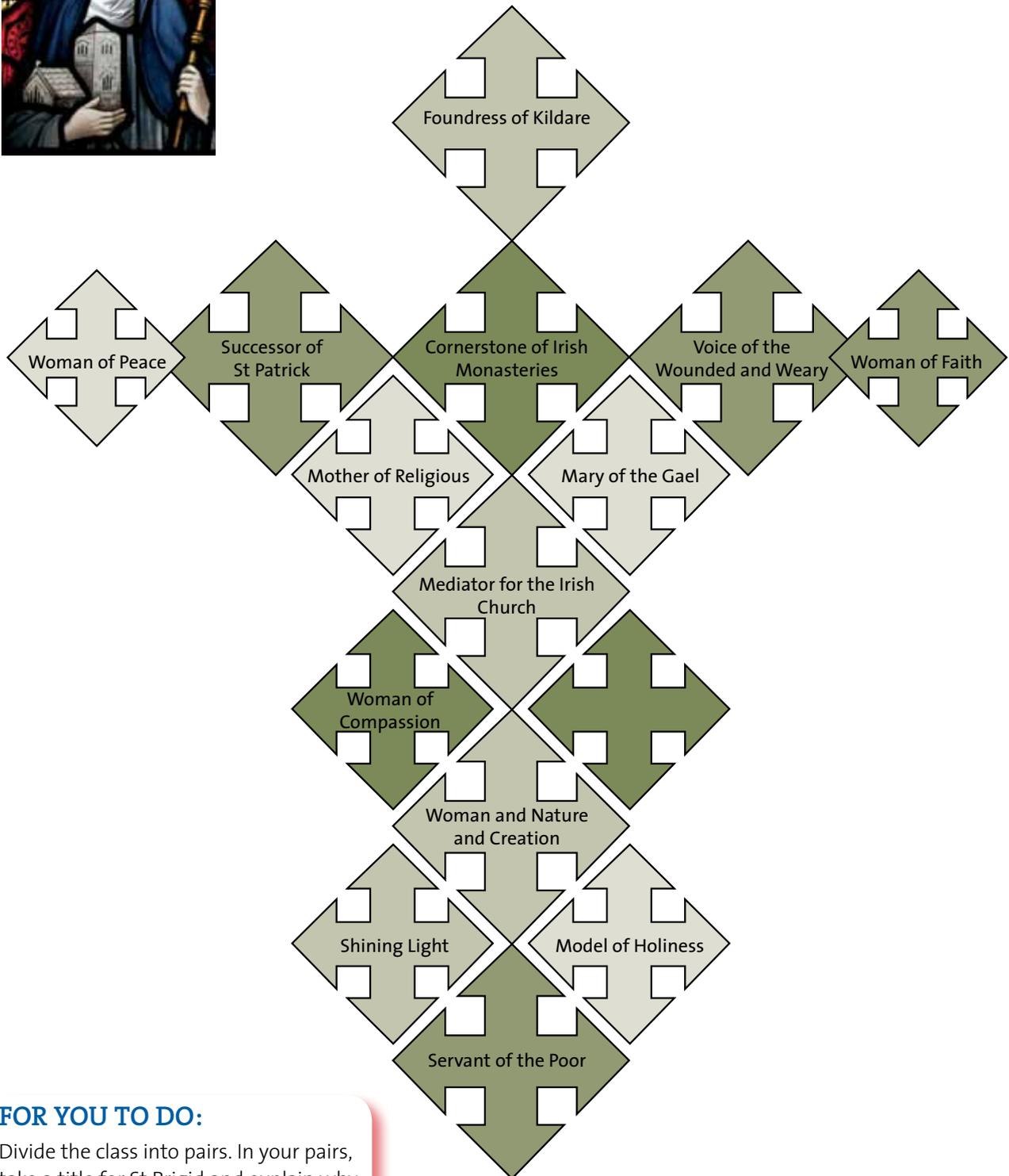
Benedict XVI, Address to the Ambassadors of Countries with a Muslim Majority and the Representatives of Muslim Communities in Italy, 25 September 2006.





Feastday of St Brigid

Titles for St Brigid



FOR YOU TO DO:

Divide the class into pairs. In your pairs, take a title for St Brigid and explain why this title was used. Compile all your research into a 'storyboard' to explain the name's significance.



Feasts for Feasts!

Ingredients

2 1/2 cups walnuts or pistachio nuts
4 1/2 cups sugar
1 lb butter
1 package, or 16 oz. frozen filo dough, thawed according to package directions
2 cups water
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
cinnamon if using walnuts

Islamic sweets at mealtimes during Ramadan: Baklawa

These treats are well known to the Islamic faith community especially during the festival of Ramadan. The treats are tasty and filling and very satisfying after fasting.

Preparation:

Prepare Syrup First

Combine 4 cups of the sugar with the lemon juice and water in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, and allow to boil for 10 minutes. Remove from heat immediately. Allow to cool.

Dough and Filling

Combine the remaining 1/2 cup of sugar and the nuts in a bowl. (If using walnuts add cinnamon. Preheat oven to 300 Fahrenheit (160 degrees Celsius).

Grease bottom of 9x12 dish with butter. Unroll dough and cut into pieces to fit the baking dish.

Place two sheets of dough in the baking dish. Brush dough with butter and repeat until half of the dough is used. Spread about 1 cup of nut mixture over the last layer of dough. Place two sheets of filo dough and brush with butter. Repeat until nut mixture is used. On the final layer of filo dough, be sure to brush with butter. Cut into 3 inch squares. Then, cut each square in half diagonally to make triangles. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven and pour syrup over top of baklawa and allow to seep and saturate it well.

Now enjoy this Islamic feast!

Ingredients

4 eggs
2 cups sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
3/4 cup cocoa powder (*parve)
1 cup potato starch (ground almonds work as well)

Banana Ice Cream (optional)

3 egg whites
3 ripe bananas
2/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Chocolate Sauce (optional)

1 container non-dairy whip topping
200 grams *parve bittersweet chocolate

Jewish sweets at mealtimes, especially on Shabbat:

Brownies

These brownies are a favourite of all but especially to the Jewish community as there is no yeast in the recipe and the ingredients can easily be *parve**.

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit (180 degrees Celsius). Grease a baking pan.

In a mixing bowl, beat together the eggs, sugar, oil, salt, cocoa and potato starch. Pour into pan. Bake for 30–35 minutes or until a knife inserted comes out clean.

After the brownies have cooled, cut them into squares. The brownies freeze well.

Banana Ice Cream

Beat egg whites until stiff. In a separate bowl, mix together the mashed bananas, sugar, vanilla and lemon juice. Add the banana mixture to the egg whites. Put into a plastic container and freeze.

Chocolate Sauce

In a sauce pan, put non-dairy whip topping and chocolate. Melt over low heat, stirring.

Now enjoy this Jewish feast!

*Parve means kosher; that is, no contact with dairy or meat products.



Ingredients

1 cup of flour
1 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt
4 eggs
3/4 cup sugar
1 tsp almond extract
1/4 cup coconut milk

Coconut Icing

2 tbs plus 1 tsp
pineapple juice
1 tbs plus 2 tsp
cornstarch
1 cup coconut milk
1/2 cup sugar

Buddhist cake at mealtimes: Steamed Sponge Cake

A Buddhist diet is usually vegetarian or vegan, since one of the important principles of Buddhism is to not harm any living thing. This steamed sponge cake can have many fruits and nuts added.

Preparation:

Cake

Line the bottom of a cake pan with parchment paper. Prepare a wok for steaming. Place the flour in a medium bowl. Sift in the baking powder and salt and set aside.

In a separate bowl, add the sugar to the eggs and beat until they are frothy (about 3 minutes). Stir in the almond extract. Gradually add the flour mix to the egg mixture, stirring. Add the coconut milk. Stir, but do not beat, until you have a smooth batter that is thoroughly mixed.

Pour the batter into the pan (ideally it should only come 2/3 to 3/4 up the side of the pan). Cover and steam for 30 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool and remove from the pan, turning the cake over. Cut the cake into squares or diamond shapes.

Coconut Icing

In a small bowl, mix the pineapple juice and cornstarch and set aside.

In a medium saucepan, bring the coconut milk and sugar to a boil, stirring occasionally. Give the pineapple juice/cornstarch mixture a quick re-stir and then add to the saucepan, stirring. Cook for a few minutes on medium-low heat to thicken. Cook for another minute, then remove and use to ice the cake. Chill the cake until the icing stiffens. Refrigerated in a sealed container, the icing will keep for a few days. It can be used again to ice another sponge cake, or as a simple (but sweet!) dessert for one to two people.

Now enjoy this Buddhist feast!

Ingredients

175g/6oz butter or margarine
175g/6oz soft brown sugar
3 free-range eggs, beaten
175g/6oz plain flour
Pinch salt
1/2 tsp ground mixed spice (optional)
350g/12oz mixed raisins, currants and sultanas
55g/2oz chopped mixed peel
1/2 lemon, grated zest only
1-2 tbs apricot jam
1 free-range egg, beaten for glazing
Use shop-bought almond paste

Traditional Christian Simnel Easter cake to be enjoyed by all on Easter Sunday

Simnel Cake was not originally baked at Easter but on Mother's Day as a kind of mid-Lent treat. Somehow or other it got postponed until the great feast of Easter itself – and is now a traditional sweet Easter cake to be enjoyed after the fasting in Lent.

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 140C/275F. Grease and line a 18cm/7in cake tin.

For the cake, cream the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs until well incorporated and then sift in the flour, salt and mixed spice (if using) a little at a time. Finally, add the mixed dried fruit, peel and grated lemon zest and stir into the mixture.

Put half the mixture into a greased and lined 18cm/7in cake tin. Smooth the top and cover with the circle of almond paste. Add the rest of the cake mixture and smooth the top leaving a slight dip in the centre to allow for the cake to rise. Bake in the preheated oven for 1 3/4 hours. Test by inserting a skewer in the middle – if it comes out clean, it is ready. Once baked, remove from the oven and set aside to cool on a wire rack.

Brush the top of the cooled cake with the apricot jam. Divide the almond paste in half; roll out a circle to cover the top of the cake with one half and form 11 small balls with the other half.

Place the circle of paste on the jam glaze and set the balls round the edge. Brush the cake topping with a little beaten egg.

Preheat the grill to high. Place the cake onto a baking tray and grill for 1–2 minutes, or until the top of the marzipan begins to brown. Alternatively, lightly heat the cake topping using a cook's blow torch, until the marzipan is golden-brown.

Now enjoy this Christian feast!



Year of Faith

What is the Year of Faith?

Pope Benedict XVI has set aside a special year for Catholics throughout the world to rediscover, and share with others, the precious gift of faith entrusted to the Church and the personal gift of faith that we have each received from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

When is the Year of Faith?

The Year of Faith began on 11 October 2012 and will end on 24 November 2013.

What is special about the dates for the Year of Faith?

Pope Benedict chose to open the Year of Faith on the 11 October 2012 because that date was the anniversary of two important events in the life of the Catholic Church: the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council (11 October 1962 – 8 December 1965). The 20th anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church by Blessed John Paul II.

Why is the anniversary of the Second Vatican Council so important that it marks the opening of the Year of Faith?

Pope Benedict explains that though the Second Vatican Council occurred half a century ago it remains 'the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century', that it is 'a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the century now beginning'. The Holy Father is also convinced that the Second Vatican Council, if interpreted and implemented according to the mind of the Church stretching back to the apostles, 'can be and can become increasingly powerful for the ever necessary renewal of the Church' (*Porta Fidei*, 5). This is why an important component of the Year of Faith is reflection on and rediscovery of the riches contained in the texts of Vatican II.

Why is the anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church so important that it also marks the opening of the Year of Faith?

The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** is a systematic presentation of the Catholic Faith that enables the faithful to know the full symphony of faith. In the **Catechism** 'we see the wealth of teaching that the Church has received, safeguarded and proposed in her two thousand years of history.

Pope Benedict XVI sees the Catechism as 'a precious and indispensable tool. It is one of the most important fruits of the Second Vatican Council' (*Porta Fidei*, 11). This is why an important component of the Year of Faith will involve a 'concerted effort by every Catholic to rediscover and study the fundamental content of the faith that receives its systematic and organic synthesis in the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**'.

What are Pope Benedict's hopes for each one of us during the Year of Faith?

The Holy Father wants us to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ. He wants us to rediscover a taste for feeding ourselves on the word of God, faithfully handed down by the Church, and on the bread of life, offered as sustenance for his disciples (cf. Jn 6:51).

The Holy Father also wants us to take the opportunity to read the documents of Vatican II correctly, help them become widely known and take them to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium.

To intensify our reflection of faith, so we acquire a more conscious and vigorous adherence to the gospel, especially at a time of profound change such as humanity is currently experiencing.

To profess our faith in the Risen Lord in our cathedrals and in the churches of the whole world; in our homes and among our families, so that everyone may feel a strong need to know better and to transmit to future generations the faith of all times.

The Holy Father wants the Year of Faith to arouse in every believer the aspiration to profess the faith in fullness and with renewed conviction, with confidence and hope.

He wants us to intensify the celebration of the faith in the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist, which is 'the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed ... and also the source from which all its power flows.'

To rediscover the content of the faith that is professed, celebrated, lived and prayed, and to reflect on the act of faith, is a task that every believer must make his own, especially in the course of this year.

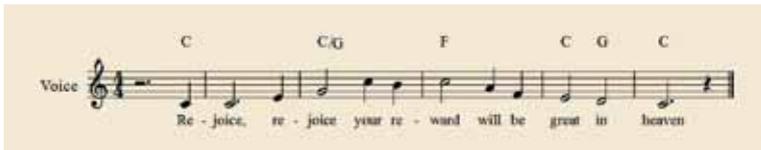
Year of Faith Website: www.annusfidei.va/

Prayer Service for Catholic Schools Week

‘Sharing the Good News’

During this prayer service, it is recommended that five stations be set up in the room in which you will be praying; however, it will also work if this is not possible.

Opening Music – Rejoice and Be Glad (all stand)



Reader 1: And so I prayed, and understanding was given me; I entreated, and the spirit came to me.

All sit

Reader 2: Lord, teach me your law.

All: *Lord, teach me your law.*

Reader 2: How can a young person keep their way spotless? By keeping their word.

All: *Lord, teach me your law.*

Reader 3: With all my heart I seek you, do not let me stray from you commandments.

All: *Lord, teach me your law.*

Reader 4: In my heart, I treasure your promises, to avoid sinning against you.

All: *Lord, teach me your law.*

Reader 5: Blessed are you O Lord, teach me your law.

All: *Lord, teach me your law.*

Reader 6: With my lips I have repeated all the judgments you have given.

All: *Lord, teach me your law.*

Reader 7: In the way of your instruction lies my joy, a joy beyond all wealth.

All: *Lord, teach me your law.*

Where possible, during the singing of the chant all students walk to a second station in the room.

Music: ‘Rejoice and Be Glad’

All remain standing

Leader: Let us pray:

O God, who made St Thomas Aquinas outstanding in his zeal for holiness and his study of sacred doctrine, grant us we pray, that we may understand what he taught and imitate what he accomplished.

All sit

Reader 8: Wisdom comes from the lips of the upright, and their tongue speaks what is right.

All: *Wisdom comes from the lips of the upright, and their tongue speaks what is right.*

Reader 8: Put your trust in God and do right, make your home in the land and live secure.

All: *Wisdom comes from the lips of the upright, and their tongue speaks what is right.*

Reader 9: Make God your joy and he will give you your heart’s desires.

All: *Wisdom comes from the lips of the upright, and their tongue speaks what is right.*

Reader 10: Commit your dreams to God, be confident in him, and he will act, making your uprightness clear as daylight and the justice of your cause as the noon.

All: *Wisdom comes from the lips of the upright, and their tongue speaks what is right.*

Reader 11: Wisdom comes from the lips of the upright, and their tongue speaks what is right, the law of their God in is their heart, their foot will never slip.

All: *Wisdom comes from the lips of the upright, and their tongue speaks what is right.*

Leader: Let us pray:

Almighty God, who called St Aidan to count all as loss for the sake of gaining Christ, fix, we pray, in the hearts of all who celebrate his memory the desire to show forth the gospel that they may share in its blessings.

Where possible, during the singing of the chant all students walk to a third station in the room.

Music: 'Rejoice and Be Glad'

All sit

Reader 12: O bless the Lord my soul.

All: *O bless the Lord my soul.*

Reader 12: Bless the Lord my soul, from the depths of my being, his holy name; Bless the Lord my soul, never forget all his acts of kindness.

All: *O bless the Lord my soul.*

Reader 13: As tenderly as a father treats his children, so the Lord treats those who fear him, he knows of what we are made, he remembers that we are dust.

All: *O bless the Lord my soul.*

Reader 14: But the Lord's faithful love for those who fear him is from eternity and forever; and his saving justice to their children's children; as long as they keep his covenant, and carefully obey his laws.

All: *O bless the Lord my soul.*

Leader: Let us pray:

O God, who raised up the priest St John Bosco as a father and teacher of the young, grant we pray, that, aflame with the same fire of love, we may seek out souls and serve you alone.

Where possible, during the singing of the chant all students walk to a fourth station in the room.

Music: 'Rejoice and Be Glad'

All sit

Reader 15: This is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every family, whether spiritual or natural, takes its name: out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God. Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

Leader: Let us pray:

Merciful God, you called St Brigid to teach the new commandment of love through her life of hospitality and her care of the needy; give to your people, by her intercession, a generous spirit, so that, with hearts made pure, we may show your love to all.

And so, let us take a moment to think about the things that are weighing heavy on our mind. In the quietness of our own hearts, let us offer them up to our Irish Saints that they may intercede for us and bring our intentions to God. (Pause)

And so together let us pray ...

All stand

All: *Let us sing the praises of our ancestors in their successive generations, for the Lord has created an abundance of glory, and displayed his greatness from earliest times!*

Where possible, during the singing of the chant all students walk to a fifth station in the room.

Music: 'Rejoice and Be Glad'



Board of Management/ Governors and Staff Reflection

The following is offered as a basis for a short reflection on Catholic Schools with staff and members of Boards of Management/Governors during Catholic Schools Week 2013.

The theme of Catholic Schools Week 2013 is **Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News**. The context for our celebration is the Year of Faith which is being celebrated throughout the universal church at the invitation of Pope Benedict. His desire is that there would be a rediscovery and a deepening of our faith in Jesus Christ and its value in helping to make the world a better place. At the Mass to mark the beginning of the Year of Faith which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, the Holy Father spoke about the spiritual desert in which many people now find themselves and he offered this challenge to us:

In the desert we rediscover the value of what is essential for living; thus in today's world there are innumerable signs, often expressed implicitly or negatively, of the thirst for God, for the ultimate meaning of life. And in the desert people of faith are needed who, with their own lives, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive. Living faith opens the heart to the grace of God which frees us from pessimism. Today, more than ever, evangelising means witnessing to the new life, transformed by God, and thus showing the path.

Catholic schools can play a key role in the community of faith of which they are a part. In our schools we have unique opportunities through our attention to ethos, the liturgical year and the faith development programme to assist everyone in the school community to come to an experience of how sharing the good news impacts positively on our lives.

As school boards and staff it may be helpful for us to plan an event or a programme during this Year of Faith that will allow us to focus on the ways in which the values of the gospel (the good news) that lie behind our school's characteristic spirit and mission statement shape the life and work of our school. This may be undertaken as a type of self-evaluation programme, whereby we acknowledge and celebrate what we are doing well and seek to improve on areas where we are not living up to the ideals put before us by Jesus Christ, who is our inspiration and guide on this journey.

A good place to start might be *Share the Good News: The National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (Veritas, 2010). The Directory lists seven objectives for Faith Development in Catholic Schools (pp. 204–10) and each of these comes with a list of indicators of achievement. Any one of the objectives could form the basis for reflection for the Board in the coming year and be of assistance in ensuring that our schools continue to grow as communities of faith where the good news is joyfully shared.



Prayer for Teachers

Lord Jesus,
You came among us as a teacher
to share with us the Good News of the Father's
infinite love.
In sharing your compassion and wisdom
you opened the eyes of the blind and
unblocked the ears of the deaf.
May we who are also privileged to teach
learn from your compassion and wisdom
so that we too may encourage our students to
see and celebrate their gifts
and support them in hearing and heeding the
truth that will set them free.
As teachers may we always be willing to learn
from your example of gentle service.
May we become sources of hope and
enthusiasm for the young people in our care.
And may our work in school be always guided
by the inspiration of your Spirit.

Amen

Prayer for Board Members

O God our Father,
You invite us to share our gifts in the work of
Catholic education
and to assist our school community in
becoming a place where the Good News is
shared and celebrated.
By the light of the Holy Spirit,
guide our work on behalf of the school so that
the teaching and learning that takes place here
may allow our students, parents and teachers
to live gratefully in your world;
to witness to the power of your love;
and to be confident witnesses to Christian
hope and joy.
We make this prayer In the name of
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen



The members of the Steering Committee are:

Gary Abrahamian; Jim Cassin; Martin Delaney; Colette Dower; Michael Drumm;
Paul Farren; Fiona Gallagher; Seán Goan; Maura Hyland; Martin Long;
Tony McCann; Maeve Mahon; Bernie Martin; Michael Redmond; Maria Spring;
Eithne Woulfe



YEAR OF FAITH²⁰¹²₂₀₁₃

Catholic Schools in the Community of Faith: Sharing the Good News

Resources for the Post-Primary School Community: School & Parish

27 January–2 February 2013