

R.E. News

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Welcome to the third edition of the R.E. News for this academic year. From Vocations Sunday, 13 April 2008 until May 3 2009 Ireland will celebrate the 'Year Of Vocation'. Fr Eamonn Bourke, Vocations Director, has very kindly included some resources on Vocation. Rev. Ken McCaffery has written a Prayer service on Vocation, which can be used in the classroom.

Mícheál de Barra takes us through Religious Education as a Leaving Certificate Examination Subject. Mícheál looks at the '**Faith Seeking Understanding Series**' published by Veritas of which he is the author.

In this edition some resources for graduation liturgies are listed.

Eddie O Carroll, Chaplain in Coláiste Íoseaf, Killmallock, Co Limerick very kindly shares with us the importance of Pastoral Care in Post Primary schools.

Mr Patrick Doyle, Chaplain in Jobstown Community College, Tallaght takes us through their prayer garden.

Any articles, Prayer services or events which you would like to share through the R.E. News are most welcome. Please email them to brigidgilligan05@eircom.net.

I would like to take this opportunity to say 'Thank You' for the very warm welcome I have received in the schools I have visited so far and to acknowledge the excellent work being done by the R.E. teams.



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Some Resources - Year of Vocation

What will you do when you leave school?



You are probably fed up with this question. This question is asked constantly of students who are coming to the end of their time in secondary school. We all hope when we leave school we will get a great job, one that will bring satisfaction and contentment and also a big salary! We all want to be successful in whatever path we choose. However because there are so many opportunities for people today the big problem is choosing the right job and making the right choice. Above all else we all want to be happy in life. Looking forward five or ten years after leaving school you want to know that whatever choice you have made

will lead you to happiness and contentment. Money is important of course, but your personal contentment is more important. You also want to know that whatever path you have chosen will make a difference to yourself, but also a difference to the world. We get only one chance at life and we want it to be the best chance possible. As the saying goes life is not a rehearsal!

There is one path in life that makes a difference, one path that brings the satisfaction of knowing that you have touched people's lives for the better, one path that when you look back on will bring joy to your heart because you have brought joy to others. OK the salary is not huge and the challenges are great. But for anyone with a generous heart money is not the most important factor and anyone with courage loves a challenge. So what is this way of life that brings satisfaction, joy



and contentment? The life of a Priest! Reflect on your present circumstances in life, what are your goals or interests for the future? Ask yourself does God have a place in my life? Central to the life of a Diocesan Priest is regular prayer. From this prayerful life emanates a particular relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Over time the need to express this relationship with God in an active way is realized through helping people less fortunate in society. Regular Eucharistic Celebrations nourish the apostolic prayer life of a young man who may be thinking of Priesthood. His ongoing relationship with people from all aspects of life will be significant in discerning his vocation. Through conversation, dialogue, discernment and prayer with specialists in the field he can clearly discover within himself the call of God in the beginnings of a Priestly vocation.

So when you are making your choice about the future why not think also of becoming a priest? It's not as mad an idea as you might think...you could one day become a priest...and that choice would make all the difference, not just to your life but to the lives of countless others.

For more information: www.priest.ie.

What is a Vocation?

It is not easy to put into words what a vocation is. We know the word 'vocation' comes from the Latin word 'vocare' which means to call. But practically what does this mean? Well at some level it involves a felt attraction to the vision and message of Jesus, and a desire to use one's energies for the kind of ministry that he was about. At a hunch this offers both meaning and a real satisfaction, deep and lasting joy.

The call to vocation in the church is a call to use your gifts and talents and abilities to build up the Kingdom of God, depending upon his divine help and inspiration. Vocation then is a generous and radical giving of oneself to the service of our brothers and sisters. The call to priesthood is the call to share your life in making Christ's presence real through the sacraments and especially through the Mass.



Prayer for Vocations

Dear God,

*You have called us all to be your followers
and to use our gifts wisely to build up your Kingdom.*

*We ask you to give courage to all those
who are being called to be a priest.
Help them to say yes to their call.
Inspire many more young people
to think about becoming a priest in your church.*

*Together we will make a better world
where all people feel respected, cared for, and loved.*

A world where no one feels forgotten.

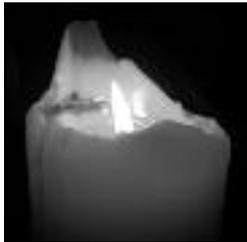
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dare to dream

A Prayer service on Vocation



Introduction



When you are thinking of career choices, what comes firstly to your minds? Money, job security, fun times? Our Baptismal call challenges us to look at our lives as a call from God to use our gifts and talents to better the human community and to play a real part in establishing God's reign on earth. Jesus' invitation 'Come, follow me!' is a call to transform the world and make it a better place. Let us reflect prayerfully on this call to 'come, follow me'.

Leader

Each of us will someday choose a career or job that we hope will bring us happiness. But, how do we choose what we will do and how do we know whether it will make us happy. Think for a moment of someone you know, someone you respect, someone you really admire. Who is that person and why do you respect and admire them? I'll bet they serve other people in some way, and use the talents God gave them to help others.

Would you ever consider using your talents to help others?

Music



Why not put together a Power Point Presentation for use during music

Loving God, you have created us with different talents and you have placed people in our world who need the specific gift that each of us can offer. Help us this week to think about our future as a way to answer your call to develop and use our gifts for the good of the community. Grant us the courage and wisdom to respond generously to your call.

Reader 1

We have many guides to help us think about the future. Some tell us that we should make a lot of money, others tell us that career advancement and power are all that matter. But there are other more courageous voices who see that our futures are intimately bound to God's presence in the world. These people encourage us to realise that our ability to solve problems, imagine new

futures, design or repair machines, care for and educate children, cure diseases, are ways that God calls us to continue to bring Christ's love to the world. As we think of our futures, let us listen to God's word and allow its message to enter our hearts.

Reader 2

This reading describes Samuel's; failure to recognise that God was calling him, until Eli told him it was the Lord. [1 Samuel 3: 1- 9]

Pause for reflection - quiet music and perhaps some slides

Leader

This reading is a reminder that as followers of Jesus, baptised in his name, God calls us to use our gifts for the service of our brothers and sisters. When we have a special talent, do we think of it as God calling us to a particular vocation in life? For Mother Teresa, it was the sight of an abandoned child that helped her discover her vocation. For the great monk and writer, Thomas Merton, it was his best friend and his teachers in college who helped him discover his vocation in life. Whatever our talents, God invites us to use them for more than making money, gaining security, or finding success. For we are called by God to heal our broken world.

Think for a moment of the late Mother Teresa who encourages us to give of ourselves until it hurt. Perhaps you might think of Sister Ita, a nun who was murdered in El Salvador, who helped her niece think about the future when she wrote: 'What I am saying is I hope you find what gives life a deep meaning for. Something worth living or maybe even dying for, something that energises you, entuses you and enables you to keep moving forward in faith'.

Music



Let us pray

Help me Lord to hear you
To listen with an open heart,
For the silent whispering sounds you send
Help me Lord to know that you are calling me,
And to answer that request
Help me Lord, to reach you
Know you more clearly
And believe in you more deeply
Help me Lord, to find that path
You laid out for me
And to take it.

Bless me with the courage to act,
To respond to the unseen and unexpected,
To that Spirit of God working in me.

Help me Lord, to see you,
Recognise your light
In the lives of people.

Kindle in my heart the will to serve you, by serving them,
To give generously not just what I have
But what I am.



Prepared by Rev Ken McCaffery.

Upcoming events:

From Vocations Sunday this Year (13 April 2008) to Vocations Sunday next year (3 May 2009) Ireland will celebrate a '**Year Of Vocation**'. This YOYV will be an opportunity to celebrate our calling in life as followers of Christ, as married people, as Priests, as Religious Brothers and Sisters. By virtue of our Baptism we are all 'called' by God to build up His Kingdom using our many gifts and Talents.

So why not organise events in your School to coincide with the YOYV. Organise a prayer service. Provide information on priesthood or religious life. Invite a speaker to your school to talk about his/her Vocation. Undertake projects to research priesthood and religious life. Hold an art competition in your school on the theme of vocation, etc. The list is endless.

To launch the YOYV in Dublin Diocese a series of events have been organized in the Pro Cathedral in Marlborough Street in Dublin. On Thursday the 10 of April Dr Andrew O Connell will speak at the 5.45pm Mass on the theme of "the Challenge to Live the call to Holiness today". On Friday 11 of April Ms. Marie Hogan, National President of St Joseph's Young Priest society will speak at the 5.45pm Mass on the Theme "How priesthood and religious life have graced my life". On Saturday 12 of April (eve of Vocations Sunday) Fr Eamonn P. Bourke, director of Vocations, will speak at the 6.30pm evening Mass on "the importance of priesthood today".

On Sunday evening at the 6.30pm Mass on 13 of April (Vocations Sunday) Dr, Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin will formally launch the Year Of Vocation. All are welcome to attend.

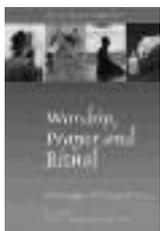
On Saturday the 19 April in Dun Laoghaire Church, the 6pm Mass will be a celebration of Diocesan Priesthood with choirs from the Dun Laoghaire area coming together to provide the music. All are welcome.



Religious Education as a Leaving Certificate Examination Subject

*'There is a tide in the affairs of men,
which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune:
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.'*

(Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*)



I had a conversation recently with some former students of mine who had called to our house to visit my son. All but one of them are to graduate this year and hopefully take up positions in various professions. Our conversation was wide-ranging but inevitably came around to religion and religious education because they would know of my interest in that area. Discussion revolved around the existence of God, belief in Jesus and the role of religion in our lives. I was impressed as always with their sincerity and honesty. They struggle with the notion of a personal relationship with God in our culture today and find it difficult to counter the prophets of atheism and materialism. Not for the first time did I wonder why we continue to turn out students from our second-level schools proficient in many disciplines but struggling when it comes to religious education or being able to articulate the truths of our faith adequately for the times that we live in...And if we don't engage students in this way while they are at school, I think it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, afterwards.

General Introduction to the RE Syllabus



The new syllabus for Junior Certificate Religious Education (JCRE) was introduced into second-level schools in Ireland by the Department of Education and Science (DES) in September 2000. Almost fifty schools opted to 'pilot' this programme. The first examination in JCRE took place in June 2003. The syllabus for Leaving Certificate Religious Education (LCRE) was introduced in September 2003, and students who had taken Religious Education (RE) for Junior Cert were invited to opt for the subject for Leaving Cert. Because of the Transition Year Option (TYO) and other considerations, a small number of schools began LCRE in September 2003 and sat the first Leaving Cert examination in RE in June 2005.

That same year saw the introduction by the DES of *A Framework Document for Senior Cycle Religious Education*, a new innovative programme designed for those students who opted not to take RE for the Leaving Cert.

Over a relatively short period, therefore, new programmes in RE were introduced for the entire second-level school experience. And more significantly perhaps, for the first time, RE was to be assessed and examined in line with other subjects on the school curriculum.

Reaction from those involved in Religious Education to these developments was generally positive:

'At this momentous time in the history of Christianity, it is with pleasure that I write on behalf of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference to encourage you in your great work of educating the young particularly in the area of Religious Education.'

(Seán Brady, Archbishop of Armagh, in a letter to accompany the **Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students**, Spring 2000)



'September 2003 saw the introduction of the LCRE Syllabus by the DES. For those concerned to promote a religious sensibility in young Irish adults it is hard to exaggerate the importance of this event. It both represents a formal recognition by society of the value of Religious Education in the academic lives of second-level students, and it also reflects the importance which Irish society attaches to promoting the personal growth of students, including their spiritual and moral development. Religious Education offers young people the opportunity to understand and interpret their experience in the light of a religious world-view. Furthermore, in and through an engagement with the RE Syllabus at Leaving Cert, students will learn a language that will enable them both to articulate their own faith experience and to dialogue with those of different faiths or non-theistic stances.'

(Eoin Cassidy and Patrick Devitt, Mater Dei Institute)



'Religious education as an "exam subject" in the Irish secondary school curriculum has great potential... I'm convinced that it is possible to teach any great religious tradition a) with academic rigor and critical appreciation, b) without indoctrination or confessional expectation, c) and yet in ways that enhance people's well-being in that they learn from it for their lives rather than merely about it for their heads... However, there is nothing inevitable about this achievement; so much depends on the teacher's intention and on the pedagogy s/he employs.'

(Thomas Groome)

Since 2000, the number of schools taking JCRE has grown exponentially and the number of schools opting for LCRE has also increased considerably.

The 'Faith Seeking Understanding Series'



Faith Seeking Understanding (St Anselm's motto: *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*) is the title of the Veritas series for students taking Religious Education as a Leaving Certificate examination subject.

The series editor, Mícheál de Barra, (the author of this article) was Head of RE in a large boys' secondary school for over twenty years and then served as Post-primary Diocesan Adviser in the Diocese of Cork & Ross before taking up a position with Veritas. Each of the texts has been written by experienced RE teachers and catechists, who have attempted throughout to distil the topics and concepts in the syllabus into digestible and engaging material for students.

Students taking LCRE must study Unit 1 and two sections from Unit 2. That is the core material. Two sections must be chosen from Unit 3, one for examination and the other for Coursework which constitutes 20% of the final examination.

Unit 1



The Search for Meaning and Values (Section A)
Paula Goggin and Colette McCarthy-Dineen

Unit 2



Christianity: Origins and Contemporary Expressions (Section B)

The series consists of four core texts:

Paula Goggin and Colette McCarthy-Dineen

World Religions (Section C)

Ellen Moiséelle

Moral Decision-making (Section D)

Fr Dónal O'Neill

and six optional texts, from which the students will choose two

Unit 3



Religion and Gender (Section E)

Aiveen Mullally

Issues of Justice and Peace (Section F)

Barbara Raftery PBVM

Worship, Prayer and Ritual (Section G)

Tom Gunning

The Bible: Literature and Sacred Text (Section H)

Catherine Sheehan SMG

Religion: The Irish Experience (Section I)

Tom Gunning

Religion and Science (Section J)

Joseph McCann & Fachtna McCarthy

The 'Into the Classroom' Series



'Into the Classroom' is a series of eleven texts (one introductory text and one for each of the Leaving Certificate syllabus sections). These texts were written by experts in the various fields and are intended as a background resource for teachers for the different sections of the syllabus. The series was jointly edited by Eoin G. Cassidy, Head of the Philosophy Department at Mater Dei Institute, and Patrick M. Devitt, Senior Lecturer in Religious Education at Mater Dei Institute. So, for example, a teacher who felt the need to update on Section D ***Moral Decision-***

Making will find a wealth of material in the ***Into the Classroom*** text on that section written by Professor Patrick Hannon of St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Teachers will probably dip in and out of this series to research a particular topic or section from the syllabus from time to time.



Irish Catholic Bishops' Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students

These Guidelines were prepared by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and are offered to those involved in educating Catholic students as a companion to the DES RE syllabus. Specifically, they relate to the teaching of the DES syllabus to Catholic students attending second-level schools. While they respect the academic aspects of learning offered to all students in general, regardless of faith affiliation, they supplement such academic aspects with considerations of faith formation for Catholic students in particular. They are offered to assist the partners in education who have the responsibility of guiding students to maturity of faith in Christianity according to Catholic teaching. They seek to contribute to a catechesis that will develop in students a critical Christian consciousness and response to the presence of the Reign of God.

So all the textbooks and teacher resources are available from Veritas (who incidentally are the only providers of any resources for LCRE at this time!). The syllabus and full backing are provided by the DES; and the Catholic Bishops have implemented Guidelines for catholic schools.

So, what are you waiting for?

Mícheál de Barra, February 25th 2008.



Senior Cycle Religion

Rites of Passage

Like many other world religions, Christians mark many important stages in life with religious ceremonies. Some of these are known as sacraments. The definition of a sacrament is, “an outward sign of inward grace”. The Roman Catholic Church has seven sacraments: Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation, Holy Orders, Marriage, and Anointing of the Sick; while the Protestant churches recognise only two of these as being ordained by Jesus Christ in the gospels: Baptism and Eucharist.

Baptism



Parents in most Christian churches bring their children to the church to be baptised within the first year after their birth. The sacrament of Baptism symbolises the washing away of sin and the entry of the child into the family of Christ. The baby is often dressed in a white robe representing purity and the priest or minister sprinkles water over the child’s forehead, baptising him or her in the name of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit. Sometimes the parents choose close relations or friends to be their child’s Godparents.

These are spiritual sponsors who will help the parents to bring their child up in the Christian faith. The parents and Godparents are asked to make promises on behalf of the child to believe in Jesus Christ, to reject evil and to grow in the faith of their church.

In the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches perfumed oil called chrism which has been blessed by the bishop is used to anoint the child as a symbol of his or her membership of the Christian church. Sometimes, a candle lit from the Paschal candle, is received from the priest by one of the parents on behalf of their child. This symbolises the passing on of the Christian faith. In the Orthodox church the ceremony of Baptism is similar to the Catholic ceremony except that, instead of merely sprinkling water on the baby’s head, the priest fully immerses the baby in the baptismal font three times.

In Protestant churches the baby is carried among the congregation who have the opportunity to greet this new member of the church and they promise to help his or her parents to bring the child up in the Christian faith. In Baptist churches there is very often a pool in which the adult believer wearing a white robe is fully immersed during their Baptism.

The child is usually given his or her Christian name or names during the ceremony of Baptism which may also be called a Christening.

First Confession and First Holy Communion.

These two rites of passage are only celebrated in the Roman Catholic Church. They usually take place when the child is six or seven years old and has had some teaching in the Catholic faith. In Protestant



churches this is usually done in the form of a general confession when the congregation pray together for forgiveness of their sins and the minister confirms the gospel truth that through Christ all sins are forgiven. In the Roman Catholic Church absolution (literally, the washing away of sins) is performed by a priest on an individual basis to members of his congregation who must confess their sins to him. This was traditionally done in a confessional, the wooden chambers which can still be seen around the walls of some Catholic churches and which were designed to protect the privacy of the person confessing their sins. Nowadays some Catholics prefer to sit opposite their priest and to confess to him face to face in an ordinary room.

The first time a child goes to confess his or her sins to a priest and receives forgiveness, is known as their First Confession. This is followed, in a matter of days or weeks, by their First Holy Communion. This is the first time a child is allowed to receive Holy Communion and is a very big occasion for Catholic children. Up to this they were considered too young to really understand the true meaning of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Most children get a new outfit for this special occasion and girls are traditionally dressed in white dresses and veils. Recently there have been moves to simplify what is worn at the First Holy Communion ceremonies due to the enormous amounts families were spending on outfits and accessories, especially for their daughters. After the First Holy Communion Mass families often celebrate by going to a hotel or restaurant for a meal with grandparents, relations and friends. The traditional gift to the child is rosary beads, prayer books and jewellery are also popular.

Confirmation.



In both the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches Confirmation takes place when the child is between 12 and 14 years old. It is at this stage that they take on full responsibility for their own faith, which up to now has been the responsibility of their parents and Godparents since their Baptism. Before Confirmation they receive instruction in the faith at school or from their minister. The ceremony of Confirmation is performed by the Bishop who anoints the heads of those he confirms with chrism. In the Anglican Church the young person cannot receive communion until he or she has been confirmed. Although special clothes are not necessarily worn for Confirmation, most young people get a new outfit for the occasion and there is often a family meal or party to mark their coming of age in the faith.

The Methodist and Calvinist (Presbyterian) churches do not have a rite of Confirmation, instead young people are received into full membership of the church at much the same age after they have been instructed in the faith by their minister, either individually or in small classes. They may then participate in the Eucharist as a full member of their church. In the Orthodox Church Confirmation is performed immediately after Baptism when the baby is anointed with chrism a second time and is also then given Holy Communion. The bread and wine are mixed together and fed to the baby on a spoon.

Marriage

Most Christian marriages are performed by a priest during a special church service. The bride usually dressed in white or cream and wearing a veil, is escorted down the aisle of the church by her father



and often followed by her bridesmaids, or attendants. The groom waits for her at the top of the church and he is accompanied by his best man (usually a brother or close friend) and one or more groomsmen. The bride's father passes her hand to the groom and they move up to stand in front of the priest or minister. The minister greets the couple and during the course of the service they are asked to make vows to love each other and to remain faithful to one another in the sight of God and all those gathered in the church. There are readings from the Bible, prayers for the future happiness of the couple and for their families, special music is used, and in some churches the Eucharist is celebrated. In the United Kingdom and in Ireland the civil part of the marriage is also performed in the church when the couple sign the official marriage register and it is witnessed by their attendants and by the priest or minister. In other countries, such as France, the couple go first to the town hall to have a civil marriage and then come to the church for the religious ceremony.

After the wedding there is usually a party or reception with a meal to which friends and relations of both families are invited and then dancing to celebrate the marriage. The young couple receive gifts of money and items for the house which help them to begin their new life together. Very often the couple go away for a holiday together after the wedding, this is known as the Honeymoon. Of course today many couples are choosing to live together before they get married and may even have one or more children before they decide to get married. Although this is against the teaching of all the Christian churches, it is very rare that a couple will be refused a church wedding because they have been living together beforehand.

Christian Marriage is intended to be a lifelong commitment, and today the importance of preparation for marriage is stressed by all churches, but the reality of 21st century society, is that in some cases, marriages break down. Because the Roman Catholic Church sees marriage as a sacrament which can only be given once, re-marriage is not an option and those who receive a state divorce can never be married again in a Catholic church. Most Protestant churches allow re-marriage upon due consideration of the circumstances, but no minister is obliged to re-marry a divorced person if she or he has a conscientious objection to doing so. Catholic marriages are occasionally "annulled" by the Vatican but this is done only in the most exceptional circumstances (such as if one of the people being married was not in their right mind at the time) and after rigorous examination of the facts. An annulment means that in the eyes of the church, the marriage never actually took place and the two people are therefore free to marry again.



Ordination and Holy Orders.



This is the name of the ceremony which is performed when a person becomes a priest or a minister. There is usually a long period of training involved when theology, pastoral care, biblical languages and often psychology are studied. This training usually takes place within a seminary or theological college attached to one of the universities. When the studies have been successfully completed, the priest or minister is ordained. In the Catholic Church this involves the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The ordination is performed by one or more bishops who lay their hands on the head of the person being ordained and pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to help him or her in their work. In Protestant Churches both men and women may be ordained but in the Catholic Church only men are allowed to be priests. Protestant clergy are also allowed to marry and have a family while Catholic priests are required to remain celibate.

Death and Burial.

When a Christian is very sick, either at home or in a hospital, he or she will be visited by a priest or minister who will offer to pray with or for them and may also celebrate the Eucharist. In the Roman Catholic Church there is a sacrament called the Anointing of the Sick, which is administered if it is feared that the person is in real danger of dying. In this sacrament the priest will anoint the sick person with chrism and will ask them to confess their sins and then pronounce forgiveness so that the person is ready to face death. If they are still able to eat, they may also receive the Eucharist. A Protestant minister may also be called to be with a member of his or her church who is about to die. The minister would pray with the dying person and read passages of scripture, such as the Psalms, to them.



After death the priest or minister will help the family to make the arrangements for the funeral. The body of the deceased is usually placed in a wooden coffin and dressed and made to look their best by the undertakers. In some areas it is the custom that the coffin is left open for a few hours either at home or in the hospital or funeral parlour so that friends and neighbours can come to say goodbye. The coffin is then closed and brought to the church on the evening before the funeral when there is a short service of readings and prayers and then people come to extend their sympathies to the family of the deceased. The next day there is a funeral service (or Mass in the Catholic Church) at which there are readings and prayers confirming the Christian belief in a life after death and seeking God's comfort on those who have been bereaved.



The coffin is then taken for burial or cremation and another short ceremony is performed by the priest or minister at the side of the grave or crematorium during which he or she reminds mourners that the bodies of all will return to dust and ashes some day and that only the soul lives on eternally through the grace of God.

Mourners generally wear black to funerals and often bring wreaths of flowers which are left on the grave. They may also send cards to the family to express their sympathy. Roman Catholics often send Mass Cards stating that they have paid a priest to say a special Mass for the soul of the departed. A headstone is erected by the family to mark the grave of their loved ones and on it is carved the full name of the deceased as well as the dates of his or her birth and death. Sometimes an epitaph, or short statement about the deceased, or a passage from Scripture is also inscribed on the headstone. In many cases husbands and wives are buried in the same grave to symbolise the continuity of their life together even after death.

If a body is cremated the family may choose to bury the ashes or to scatter them at some place which was special to the deceased person. They may even choose to keep the ashes in an urn in the house somewhere but this is more unusual. Some Christians visit the graves of their loved ones as a mark of respect or because they feel close to them there, but others prefer to remember that their bodies are only empty shells and that the soul of their loved one is now in Heaven with God forever.



Reflection for a Graduate

This reflection might be used as inspiration for 6th Year Graduation

I believe...

- That our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.
- That no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.
- That just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to doesn't mean that they don't love you with all they have.
- That true friendship continues to grow even over the longest distance, same goes for true love.
- That it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.
- That you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.
- That you can keep going long after you think you can't.
- That we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.
- That either you control your attitude or it controls you.
- That heroes are the people who do what has to be done, when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.
- That money is a lousy way of keeping score.
- That my best friend and I can do anything or nothing and still have the best time.
- That sometimes the people you expect to kick you when you are down will be the ones to help you get back up.
- That sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel.
- That maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.
- That it isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes you have to learn to forgive yourself.
- That no matter how bad your heart is broken the world doesn't stop for your grief.
- That just because two people argue it doesn't mean they don't love each other and just because they don't doesn't mean they do.
- That you shouldn't be so eager to find out a secret, it may change your life forever.
- That two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.
- That your life can be changed in a matter of hours by people who don't even know you.
- That even when you think you have no more to give, when a friend cries out to you, you will find the strength to help.
- That credentials on the wall do not make you a decent human being.
- That the people you care about in life are taken from you much too soon.
- That life is more precious than money ever will be.



Celebrating the End of Transition Year

A Prayer of Gathering

As we come together to celebrate and give thanks for the students and their work over this last year, we pause for a few moments with our thoughts to allow the spirit of God and the blessings of life to enter our hearts and minds...(Pause)



Leader Our help is in the name of the Lord

All Who made heaven and earth and gave it life.

Leader Spirit of the Living God,

All Fill us with appreciation and wonder.

Leader Protector of all that is good and sacred.

All Bless our celebrations this night.

A Time Spent Together

Leader Transition Year brings together students from across third year and often from outside this school. It is a year when people work closely together on various projects and activities and get to know each other well. New styles of learning are explored. Students learn to co-operate closely with each other and with teachers. Lest we forget the time spent together and the lessons learnt, we share in the following reflection....

Reflection

Our lives are marked forever by those we meet;
the friendships we make and the love we experience,
the reconciliations and the quarrels,
the works we have tried to do together
for each other and those less fortunate.
All this has given us something that will last.
Long after we have forgotten the marks of our assignments,
we'll remember the friendships, the times of growth,
the fun, the quarrels, the laughter, the jokes.
We'll remember how we helped each other grow as young men,
and young women in faith, in hope and in love.
May what we have done over the last year
be given to many others in our lives.

In the words of a Buddhist prayer we say;

May all living beings be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous. May no harm come to them; may no difficulty come to them; may no problem come to them; may they always meet with success.

May they also have the patience, courage, understanding and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems and failures in life. Amen.



Remembering and Blessing the Work of the Year

A reading from the book of Sirach.

God is aware of our works and takes delight in them.

Our ways are always under God's eye,
Nothing can be hidden from his sight.
All our works are as the sun to him,
Our alms-giving is like a signet ring to him,
He cherishes our acts of generosity like the pupil of his eye.
One day he will arise and bless us for our good works.

This is the Word of the Lord.

A Collage of Memories

"...and everything we're going through will be our memories. I'm going to make them worth remembering for years" (Memories. Beverly Craven)

Leader Together let us pray blessing over these young people, their memories and their work during the year.

The Blessing

Lord, you are the source of all creation,
You watch over it and bless it with your love.
We ask you to bless, the work of our hands,
The work presented here tonight,
And the work and effort that has made up this past school year.
Help us to grow in wisdom from this work.
We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

A Time For Thanksgiving

Reflection

I am thankful, Lord, for the support of a friend's hand,

For the hug of sympathy and friendly warmth

For the embrace of love and care.

I am thankful for the people whose live touch mine with friendship.

I recall, Lord, the love that has helped me to grow from childhood to this day:

The care of parents and friends that meant security and love

The presence of the friend who cheered me when I was sad

The words of encouragement when I was afraid

The offer of sympathy when I was unhappy.

I thank you, Lord, for this gift,

You have been there for me through the goodness of others.

And because I know that time is always time

And place is always and only place

And what is actual is actual only for one time

And only for one place, I rejoice that things are as they are...

A Prayer of Gratitude

Leader As in every experience, Transition Year has it highs and lows.

We may feel it has been useful or that we should have got more out of it.

Whatever our experience has been, lessons have been learned and effort has gone into it. For this we now give thanks.

R1. We are grateful for the friendships made and the time we spent together. We have grown as individuals and we give thanks for all those who have supported this growth.

R2. We are grateful for being able to realize our gifts, for being able to use all our talents in a meaningful way. This has filled the lives with purpose and joy.

R3. We are grateful for all those that supported us in our lives so far. For everyone that helped us this year. From them we have learned the meaning of respect and understanding.

R4. We are grateful for the journey shared. The highs and lows that led us to grow in wisdom. From this, we have gained hope. Lord we have gained hope. Lord we are grateful, bless this gratitude.

Together we say

**God of life, show me the way to repay the blessings you have given me.
Help me to give generously of what I have.
Help me to do so with gratitude in my heart,
And may my giving always bless those who receive it.
Amen.**

A Prayer For Each Other

Leader We look to the future and pray for everyone here and in particular for the students who have just completed Transition Year.

Response **Lord in your faithfulness, hear our prayer.**

1. We pray for our families, teachers and friends who supported us, especially when we were struggling or just getting by. **Response.**
2. We pray for all those who are anxious about what lies ahead. (Give us peace of mind and of heart. **Response.**
3. We pray for anyone that we have hurt or let down this year. **Response.**
4. We pray that we may continually recognise all our gifts and talents as we prepare for the new challenges ahead. May we always give thanks to you and trust that you will be guiding us. **Response.**
5. We pray now in silence.....

Leader Lord, we give you thanks for your faithfulness. Help us to never stop bringing our concerns to you. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite

(We call on the God of Life to bless these young people as they leave Transition Year.)

Leader May God bless them with the wisdom to seek the truth and learn from the experience of others.

All **Amen.**

Leader May God bless them with the love to share their gifts and talents with others.

All **Amen.**

Leader May God bless them with the courage to act for justice.

All **Amen.**

Leader In the name of God the Father, who created all people to enjoy the fullness of love;
In the name of Jesus the Son, who has shown Christians the way to the fullness of life;
And in the name of the Holy Spirit who encourages all.
Go in peace and joy.

All **Thanks be to God.**



Liturgy for a retiring teacher

This liturgy can be used to honour a retiring teacher. It can be used as part of a Eucharistic Celebration or can be adapted to stand-alone. The participants and readers should be drawn from a wide cross-section of the school community and include colleagues from the staff, students, parents, management, the teacher's own family and the wider community.



Gathering ritual

- Presider: We gather together to honour a lifetime of service and dedication to the teaching vocation. We rejoice and give thanks for the great work that has been done by N., we pray that he/she will enjoy a long and happy retirement.
- Management representative We honour N's. commitment to the Catholic ethos of this school. By his/her word and example he/she has given to the students a pride in belonging and a strong sense of the values that this school seeks to promote.
(present a symbol of the school's ethos)
- Teaching Colleague We honour N's. dedication to the teaching vocation. By his/her hard work he/she has always striven to achieve the best for his/her students.
(Present symbol of teaching or of a particular subject)
- Student We honour N's involvement in extra-curricular activities. By his/her sharing of talents we have all grown as people.
(Present symbol of activities in which teacher was involved)
- Parent We honour N's love for his/her students. By his/her dedication, to the welfare of our children he/she has helped our families.
(Present symbol of family/love)
- Community We honour N's passion for this community. By his/her concern representative he/she has enriched our community.
(Present symbol of local community).
- Presider N, in your career you have touched the lives of countless people. We gather in prayer to give thanks for all that you have achieved and to pray God's blessing on you and your family as you begin your retirement.

Opening prayer

God Almighty, giver of all good gifts, we praise you for your goodness. We ask you to bless our teachers who have imparted to our children the wisdom and wonder of your world. Grant a long and happy retirement to N. that he/she may continue to grow in your grace and love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

First reading Ecclesiastes 12:9-13

Responsorial psalm Psalm 27
Response: The Lord is my light and salvation.

Second reading Philippians 1:3-11

Gospel Luke 15:3-7



Prayers of intercession

Presider Dear Lord, we celebrate your care, your goodness and your love. We look ahead into all the unknowns and ask you to grant us hearts that are open to your spirit and truth as we place our needs before you.

1. For the Church that has been enriched by the teaching vocation of N., that it may always be a sign of God's love and an instrument of his peace.
Lord hear us.
2. For all whose lives have been touched by the teaching of N., that they may grow in knowledge and awareness of being God's beloved children.
Lord hear us.
3. For our school community, that we may be united in faith and love striving to help build up God's kingdom in our midst.
Lord hear us.
4. For N. that God may grant him/her a long retirement filled with grace and blessings surrounded by love and care.
Lord hear us.
5. For all who are denied an education, that God's people may work to promote justice and opportunities for all.
Lord hear us.
6. For those who have died, that as they lived their Christian vocation in this life, they may live for eternity in the presence of the God they tried to serve.
Lord hear us.

Presider Lord our God, we praise and celebrate your love for us as shown in this gifted and caring teacher. Let his/her example be a model for us all. Grant us the grace to go forth and learn – the greatest gift we can give our teachers in return. We ask all our prayers through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer over the gifts

Loving God

Accept the gifts we offer to you in appreciation of all you give and teach us. Make them holy with your blessing that they may become the food for eternal life and may we learn the lessons of your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Post-communion reflection

Why God Created Teachers

When God created teachers,
He gave us special friends
To help us understand His world
And truly comprehend
The beauty and the wonder
Of everything we see,
And become a better person
With each discovery.
When God created teachers,
He gave us special guides
To show us ways in which to grow
So we can all decide
How to live and how to do
What's right instead of wrong,
To lead us so that we can lead.
And learn how to be strong.
Why God's wisdom and His grace,
Was to help us learn to make our world
A better, wiser place.
Amen.

Concluding prayer

Gracious God, keep us always mindful of your compassion and love and give us the gifts we need to spread your message of love among those we meet. Open our hearts to give us courage that we may share the adventures that the future has to offer. Grant to N. a happy and fulfilled retirement. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

(Invite the assembly to extend their hands in blessing over the retiree).

Send your blessing on this wonderful teacher. Reward him/her for the sacred work of education. Hold him/her in your heart. Refresh them when they tire, comfort them when they despair and magnify their moments of joy and peace. Give new life and hope to all who have learned of your love through their teaching. This blessing we now call down in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.



The Importance of Pastoral Care in Post-Primary Schools

We now live in an affluent Ireland thanks to the phenomenon of the 'Celtic Tiger'. While we can be very pleased with our present economic prosperity, it is also clear that many of the values that once defined us so proudly as a nation are now becoming increasingly non-Christian. In this context it is appropriate to remind ourselves of the words of Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 Dec 1975) "that the split between the Gospel and culture is without doubt the drama of our time". I believe that we are now struggling to re-establish our Christian identity in a different world and culture. The manner in which young people experience reality is culture-bound and therefore, I believe it is critical to understand the culture of our time if we are to be effective religious educators.



In recent years much attention has been given to the provision of pastoral care for post-primary schools. Few, if any, will deny the urgency and the importance of this service. Unfortunately for many teenagers the only contact they have with their faith is that which the school provides. I believe that young people need to feel they belong to a faith-sharing community where Christianity is not just talked about but rather witnessed and lived in the classroom, corridor and in recreational areas. The Catholic school should be experienced as a Christian community where every pupil is valued equally and given a genuine sense of belonging. The demands of the school curriculum and the competitiveness generated by the present examination system allow little time to focus on the spiritual needs of the young. However, the achievement of our schools in nurturing the faith amongst Ireland's young people through the generosity and care of generations of great teachers should never be underestimated.

Education is a life-long process and one of the principal roles of the school is to initiate pupils into an experience of life-long and self-directed learning both academically and spiritually. Catholic education is a continual process of nurturing the faith-development of pupils and getting to know Jesus Christ and his message. This ministry can be traced to the command of Jesus to his apostles to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations"(Matt 28:19). The Church has always been involved in religious education and one of the challenges we face today is that other important agents of education such as the home and the parish, have tended to let the school carry overall responsibility. Nonetheless, the Vatican II document on education *Gravissimum Educationis*, (28 Oct 1965) states that "among the various organs of education the school is of outstanding importance".

The current widespread recognition of the vital contribution that chaplains make in second level schools is firmly supported by law. The 1998 Education Act obliges every school in this state to "promote the moral, social, spiritual and personal development of students". The proper implementation of this stipulation necessarily implies the provision of funding for suitably qualified full-time chaplains in every second level school. All who value the holistic development of students must rejoice in this acknowledgement. While some deficiencies still exist there is, I believe, good reason to hope that full-time chaplains will be the norm in all post-primary schools sooner rather than later.

The Department of Education remunerates chaplains in Community schools/colleges. However, full time chaplains employed in Voluntary schools are remunerated from their own resources. The bishops and the government correctly state that the youth are the future of our Church and country. Why then, are voluntary schools so blatantly discriminated against on this most influential area of school life? There can be no doubting the necessity for school chaplains in all second level schools. Their role and contribution are of such long-term value that the Department should assume full responsibility for the remuneration of chaplains in all post-primary schools. Church and State would be well advised and I believe well rewarded, to ensure that this need is both promptly and adequately met. The dividend to be expected from providing this vital service is almost incalculable in terms of students, schools and families and its concomitant effect on society at large.



The chaplain in a post-primary school receives a mandate that is both educational and ecclesiastical. He/she is also given a mission by the Christian community to accompany and support young people so that they may *“have life and live it to the full”* (John 10:10).



Though the chaplain’s main responsibility is being available to all pupils as a spiritual guide and faith friend, they are also entrusted with the pastoral care of the teaching and ancillary staff. In carrying out their role in the school the chaplain should be always mindful of the vocational and professional orientation of this role with a view to promoting the faith life of the students and staff. In working closely with and in supporting the catechists and other teaching staff, the chaplain should seek to integrate the school curriculum into the wider concerns of Catholic education, as well creating links with the local parishes and clergy. Pope John XXIII said, “we are not here on earth to guard a museum, but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life”. The chaplain should be aiming by example and diligence to inspire and cultivate the faith of each pupil insofar as time and personal contact allows.

In his book *The Chaplain: A faith presence in the school community*, Fr Luke Monahan describes the role of the chaplain as: “a faith presence, committed to the values of Christ, and on behalf of the church and school communities accompanies each person on the journey through life”. I believe that ‘presence’ is at the heart of chaplaincy and is the basis for forming a series of relationships, which ensures that the chaplain can be a visible sign of God’s presence in the school. The chaplain, while being a friend and confidant to students is also a member of staff and must uphold whatever



policies and procedures the school has in place. A school chaplain, by virtue of their role, may be the recipient of sensitive information. While confidentiality is assured, there are occasions when a chaplain has an ethical and moral responsibility to report certain matters to the principal. Any external personnel or professional body that needs to be involved are to be informed immediately.

Central to the role of chaplaincy is the ability to make friends easily. As a “*spiritual welfare officer*” the chaplain is a friend to all students and teachers. Consequently some of the most productive ministering takes place on the corridor, between classes, at break times and in the staff-room. The Church’s year provides ample opportunity for the chaplain to get involved in prayer services with the help of the R E department and to experiment with different kinds of prayer services for students and staff. The chaplain must be resourceful. He/she must keep abreast with new ideas and continually search for innovative ways of communicating the Christian message. Working in a post-primary school a chaplain is really in ‘mission territory’ and many of us work from the premise that you catechise those that are still practising and evangelise those that have ceased. Regardless of how professional and effective a chaplain is he/she may be regarded with indifference and/or resentment by some. It is the chaplain’s role to nurture a faith that is loving and giving, overcoming prejudice and ignorance and striving after truth, as well as helping them to discover the beauty of God.

In the course of any school year one encounters among students and staff feelings of alienation, isolation, despair, sorrow and loss. The greatest and most challenging part of the ministry of chaplaincy is in responding to these feelings and emotions. From my own experience, I have become increasingly aware of the need to help people cope with their feelings in order to develop a sense of self-worth and self-confidence. As a chaplain I can be involved in the legitimate yearnings and aspirations of young people and guide them towards tapping into their own resources. The school chaplain needs to be aware that they are not self-sufficient. A chaplain is seen, as someone who is always in a supporting role and it may not readily occur to others that he/she also needs support. This support is primarily found from staff colleagues, in chaplaincy cluster meetings and in information/reflection days organised by the diocese.



More and more lay people are being appointed as school chaplains and I know that my own ministry would be fruitless if I did not have a personal commitment to my own faith and belief in Jesus Christ. To be otherwise is to play the part of the Pharisee to perfection. Experience has taught me that young people have an innate sense of who is genuine and are the first to recognise the shallowness and insincerity of the ‘false prophet’. Prayer and the practice of my faith have always been and continue to be anchors in my own life. I am also well aware that while being the visible ‘*God person*’ in the school, my presence will have little significance unless the message of Jesus Christ is central to who I am and the ministry I have. I believe that the chaplain should be a spiritual person who lives the values of Christ and in doing so leads others by example.

I have found that despite the overall teenage trend of apathy and lack of interest in the spiritual there is nonetheless, a continual search for a sense of God in their lives. Ironically this lack of interest is fertile ground for evangelisation. Even though faith can sometimes be seen to wane there are many opportunities for the chaplain to provide healing and strength and to assure all that

God does love them. If Christianity is to be ‘good news’ for students it has to be experienced in good relationships and good communication between teachers and students and between students themselves. While no individual can or should be expected to meet all the demands involved in handing on the faith to the next generation, the school chaplain is in a privileged position and plays a significant part in that process.

School chaplaincy offers a unique entry point into the lives of young people and their families. The work of the chaplain also takes place outside school hours, outside the school building and within the larger parish community. The school, ‘*the chaplain’s parish*’ presents a challenging and rewarding work environment. Though the work is demanding and sometimes thankless, it is very fulfilling to sow the seeds of faith in the hearts of students that will hopefully last a lifetime. Pope John Paul II offered support and “encouragement to the priests, religious and lay people who are devoting themselves to sustaining the faith of school pupils” (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 16 Oct 1979).

However, despite all the efforts of parents, teachers and chaplains it is evident that not all our young people will choose to remain active members of the Church. Nonetheless, those of us who have responsibility in this regard should help them find true meaning in their lives. It is my strongly held conviction that the present cultural and moral environment is not just a challenge, but rather an occasion, to re-awaken the deeper things of the spirit in young people. This is a challenge and an opportunity that should be eagerly grasped.

Eddie O Carroll, BA. MA.
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Jobstown Community College, Jobstown, Tallaght.

Our Prayer Garden

A 'prayer garden' lives at J.C.C. for you and me, for all to see.
Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall, always there, we hear it's call.
Come in, sit down, no matter if with a smile or a frown.
Breathe deeply, chill and see, that what surrounds you is nothing but beauty.

Here we remember our loved Ones who have died, the sick, the well and those who have cried.
A holy place this our Prayer Garden be, respect it well, alone or in company.
Water flows, fresh and clear, listen now, carefully, a voice is near.
I am the place where memories run free, memories of people like you and me.

So remember well as you sit and pray, today, tomorrow or maybe someday.
Our Prayer Garden is special, it's plants show this well.
That without you, your care and respect, sure it will never look swell!
Allow me to grow, flower and be nourished, treat me with respect so that I may flourish.

A Reflection

Welcome to our Prayer Garden

As you enter you will notice FOUR big trees. These remind us of who we are. The importance of caring and nourishing our physical, spiritual, emotional and academic parts of us.

They also remind us of the FOUR Provinces of Ireland. Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connaught. That we are an Island Nation sharing our lives with a wide variety of people. The FOUR trees also remind us of the FOUR corners of the World. Our place, Our Planet....
Continually in a state of flux.... we have a right to be here... a World.
A Garden awaiting our own unique contribution.

To the back of our Garden are two statues of a boy and a girl. Reminding us that we are a place of learning for all, forming our young and those who choose to become a member of our College Community in whatever course they are a part of. They remind us too, to become the best person we can be.

On our back wall is written:
'LOVE ONE ANOTHER'

This is our challenge each day.
The wooden and steel chimes draw our senses.
Challenging us to use our ears to really listen.
Our various plants attracting our sense of smell and sight.

The 'heart' of our Prayer Garden lies in our ROCKERY. A breathing, living mound of earth, filled with rocks and plants, angels, shells and sculpture. Telling us too, that life has its tough times (rocks) amidst our plants (beauty) in our Communities. Our plants are there in memory of those who have died, our sick, our worries, or just to say thanks for a special intention that has happened in our lives.

(You too are welcome to donate a plant for whatever your intention may be).

Our clock reminds us that each of us are only passing through. That some day, it will be our turn to leave and to move on. We are not here forever. Challenging us on how we have spent our time while here in J.C.C.

Our fountain reminds us of the beauty of our lives.
How precious it is and how it is giving life to others.

Our seats invite us to sit and be. To listen to nature and to what our God and hearts are saying to us. To take time to chat and to listen to each other with respect, knowing we are loved by God and surrounded with the beauty of nature and each other.

With grateful thanks to Mr. Patrick Doyle, College Chaplain

