

# R.E. News

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## Welcome to the second edition of the R.E. Newsletter for this academic year.

We would like to wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year.

There are several initiatives taking place during the coming term which we hope you will support in your school community.

We urge you all to actively promote "Catholic Schools Week", both in your school and in your parish. It commences on 26 January, 2009 and ends on 1 February, 2009. Information is being sent to all schools, to arrive in the New Year.

### DECEMBER 2008

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Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has

designated 2009 as a "Year of Evangelisation". The term 'evangelisation' has been repeatedly highlighted by the Church since Vatican II. Through baptism and confirmation every Christian is initiated into the Church and into the mission of the Church. All are sent, all are missionaries.

The Office of Evangelisation, recently set up in the Archdiocese, plans to actively promote the vision and theology of evangelisation through mission across all parishes and agencies.

This edition of the R.E. News has a variety of articles to offer to our readers. Grateful thanks to all who contributed to the Newsletter.

*Mary FitzGerald*  
Post-Primary  
Diocesan Adviser

*Brigid Gilligan*  
Post-Primary  
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# Ecumenical Cross Liturgy

## A Prayer Service for the Week of Christian Unity

The following service originally took place in Tallaght during Christian Unity Week last year involving faith leaders and participants from several primary and post-primary schools in the area.

The service may be adapted for use in your school.

### Opening Song:

*(A procession moves from the back of the Church involving representatives from the Schools and Faith Communities present)*

### Opening Prayer

As we gather in your name, we pray through the power of your cross and resurrection, that you continue to bless us, your people in the love of your Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

### Read by Post-Primary School Student

Why are we gathered here today? 2008 marks the 10th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Week. This week of prayer was first marked by Father Paul Wattson, an Episcopalian Franciscan priest in the U.S.A. Today marks our sixth anniversary as young people, as people of faith to gather ecumenically. *(Student places his name on the Ecumenical Cross)*

### Read by Chaplain

Today our Celebration reflects our theme; 'PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.' Our symbol is the Cross! A symbol at times, finding ourselves hardly looking at twice nowadays! A symbol that has been adopted as a 'fashion statement' more so than a 'statement of faith.' Today we will be invited to put in vogue a new meaning, the true meaning of our Cross. Today, we are invited to place ourselves on this very cross by way of placing our names and to know that whatever our situation we too can receive HOPE just as Christ did by offering us his resurrection.

*(Chaplain places his/ her name on the Ecumenical Cross).*

### Read by a Primary School Student

Why this invitation? As Christians we each live a life that is full of human challenges. Life gives us our Cross to carry. Just as Jesus carried His cross, ultimately ending in his humiliating crucifixion. This though, was not the end. As Christians, as we gradually place our names on this our Ecumenical Cross, we are reminded that no matter what cross we have to carry in life, we are not alone, we should not be alone! *(This student now places his/her name on the Ecumenical Cross)*

## **Read by Chaplain**

Our Cross lacks a figure, the figure of Christ. Today, we are that figure, in our sufferings, in our struggles, in our humanity, in our faith journey, in our worries and in our fears.

Like Christ we too can come off the cross. We are offered HOPE shown to us in Christ's Resurrection. Our HOPE which is in Christ's RESURRECTION. We now gather to 'PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.'

*(Chaplain places his/her name on the Ecumenical Cross)*

## **Read by Post-Primary School Student.**

Our presence here today is a wonderful sign of HOPE. Our willingness to integrate in prayer and Christian action. So now, let us begin.....

*(Student places his/her name on the Ecumenical Cross)*

## **Everyone now prays together.**

Most High and Glorious God.

Enlighten the darkness of our hearts.

Give us a true FAITH, a certain HOPE and a perfect LOVE.

Give us a sense of the divine and a knowledge of yourself.

So that we may do everything in fulfillment of your holy will,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **The Blessing of the Ecumenical Cross (By Faith Leaders)**

God the Father of Creation, Source of life and energy, your creative love so shapes us that we share your liberty. Teach us to use our freedom wisely. Jesus Christ our Lord and Brother, in your cross we see the way to be servants for each other, caring, suffering every day. Teach us patience and obedience, never from your path to stray. Holy Spirit, love that binds us to the Father and the Son, giver of the joy that fills us, yours the peace that makes us one, teach our hearts to be more open so to pray,

"God's Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." Father, Son and Holy Spirit + bless this our "Ecumenical Cross". Inspire it to unite us in our relationships with each other and as we place our names enable us to draw closer to you as we continue on our Christian Journey. Amen.

*(Representatives of the Faith Communities present now place their names on the Ecumenical Cross)*

## **Music Presentation**

*(A number of those present are now invited to place their name on the Ecumenical Cross)*

## **A Reflection read by a Post-Primary School Student.**

Prayer is a two way street! Talking and Listening go hand in hand. Like any relationship, it deserves time. Prayer is a conversation, a relationship based on honesty and trust. Prayer is that

'springboard' into the depths of life itself. Prayer is not easy, but not impossible either. Nothing is impossible to God!

*(Student now places his/her name on the Ecumenical Cross)*

### **A Reflection by a Chaplain**

Trinity in Unity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, grant us the grace to pray without ceasing for the Unity of your Church. May we reflect in your Church the Unity in diversity that is yours. Amen.

*(Chaplain places his/her name on the Ecumenical Cross)*

**Scripture Reading** - Read by two Post-Primary School Students.

### **Student One**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew.

**Response:** Glory to you, O Lord.

### **Student One**

When you pray, do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that their gods will hear them because their prayers are long! Do not be like them. Your Father already knows what you need before you ask him. This is how you should pray:

### **Student Two**

Our Father in heaven:  
May your Name be honoured;  
May your Kingdom come;  
May your Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us today the food we need.  
Forgive us the wrongs we have done,  
As we forgive the wrongs others have done to us.  
Do not bring us to hard testing,  
But keep us safe from the Evil One.

### **Student One**

If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done. This is the Good News of the Lord.

**Response:** Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

*(Both Students now place their names on the Ecumenical Cross)*

## Homily

### Music Presentation

*(Some members of the congregation are now invited to place their names on the Ecumenical Cross)*

### Prayers of the Faithful

*(As the prayers are read, the readers then place their names on the Ecumenical Cross)*

Inspired by our symbol, the Cross of Christ, we now take time to pray, just as Jesus prayed to the Father. Knowing that we are not alone, as the 'Ecumenical Cross' shows us, knowing that we gather here today as Christians of HOPE struggling to act and speak in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. So we take on this challenge as we now pray...

### Student from Primary School

It's easy to think that we have all the answers, that our way is the best way, that our actions need no explanation! Building Community and Building Unity calls us to something better. Being a United Community - 'Being at Peace' - makes us a sign of HOPE! Father, open our hearts to your vision of peace, where our jealousies vanish because we are whole, and our pride falls away because we are healed. Open our hearts, God, to your vision of peace, and inspire our work as we make it real In Jesus' Name.

**Response:** We take up the challenge to pray without ceasing.

### Chaplain of Post-Primary School

St. Paul said to the Thessalonians 'And we urge you, beloved, to warn the idlers, encourage the faint - hearted.' The readiness to turn around and go in a new direction is a main theme within the Bible. The call to change is central. Christians of all traditions need to be brave enough to say NO to the causes of division and encourage the means of reconciliation. Deep desiring God, in the secret of our hearts you teach us wisdom. Teach us to encourage each other along the road of Unity. Show us the changes needed for reconciliation in Jesus' Name.

**Response:** We take up the challenge to pray without ceasing.

### Student from Post-Primary School

Jesus Christ, Saviour of the World, who was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God, help us to know our own weakness as well as those of others, that together with them we might experience your risen power in Jesus' Name.

**Response:** We take up the challenge to pray without ceasing.

### **Teacher from Post-Primary School**

I am lazy sometimes, God. Sitting comfortably here, it's easy to ignore the suffering of others, easy to forget the challenge to see your image in a friend or a stranger, easy to expect others to work for justice. I am lazy sometimes, God, and that diminishes me. Make me uncomfortable, make me alert, make me responsive. Above all, make me love, in your name in Jesus' Name.



**Response:** We take up the challenge to pray without ceasing.

### **Student from Post-Primary School**

Sometimes we are like the wanderers in the wilderness, questioning rather than trusting, especially, if at this time on our pilgrimage, we are going through a painful experience. Father, make me aware of your presence and be attentive to you. Give me an understanding of my needs, and a spirit to endure in Jesus' Name.

**Response:** We take up the challenge to pray without ceasing.

### **The OUR FATHER is now introduced by the President.**

Our Father...

### **Prayer and Final Blessing of Dismissal** (Leaders of Faith Communities)

The Lord bless us and keep us,  
The Lord make his face to shine upon us  
And be gracious unto us,  
The Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace.  
Go now in the Name of Christ, seek peace and pursue it,  
hold fast to what is good.  
Go now as Sisters and Brothers, pray with each other, work together.  
Let God deliver you from all your fears.  
Go now, the World is waiting, go, and walk with God.

### **Recessional Song.**

**Thanks to Patrick Doyle, Chaplain of Jobstown Community School, Tallaght for providing this article for the R.E. News.**

# A Celebration for the New Year



This prayer service is useful for the start of the New Year; it provides a prayer and a symbol for each month to the close of the academic year. Sections of it could also be used at a monthly assembly or as a class prayer.

**LEADER:** We assemble at the beginning of this New Year to dedicate the time ahead to God's care and protection. May all that we begin be done in faith, may all that we undertake be done in hope and may all that we complete be done in love. As we journey through this year it is our prayer that Jesus will accompany us along the way, that we will always be aware of his presence and that we will follow his example of love.

**Song:** Evermore I'll Sing Your Praise. Liam Lawton

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

**READING:** Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

**JANUARY** God of New Beginnings, bless us in the month of January - it is the time of new beginnings, the time of resolution, the time of hope. We place our hopes and dreams in the care of our loving God that we may become better people when our hopes and dreams come true.  
*(Symbol of a SEED is placed)*

**CANDLEBEARER** Loving God, watch over and protect the light of hope in our lives.

**RESPONSE** All times and seasons belong to God.  
To God be glory and praise for evermore.



## **FEBRUARY**

God of new life, we bless you in the month of February - it is the time of spring, the time of growth, the time of life. We place our lives in the care of our loving God that we may grow in strength and maturity.

*(Symbol of a FLOWER is placed)*

CANDLEBEARER  
RESPONSE

Loving God, watch over and protect the light of growth in our lives.

All times and seasons belong to God,  
To God be glory and praise for evermore.

## **MARCH**

God of faith, we bless you in the month of March - it is the time of St Patrick, the time of St Joseph, the time when God became a human in the womb of Mary. We place our faith in the care of our loving God that we may have a source of strength in our time of need.

*(Symbol of a BIBLE is placed)*

CANDLEBEARER  
RESPONSE

Loving God, watch over and protect the light of faith in our lives.

All times and seasons belong to God.  
To God be glory and praise for evermore.

## **APRIL**

God of the resurrection, we bless you in the month of April it is the time of Easter, the time of resurrection, the time of eternal life. We place our eternal souls in the care of our loving God that we may live lives worthy of the promises made to us.

*(Symbol or an EVERGREEN is placed)*

CANDLEBEARER:  
RESPONSE

Loving God, watch over and protect the light of eternal life in our lives.

All times and seasons belong to God.  
To God be glory and praise for evermore.

## **MAY**

God of work, we bless you in the month of May - it is the time of study, the time of preparation, the time of perseverance. We place our work and study in the care of our loving God that we may grow in knowledge.

*(Symbol of a BOOK is placed).*

CANDLEBEARER  
RESPONSE

Loving God, watch over and protect the light of learning in our lives.

All times and seasons belong to God.  
To God be glory and praise for evermore.



# Ceiliúradh na hAthbhliana

*Coinneal agus siombail le haghaidh gach mí sa bhliain*

**Cinnire:** Táimid bailithe le chéile anseo i dtús na bliana.....  
chun iarraidh ar Dhia a bheannacht a chur orainn agus ar obair na bliana atá romhainn amach.

## Paidir

**A Dhia, neartaigh ár gcreideamh, ár ndóchas agus ár ngrá ionas go mbeidh ar ár gcumas tosú go díograiseach, leanúint ar aghaidh go dóchasach agus grá agus cineáltas a chleachtadh i rith na bliana.**

**Cinnire:** Deir an Bíobla linn go bhfuil am/tráth ann don uile ghnó faoin spéir:  
(Cóheilít 3: 1-7)

“tráth breithe, tráth báis,  
tráth curtha síl, tráth bainte fómhair,...  
tráth leagtha, tráth tógála,  
tráth goil, tráth gáire,  
tráth caointe, tráth rince,...  
tráth tosta, tráth cainte.”

## Coisreacan na Bliana

**Eanáir:** Seo an mhí is túisce sa bhliain, bíonn deis againn tosú arís.  
Ceiliúraimid Aontacht na gCríostaithe i rith na míosa seo.

*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo **dea-rúin na bliana úire**, siombail den mhí seo.  
Iarraim ar Dhia aire a thabhairt dúinn i rith na bliana seo.

**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Feabhra:** Seo tréimhse an earraigh, tréimhse breithe agus fáis.  
Ceiliúraimid Lá Fhéile Bríde i dtús na míosa seo agus Lá Fhéile Vailintín i lár na míosa.

*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo **Cros Bhríde** agus pictiúr **d’uan óg**, siombailí den mhí seo.  
A Dhia, cabhraigh linn fás agus forbairt i rith na bliana seo.

**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Márta:** Seo tréimhse an Charghais. Ceiliúraimid Lá Fhéile Pádraig,  
Patrún na hÉireann a mhúin an creideamh Críostaí dúinn.

*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Is **Cros Cheilteach** í seo, comhcheangal idir an reiligiún  
Ceilteach agus an Chríostaíocht.  
A Dhia, neartaigh ár gcreideamh.  
**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Aibreán:** Tréimhse na Cásca ina gceiliúramid Aiséirí Chríost ó na mairbh.  
*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo **Coinneal na Cásca**, siombail d'Íosa, Solas An Domhain.  
A Íosa, bhuaigh tú ar an mbás. Tabhair dóchas agus misneach  
dúinn nuair a bhíonn deacrachtaí le sárú againn.  
**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Bealtaine:** Mí na Maighdine Muire, Pátrún na Scoile,  
Ceiliúramid Lá Fhéile Éamainn Rís.  
Bíonn Oíche na nDuaiseanna againn ag deireadh na míosa.  
*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo **trófaí**, siombail den oíche sin.  
A Naomh Mhuire, Pátrún na scoile, cabhraigh linn ár  
ndícheall a dhéanamh i gcónaí.  
**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Meitheamh:** Seo tréimhse na scrúduithe, scrúduithe tí agus scrúduithe stáit.  
*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo pictiúr de **cholm**, siombail den Spiorad Naomh a thugann  
eolas agus tuiscint dúinn. Tar anuas, a Spioraid Naoimh, is líon  
ár gcroí le d'ghrásta caomh.  
**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Iúil:** Saoire an tSamhraidh  
*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo .....siombailí de spórt agus caitheamh aimsire.  
A Dhia, tabhair samhradh breá, grianmhar dúinn.  
**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Lúnasa:** Ullmhúchán le haghaidh na scoilbhliana úire

*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo **leabharliosta** agus **na sonraí i dtaobh an éide scoile.**

A Dhia, beannaigh ár dtuismitheoirí a dhéanann an oiread sin  
ar ár son.

**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Meán Fómhair:** Tús na scoilbhliana

*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo **dialann scoile**

Cuir do bheannacht orainn, A Dhia, agus ar obair na scoilbhliana  
seo. Go raibh dea-obair, creideamh agus cairdeas sa bhliain atá  
romhainn amach.

**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Deireadh Fómhair:** Mí an Phaidrín agus Mí na Misean

*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo **paidrín** agus **póstaer i dtaobh na misean**

A Mhuire na nGrást, a Mhathair Mhic Dé, guí orainn-ne agus  
ar son na ndaoine atá ag obair ar na misin.

**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Samhain:** Cuimhneachán na Marbh

*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo **cárta cuimhneacháin**

A Dhia, tabhair suaimhneas síoraí dár muintir a d'imigh  
romhainn ar shlí na fírinne.

**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

**Nollaig:** Seo tréimhse na hAidbhinte agus na Nollag.

Ceiliúraimid breith ár dTiarna, Íosa Críost,  
Slánaitheoir an domhain.

*Lastar coinneal*

**Scoláire:** Seo dealbh bheag **d'Íosa sa mhainséar/ cárta Nollag.**

Thug Dia a Mhac, Íosa mar bhronntanas dúinn um Nollaig.  
Gabhaimis ár mbuíochas le Dia.

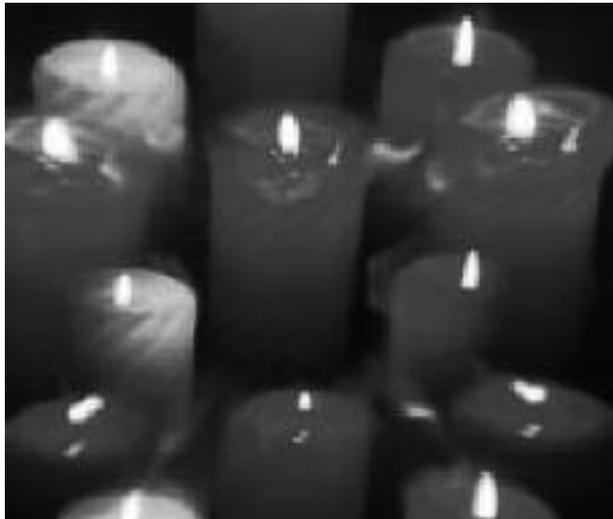
**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**

Bail ó Dhia oraibh ó Shamhain go Lá 'le Bríde,  
Ó lá 'le Bríde go Bealtaine,  
Ó Bhealtaine go Lúnasa,  
Is ó Lúnasa go Samhain;  
Is go mbeannaí Dia uilechumhachtach sibh  
Athair, Mac + agus Spiorad Naomh.

**Amen.**

Go dté sibh slán faoi shíocháin Chríost  
Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.

**Gach lá agus oíche, Amen.**



## Candlemas Day – February 2

Candlemas commemorates the purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of her son Jesus. This day also marks the ritual presentation of the baby Jesus to God in the Temple at Jerusalem.

The Gospel of Luke says that Jesus was met by Anna and Simeon. Simeon held the baby Jesus and called him a Light to the World.

This purification was a Jewish tradition which considered women to be unclean after the birth of a child. For 40 days for a boy, and 60 days for a girl, women weren't allowed to worship in the temple. At the end of this time, women were brought to the Temple or Synagogue to be purified. After the ceremony women were allowed to take part in religious services again.

The festival is called Candlemas because this is the day that all the Church's candles for the year are blessed. Traditionally, people buy candles for use in the Church and also for use at home. All the candles are blessed and then the candles are distributed. A candle blessed on Candlemas was used in homes during times of high winds or lightening storms and also when a sick or housebound person was receiving a visit from the priest.

On Candlemas night, many people place lighted candles in their windows at home.

Like some other Christian festivals, Candlemas draws some of its elements from Paganism.

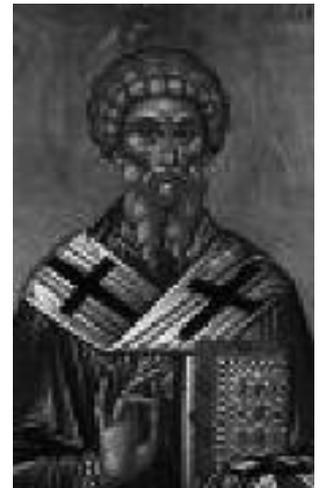
In pre-Christian times, it was the festival of light. This ancient festival marked the midpoint of winter, half way between the winter solstice (shortest day) and the spring equinox.

People believed that Candlemas predicted the weather for the rest of the winter. A traditional verse illustrates this belief:

If Candlemas Day be fair and bright  
Winter will have another fight.  
If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain,  
Winter won't come again.

# St. Blaise – Patron Saint of People with Sore Throats.

**St Blaise is best known as the patron saint of people with sore throats. In many places on 3 February - his feast day - people gather in churches for the blessing of throats. The blessing is a sign of the people's faith in God's protection and love for the sick.**



Using two crossed and unlighted candles, the priest (or other minister) touches the throat of each person, saying: *Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from all ailments of the throat and from every other evil: in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Usually the blessing takes place in Mass. It follows the homily and the prayer of the faithful. If done outside of Mass, a brief celebration of the word of God with the scripture readings suggested in the Lectionary is recommended before the blessing is given.

## Who was St Blaise?

Blaise was a bishop at Sebaste (now the city of Sivas in Turkey) in what was then the Roman province of Armenia-Cappadocia). During a persecution - probably ordered by Constantine's ally and co-emperor Licinius - he was martyred in 316 AD. This much at least seems to be historical fact, according to the *New Roman Martyrology 2004*. In the Eastern churches his feast falls on the 11th February, in the West on 3rd February. The story concerning his death recounts how he was first beaten then put on the stone table used for combing out wool and flayed with the prickly metal combs that remove tiny stones from the wool. Finally he was put to death and beheaded.

In the Middle Ages Blaise became one of the most widely venerated saints in the Western Church even though he is from the East. Different accounts of his life and stories about him appear in the 9th century martyrologies and these give us a clue to the source of his wide popularity.

The most significant detail tells that when Blaise had been captured and was on his way to prison, a boy was brought to him in danger of choking from a fishbone stuck in his throat. Blaise prayed over him and he was cured. Perhaps to fill out his healing credentials, it is also reported that before he was chosen as bishop, Blaise had practiced as a physician. The wonder about St Blaise is how veneration of a martyred bishop in eastern Turkey spread so widely in the western world. His fame as a healer of sore throats is documented in the East from the 6th century and in the West by the 9th. But he also becomes a protector of cities, a protector against wild animals, a patron of veterinarians, wool-combers and of the woollen industry in general, as well a general benefactor or even a mascot of many rural and urban activities.

# Vocations – A Call to Action

## The Heart of the Matter

I used to work as an engineer at Intel Corporation's microchip plant in Leixlip. I loved my work. It was challenging and rewarding. One evening while driving home to Lucan I clearly remember thinking to myself "if the car went off the road this evening, is this how I would want to spend the last day of my life". The answer was no. Within weeks I was working as the Communications Director for the Presentation Brothers.



The late John O'Donohue once asked in a poem "what can you do now to live the life you would love to be able to look back on from your death bed". This is what vocation is all about. It is about trying to live the life that we were created for. It is about living the life for which we sense that God has given us our particular set of gifts and talents.

When people hear the word vocation they usually think of priesthood, convents or monasteries. This is a pity. When people hear the word vocation they should think about themselves. They should think about their own lives.

## So what?

There is a problem though. When people hear the message "we all have a vocation" they often shrug and say "that's great, so what?"

The "so what" is that we have to do something about it. We have to look at our lives and see how we are **witnessing** to our Catholic Faith, how are we **servicing** God and other people and how we **love** (for instance through marriage or through celibate love).

One group of people who are really wondering about what they will do with their lives are Leaving Cert students. When I speak to groups of them I always give them the advice of St Teresa of Avila; "Do whatever most kindles love in you". That is what vocation is about.

## Back on the Menu

In talking about the vocation of lay people there is a real danger though that we would forget the vocation to religious life and to priesthood. One could argue that this has actually happened already. We now need to actively put religious vocations back on the menu.

God continues to call men and women to serve as priests, religious sisters and religious brothers. For example, last September almost thirty men started their training for priesthood in Ireland. Several more entered the religious congregations of women and men.

We need to start encouraging young people to look at this way of life. We need to suggest to those who are suitable that they would make wonderful brothers, priests and sisters. We need to tell them

that they have what it takes. We need to ask them to consider trying it out. This is our responsibility as members of the Christian community. We also owe it to our young people.

Teachers have a special responsibility to do this. You know your students better than most other people. You can see their potential, their strengths, their generosity. You need to start suggesting that they consider a religious vocation. In short, teachers are called to call.

This is the Year of Vocation. Why not make a “Vocation Year Resolution” to invite one person to consider a religious vocation? Who knows where it might lead.

Saint Catherine of Siena once said “If you are all that you should be then you will set the world ablaze”. Helping people to be all that they should be in a spirit of reflection and prayer- that is what vocations promoting is all about.

More information at [www.presentationbrothers.com](http://www.presentationbrothers.com)

Contact Andrew at [prescommunications@eircom.net](mailto:prescommunications@eircom.net)

<http://vocations.dublindiocese.ie/home.html>

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**The Year of Vocations takes place from 13 April 2008 to 3 May 2009. Thank you to Dr Andrew O’Connell, Communications Director for the Presentation Brothers for writing this article for the R.E. News.**

# The conclusion of the Prayer Service on the Beatitudes

## The Beatitudes – Signposts for Christian Living.

**Jesus: Happy the merciful. They shall have mercy shown them.**

\_\_\_\_\_ : Mercy! This makes even less sense that gentleness.

**Jesus:** Oh, so we are back to hardness and toughness again.

\_\_\_\_\_ : If you're merciful people will take advantage of you.

**Jesus:** Are you saying that the world does not need mercy?

\_\_\_\_\_ : I'm not saying it does not need mercy but that there is not room for it.

**Jesus:** Well, let's make room for it. Without mercy the world would be a jungle.

\_\_\_\_\_ : But that's more or less how it is. People are ruthless, you know. What place is there in such a world for mercy?

**Jesus:** Yet mercy is the one thing the world is crying out for. How many barriers would fall down, if people were prepared to show mercy and forgiveness to one another?

\_\_\_\_\_ : But let's be practical, Lord. It's just not on to go around forgiving everyone. You would be regarded as a softie.

**Jesus:** It's a far harder thing to show mercy towards someone who has hurt you. When are people at their best: when they are being cruel and vengeful or when they are being kind and merciful?

\_\_\_\_\_ : when they are being kind and merciful, I suppose.

**Jesus:** Well then, I say; Happy those who are able to make allowances for the mistakes and sins of others, and whose greatness lies in their ability to show mercy, because the way we treat others is the way God will treat us.



**Jesus:** Happy the clean of heart. They shall see God.

\_\_\_\_\_ : I don't get that Lord. Everyone knows how important cleanliness and hygiene is. But clean of heart? I don't get that.

**Jesus:** That's because people are more concerned about outer cleanliness than inner cleanliness.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Inner cleanliness? What do you mean?

**Jesus:** Cleanliness of the mind, heart and conscious is surely more important than clean fingernails, clean teeth and clean skin.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Honestly, Lord I think people today are more concerned about physical hygiene than any other kinds of cleanliness.

**Jesus:** And yet, am I not right in saying that pollution is a big issue today?

\_\_\_\_\_ : Yes. People want clean rivers, clean beaches, clear air and so on.

**Jesus:** Yet they seem unconcerned about what pollutes their minds and hearts.

\_\_\_\_\_ : What causes that to happen?

**Jesus:** Pride, anger, hate, lust, greed and envy. All these things are sinful and keep one away from God.

\_\_\_\_\_ : So what must we do?

**Jesus:** We have to purify the source. The heart is the source. It is the well-spring from which all our thoughts, words and deeds flow. If the human heart is polluted by evil, then everything that flows from it will be polluted. But if the heart is clean, then all that flows from it will be clean, like water flowing from an unpolluted spring.

**Jesus: Happy the peacemakers. They shall be called the children of God.**

\_\_\_\_\_ : It's more like happy the trouble makers.

**Jesus:** Why do you say that?

\_\_\_\_\_ : Because the trouble-makers get all the head-lines.

**Jesus:** Yes, that is true. But they do not act like children of God.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Everyone longs for peace. Especially now that there is war between Iraq and the United States and between other countries.

**Jesus:** Peace! People can be almost as cruel to one another in times of peace as in times of war. Some neighbourhoods, some football grounds, and sadly even some homes at times resemble battlefields. So, we can all do our bit to bring peace wherever we are.

\_\_\_\_\_ : I suppose you are right. But what bothers me is this. Though everybody wants peace, and many pray for it, there is less peace in the world than ever before.

**Jesus:** There's no peace because there are not enough peacemakers. Peace does not just happen. It has to be made.

\_\_\_\_\_ : But it is hard to make peace between people who do not want it and will not listen.

**Jesus:** I agree. Peacemaking is a tough business. This explains why there are so many people in this world who are peace lovers but only a few peacemakers. The peacemaker has to be armed, not with a bomb or gun, but with courage, dedication and patience. Anyway, we could all do something that would bring peace into our own daily living.

\_\_\_\_\_ : All of us?

**Jesus:** Yes. Peace begins with myself. If I have peace within myself, then there is at least some peace in the world.

\_\_\_\_\_ : And peace with others? What in practice can we do?

**Jesus:** Peacemaking is a very practical thing. Forgive those who offend you. Welcome the stranger and those who are different to you. Do not provoke others to anger. Rather, by your gentleness and tolerance, draw them towards peace and harmony. Be caring to those who are sad and hurt. And above all be honest and fair in your dealings with others. Fairness is the foundation of peace.

**Jesus: Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right.  
Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

\_\_\_\_\_ : A lot of people would say: Happy those who lie, steal, cheat and who manage to get off scot-free.

**Jesus:** No one can escape the eye of God, or the eye of one's own conscience for that matter.

\_\_\_\_\_ : Lord, some people have no conscience. Their only commandment is the eleventh commandment.

**Jesus:** The eleventh commandment?

\_\_\_\_\_ : Yes, thou shalt not get caught!

**Jesus:** I see. But are they happy?

\_\_\_\_\_ : Well, they seem to be the ones who prosper and go places in this world.

Jesus: But at what cost? Besides, how dark the world would be if everybody adopted that attitude. Those who stand for what is right are the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

\_\_\_\_\_ : But it's not easy to stand up for what is right. You'll bring a lot of trouble on yourself. It is far easier not to take a stand on anything. If you mind your own business, and you'll have a nice quiet life.

**Jesus:** I know if you take a stand you're letting yourself open to be criticised and laughed at. But to be brave enough to speak out in the cause of right marks you as a true follower of mine.

With grateful thanks to Eddie O Carroll

Eddie O Carroll, BA. MA. is a graduate of Mater Dei and is full-time Chaplain in Colaiste Iosaef, Kilmallock, Co. Limerick. He is a former executive member of the School Chaplain's Association.



# Reflections on World Youth Day 2008 – Down Under

Going to Australia for young people in the 21st Century causes them no trouble. It is a destination of choice. As part of World Youth Day 2008 which was held in Sydney – Australia – the biggest challenge to the organisers was to convince young people to travel there as pilgrims and not tourists.

Catholic Youth Care led the largest group of Irish pilgrims to Australia. After months of preparations, saving and getting to know other people on the pilgrimage, 200 young people aged 18+ travelled. Many of these young people represented their local parish. A great many of them had just completed their leaving Cert. This was a real test of their first great travel experience.

The group was hosted first in the city of Melbourne at an event called Days in the Diocese. Young people were hosted by the parish of St. Scholastica in the suburbs of Melbourne. Many families opened their doors and their lives to these young people from Dublin. The local archdiocese in Melbourne had arranged a number of big events with a strong Aussie theme. One of the most notable was the opening ceremony in the St Patrick's Cathedral. Another was in the Telstra Dome – a huge stadium that hosts many Aussie rules games. One of the key memories of Melbourne - was the cold – it was their coldest winter in many years and many of our pilgrims found the weather hard going.

Each day the young people gathered in their local parish. Our parish was transformed – or taken over by our young people if you prefer. They energised their liturgies, smiled and cried and left a legacy of what to do next. It is a parish with very few young people. This parish now wants now to outreach to other young people in the area. This is our legacy of the young people from the diocese of Dublin.

Sydney was different. World Youth Day had transformed the city. There were young people everywhere, from all over the world. Many took over parts of the city, singing and celebrating. Young people from Dublin were hosted in Bondi – which has an Irish Chaplaincy. They were accommodated in a school – and slept on the floor. Archbishop Martin led Morning Prayer and one of the catechesis sessions. Young people liked his friendly stories. Young people from the CYC WYD choir animated many of the ceremonies that were in Bondi.

Central events were held in a number of down-town venues. Bangaroo hosted the opening mass with Cardinal Pell. Over 200 000 squeezed into this beautiful location also to witness the arrival of Pope Benedict XVI in the famous harbour of Sydney. Friday evening witnessed one of the most beautiful telling of the Stations of the Cross. It was enacted throughout the streets and harbour area of Sydney. Seeing Jesus condemned on the steps of the Cathedral, dragging His cross in down town Sydney and with the backdrop of the Opera House watching these stations unfold was a very moving experience. A new narrative and a relevancy of this Christ event occurred for many young

people. I saw young people in tears. I saw commuters in Sydney just stop to watch. Truly this was one of the most moving religious events I have witnessed. The next day we were all on the move to Randwick Racecourse for an evening of prayer and reflection with Pope Benedict. Young people camped out that night in the Racecourse. On Sunday morning 20 July Pope Benedict XVI celebrated mass with the young people. Sydney really did become a cross between Jerusalem and Rome for a while.

“Dear young people...what will you leave to the next generation?”...The Church needs this renewal. She needs your faith, your idealism and your generosity; so that she can always be young in the Spirit...The Church especially needs the gifts of young people, all young people” Pope Benedict XVI World Youth Day 2008.

The next WYD was announced for Madrid in the summer of 2011. Surely more young people especially from Ireland should avail of this experience. You can prepare for WYD 2011 and tell as many young people about this event or let the WYD department in CYC keep in touch with you.

Catholic Youth Care has just announced the setting of a new Office of Youth Evangelisation within the Diocese. If you would like to find out more information about World Youth Day or Evangelisation in your school – contact Gerard Gallagher, Head of Youth Evangelisation, Catholic Youth Care, Arran Quay, Dublin 7. 01-8725055. [www.cyc.ie](http://www.cyc.ie)

**Thank you to Gerard Gallagher for providing this article.**

*Gerard Gallagher was Head of World Youth Day for Archdiocese of Dublin and is currently setting up a new Office of Youth Evangelisation for Catholic Youth Care.*

*He is author of “Are we Losing the Young Church”, Columba Press, Dublin, 2005.*



## World Youth Day – Sydney 2008

World Youth Day 08 was an occasion of hope and an opportunity for young people from all over the world to delve deeper into their faith. It's difficult to express the personal impact of an experience. However, I think it would be fair to say that all the Irish pilgrims gave themselves intensely to the event. At the moment it is difficult to view Irish society without taking into account the rising suicide rate, the increase in criminality and the sharply falling numbers attending masses. Irish society has become progressively more and more hedonistic in its nature.

This is the situation I left on 6 July to attend World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney. However, in Australia we bore witness to a vibrant sea of optimism and unity, something we can carry with us back to our parishes across the world. For me, World Youth Day was a journey of faith. It was much more than the typical "new experience", but an inspiration and a calling to gain more from my life. I opened myself up to the stories of the pilgrims around me and learnt of their individual experiences as Catholics living in different corners of the globe. The "I" suddenly took a step backwards as "we" and "us" reigned supreme. A sense of community existed between us and a mutual understanding that "we" as young Catholics must continue this journey of faith and draw inspiration from the connection we share in our human struggle.

The power of the Holy Spirit was an integral part of these year's festivities. It represents the birth of the Church, and in this case, carries a message of rebirth and renewal to the youth of the world. Because WYD brings together young people from around the globe, it is a chance for Catholics both young and old to promote world peace and to make long-lasting friendships. As I continue on my own journey, I will value the friendships I made and draw inspiration from the connection we share in our human struggle.



My heart was gladdened by the sight of thousands of young people worshipping God with their flags, songs and words; of pilgrims from all nations and cultures welcoming Pope Benedict with the excitement you



would expect from such events as Oxygen or Electric Picnic. The overnight vigil was a magical experience which really brought into sharp focus the sense of oneness that exists within the Catholic Church. Young people approached each other exchanging badges and small gifts as if they were life-time friends. It was something which I was privileged to be a part of. World Youth Day was, for me, a cherished experience which has had a significant impact on how I view myself and my role as a young Catholic in Ireland.

*Thank you to Ciaran Doyle, a former pupil of Arklow CBS, for providing this article.*