

R.E. News

Diocesan Advisers, Education Secretariat,
Archbishop's House, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

Ph: 837 9253 Fax: 836 8393

Email: postprimary@dubcated.org

Welcome to the first edition of R.E News for the school year 2008/2009.

I would like to introduce myself, Mary FitzGerald, a newly appointed Post-Primary Diocesan Adviser for the Archdiocese of Dublin. A graduate of Mater Dei Institute of Education, I have taught Religious Education in Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow. I am looking forward to meeting you in the schools and working with you during the year.

A number of you have met me, Brigid Gilligan as I have been working as Post-Primary Diocesan Adviser for the Archdiocese of Dublin for the past year. I, too, am a graduate of Mater Dei Institute of Education and I have twelve years of teaching experience in Dublin, Tipperary and Laois. I have taught all aspects of Religious Education and look forward to working with all of you again this year.

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



Mary FitzGerald
Post-Primary Diocesan Adviser

We hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter. We welcome your thoughts and comments and look forward to your continued support and assistance as we continue our journey in faith together. If you have any interesting events coming up please let us know, as we would love to feature them in our next edition.

Wishing you every blessing this term, we both look forward to working with you throughout the year.



Brigid Gilligan
Post-Primary Diocesan Adviser

OCTOBER 2008

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Jubilee Year of St. Paul 2008/2009

Paul's Missionary Journeys.

PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY

A. ANTIOCH

In Antioch the Holy Spirit inspired Paul and Barnabas to go and preach the news of Jesus to different communities. They set off in 45 CE and firstly arrived at Cyprus and in Salamis preached in the synagogue. They travelled the length of the island to Paphos and from there they set to sea again for Antioch in Pisidia.



B. ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

In the synagogue Paul proclaims Jesus as the Saviour so that, 'through him the forgiveness of your sins is proclaimed.' Acts 13:38. Afterwards many Jews joined them. Some Jews, however, rejected the message and expelled them from Antioch. This was significant because after the Jews had rejected the message, Paul and Barnabas decided to preach to those who were non-Jews, the Gentiles. It was here that the followers of Christ were first given the name of "Christians" who marvelled at the way in which this group loved and cared for all its members equally.

C. ICONIUM

At Iconium many become believers but Paul makes more enemies than friends amongst the Jews and they planned to stone him to death. Wisely they depart at once for the towns of Lystra and Derbe but worse lay in store for them.

D. LYSTRA



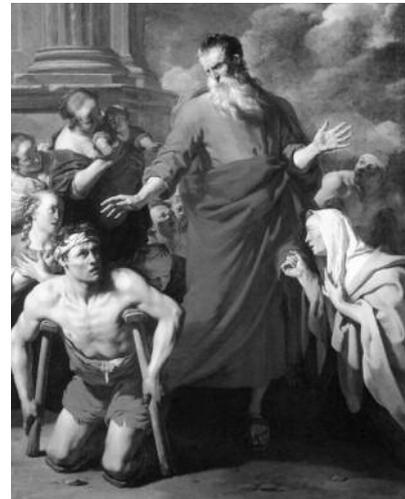
In Lystra Paul healed a cripple but some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and this time they actually did stone Paul and dragged him from the town thinking he was dead. Somehow Paul recovered and the next day they moved on to Derbe. There they inspired the community and encouraged them to have faith. It was very important for these new communities to receive such support considering the hostility towards them from the Jews. They put fresh heart into the disciples, encouraging them to persevere in the faith. "We all have to experience many hardships," they said, "before we enter the Kingdom of God".

Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in the churches on the first journey as part of their efforts to give strength and guidance to these communities. Their first journey was completed when they returned to Antioch from where they had first set out but controversy awaited them there as well. This was the year 49 CE.

PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY

When they arrived back in Antioch some devout Jews who had become Christians insisted that if anyone wanted to become a believer in Jesus they first had to become a Jew. It appears Paul and Barnabas didn't take too kindly to this and 'had a long argument with these men'. A Council of the young church was held in Jerusalem in 49 CE to resolve the matter. The Council decided that as Jesus had clearly chosen Gentiles as well as Jews to the faith, and as Christ had been rejected by the majority of the Jewish community, the only condition for salvation that should be placed on Gentile converts to Christianity was belief in Jesus Christ.

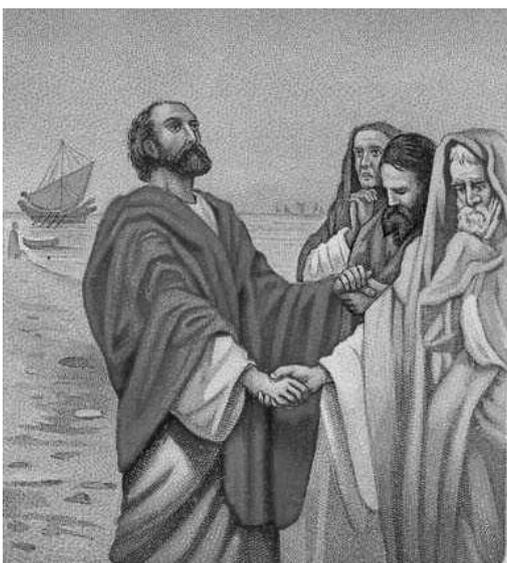
The controversy at Jerusalem highlights many important aspects of the early Christian communities. The early Christians believed that Jesus was the Messiah, God's anointed Prophet and King. However, initially they didn't see themselves as separate from the Jewish people. The very first community of believers in Jerusalem continued to attend the Temple gatherings. They believed Jesus was the climax to a long story of the relationship between God and his people as spoken through the prophets of the Old Testament. God's call was to the Jews first and the call to the non-Jews or the Gentiles was at the centre of the dispute in Jerusalem. Traditionally the church in Antioch was more liberal in these matters while the Church in Jerusalem was more conservative. As we have noted already the latter was located in the city of the Temple and all its strict regulations and observances.



In Jerusalem the devout and conservative Jews insisted that all believers become strict law abiding Jews. Paul and Barnabas felt that this was too much of a burden for the Gentiles as the Jewish religion had many rules. Paul later became known as the 'Apostle to the Gentiles'. It was then Peter spoke up in defence of Paul's position saying that the law was indeed very burdensome and that all, Jews and Gentiles are saved not by the Mosaic Law but through the "grace of our Lord Jesus."

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY

A. EPHEBUS



Paul spends much of his time on this journey establishing a large church at Ephesus. Paul stayed here for over two years preaching and teaching persuasively about the Kingdom of God. After Paul left Ephesus he travelled to Macedonia and then from Miletus, Paul says farewell to the elders of Ephesus. This is a very important moment in the development of early Christian communities. Up until now, the responsibility of leadership rested with the Apostles and Paul, but now, Paul hands on this responsibility to the elders: "Be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to feed the church of God which he bought with his own blood." This turns out to be a sad and difficult time for the leaders who must assume responsibility under challenging conditions in the knowledge that they will never see Paul again. The year is 57 CE. After departing Ephesus Paul goes on to Kos, Rhodes and then Patara. They stay at Tyre for a week and then move onto Ptolemais and Caesarea.

B. JERUSALEM

When Paul arrives back in Jerusalem the tensions between him and the conservative Jews become apparent and he is arrested and some Jews vow to kill him. See Acts 23:12. In order to protect him, the Roman authorities send Paul to Caesarea. He is placed under house arrest there for two years from 58 to 60 CE. After this, he is sent to Rome but on the way they are shipwrecked and have to stay on the island of Malta. Eventually, in 61 CE, Paul reaches Rome where he remains under house arrest for two more years.

The Death of Paul

According to tradition, Paul was arrested in Rome under the persecutions of Emperor Nero. He was beheaded in 67 CE. Beheading was the customary death penalty for a Roman citizen at this time. His head is said to have bounced three times after it fell from his body and each place his head struck a fountain sprang up. The site of Paul's execution can be visited in Rome today at 'Tre Fontane' and the Basilica of San Paolo Fuori Le Mura.



Senior Cycle Religion

1. Christian Philosophers

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430/AD)



He followed a sect called Manichaeism. They believed that our futures are already mapped out for us. He later rejected this idea because he came to believe that humans had free will and so could influence what happened in their lives. He was influenced by Plato and in his work “THE CONFESSIONS”, St Augustine outlined his belief that all humans are on a journey in search of happiness. He taught that true happiness can only be found in God.

He believed the greatest human desire was to love and be loved. God is the greatest source of love. We, in turn, show this love to others, even our enemies.

St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AC)

His most famous work is the “SUMMA THEOLOGICA”. He was influenced by Aristotle. He believed that it was human nature to pursue goals. For example, if one moves across a room the goal is to get to the other side. He believed that the ultimate goal for humans was God. He rejected riches, fame, power and pleasure as a source for happiness.



2. The Age Of Reason (17th & 18th Centuries) - The Enlightenment

Rene Descartes (1596-1650)



He is called the Father of Modern Philosophy.
He was interested in the question of Human Existence.
He did believe in the existence of God.
He was influenced by Aristotle.
He believed that humans were rational and autonomous, not at the mercy of God.
Knowledge through the senses was not to be trusted
True knowledge starts with the “SELF”. His most famous saying was “**COGITO ERGO SUM**” or **I THINK, THEREFORE I AM.**

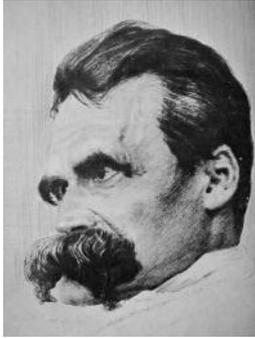
It is the intellect that tells me that I think, therefore it is more reliable than the senses.

Romanticism and Existentialism (18th & 19th Centuries)

A time of reaction to Reason alone. In Romanticism Emotion was as important as Reason and Intellect.

Independence and Free Will are central to Existentialism

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1890)



He is one of the most controversial philosophers of all time.

His philosophy emerged from his SCEPTICISM- there is no absolute moral or scientific truth.

The idea of Truth was used by society to control people.

He believed that there was no absolute good or evil. This offended many religious people.

He accused Christianity of "slave morality".

The only successful people are those who achieve greatness or excellence at leadership.

He believed that faith in God was no longer necessary in a world where everything could be explained without reference to a higher being.

His most famous pronouncement was **"GOD IS DEAD"**

His philosophy is called **"NIHILISM"**



Transition Year Certification

I've been teaching religion in TY for about ten years now, and in recent years one of the best supports for my programme has been the certification offered by the Archdiocese of Dublin, through the RE Advisers. I'm surprised there isn't a greater uptake on this initiative, as I find it a great help to motivate my students.

The award acknowledges a particular project or the year's work in RE. I usually invite the RE Adviser to attend for the award presentation in May, and to prepare for this the students have to be able to display their year's work in RE. I remind them of this during the year, which is a great incentive to keep their work in order. I teach boys, and most take the work seriously. In fact sometimes I'm pleasantly surprised by the quality of work they produce.



Most of the work I do in TY RE focuses on religion and the arts, and each year students are required to produce a work of art with a religious theme – poems and drawings tend to be most popular. I've had mixed success with this project, but last year's TY group were particularly productive. Some even wrote songs and spiritual instrumentals for the occasion, so when the adviser came, some of the students performed their works in the class. Those with poems and pictures displayed their work, along with other material they had been working on. The adviser had plenty of opportunity to talk to

the students individually about their work as she walked around the classroom checking out the material. To make the award more meaningful I withhold some of the certificates from those who haven't produced a suitable body of work by the deadline. Some produce the work later and collect their awards at that stage.

I would highly recommend this scheme as I find it offers support to the students and to me – it shows us that we are part of something bigger, that someone actually cares what we do in RE class, cares enough to pay us a visit!

Thanks to Mr Brendan O'Regan, Arklow C.B.S. for providing this article.

For further details on the Transition Year Certification Programme please contact Brigid or Mary at 01-8379253.

Chaplain's Retreat Day

The life of a chaplain, like that of many people in today's society, is a busy one, so when I get an invitation to do a day retreat, the response could easily be, "how can I afford the time, I am too busy." However, when I get an invitation like this I think of Jesus' response to the apostles after they had reported to Him all they had done and taught. He says: "Go off by yourselves to a remote place and have some rest". Our last invitation to come away and rest awhile was to Benildus Pastoral Centre in Stillorgan last April 23. Benildus Pastoral Centre is a wonderful place to come away to. A beautiful atmosphere of prayer and quiet has been created there under the guidance of Michelle and her team.

We were greeted on arrival with tea/coffee and scones which helped us all relax and begin to change gear. The Liturgy and reflections that were prepared for us were food for body, mind and spirit. The atmosphere in the prayer room in the pastoral centre supports you in letting go of the "busyness" of your life and making that inner journey to the core of your being where Jesus has promised: "The Father and I will make our home in you"... We went back to our schools nourished and refreshed and strengthened in the knowledge that we are not on our own, that the Spirit has been given to us and has been poured out afresh on us.

Mile Buíochas to Brigid who arranged this day, to the Archdiocese who supported it and the team at Benildus Pastoral Centre who allowed themselves be the hands and feet of Christ as they ministered to us.

Anne Loughman, Chaplain, St. Colmcille's Community School.



Diocesan Liturgical Project

What is Emmanuel?

Emmanuel began in 2004 to promote the use of Sacred Music in Secondary Schools. It is a project of the Dublin Diocesan Commission for Sacred Music. Emmanuel will next take place in the Helix Theatre, DCU on Thursday 12 March 2009 at 8.00 p.m. Past Emmanuel initiatives involved students, learning and performing together a programme of liturgical music. This music has assisted schools by expanding their repertoire.

Who can participate?

Any Second level School in the Archdiocese of Dublin is welcome to participate in Emmanuel 2009. Music teachers, chaplains, principals can nominate their school. Emmanuel can be used to establish a new music group or smaller liturgical choir in the school if there is none already in place.

What is involved?

1. Schools need to apply by **Friday 7 November 2008** to Grainne Clinton The Diocesan Liturgical Resource Centre, Clonliffe College, Dublin 3. Contact Number is (01) 8379253 ext 241.
2. Teachers will be invited to participate in one of three in-service dates on 25 November – Holy Cross College, Clonliffe Road Drumcondra, 26 November Gort Mhuire, Dundrum or 27 November St. Mary's Parish Centre, Lucan. At these workshops music will be distributed to each school with backing tracks.
3. Teachers can then begin to rehearse the music with their choir in school. It is hoped that a member of the Diocesan Commission for Sacred Music will visit each school at some point to offer support.
4. You can also during this period contact the musical director – Ian Callanan for advice during this period – icallanan@mac.com or 086 2490779.

How much does it cost?

There is no financial cost to the schools that participate.

What else do the schools have to do?

Each school can widely advertise the event in the Helix to ensure as many parents, staff and students attend. It also is important the schools familiarise themselves with the online booking system in the Helix.

How many students can participate?

In 2007 the Choir in the Helix was approximately 400 students. They were accompanied with an onstage orchestra. However, it is important that schools indicate the numbers participating in their choir as numbers may need to be limited per school.



What happens on 12 March 2009?

On the day of the performance all students attend a full rehearsal in Clonliffe College. 50% attend a music rehearsal and the remainder attend a variety of youth friendly workshops. After a break – each group changes around so that everyone has a musical rehearsal and can attend workshops.

Later a full dress rehearsal takes place on stage in the Helix with a break for food.

Full and final performance is at 8 p.m. A very busy day but worth the effort.

Booking Forms available from Grainne Clinton, email litsec@dublindiocese.ie



Bereavement Liturgy

Prayer Service For _____

Grant eternal rest unto him/her O Lord

Invitation to Prayer

In this moment the Lord is in our midst and consoles us with His word. Blessed are the sorrowful; they shall be comforted. Lord of all gentleness, surround us with your care and comfort us in our sorrow for we grieve at the loss of _____. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted. A time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance, a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together. A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to seek, and a time to lose, a time to keep, and a time to cast away, a time to rend, and a time to sew, a time to keep silence, and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace. God has made everything beautiful in its time.



This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reflections

Our hearts are heavy at the loss of _____. Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. Yes my yoke is easy and my burden light.

It is hard to believe that _____ will live forever. I am the resurrection. If anyone believes in me even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

We pray in hope that _____ has found peace. Only I God is my soul at rest, from Him comes my hope. He alone is my rock, my fortress. Unburden your hearts onto him for God is our shelter.

It is difficult to understand why our family and friends must die. St. Paul says: “God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength. It is when I am weak that I am strong, for I feel the power of Christ shining through my human weakness”.

Prayer of the Faithful

We pray for our friend _____, may he/she now enjoy everlasting rest in the Lord’s kingdom.
Lord hear us.

Lord graciously hear us.

We pray for _____ family at this time. May the spirit of God console them and in time help them to bear the loss of _____.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.



Gone only from Our Sight

I am standing on the seashore. Suddenly a ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze, and starts out for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength, and I stand and watch her until at length she is only a ribbon of white cloud just above where sea and sky mingle with each other. Then someone at my side says, ‘There! She’s gone!’

Gone where? Gone from my sight – that is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side, and just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of destination. Her diminished size is in me, not in her, and just at the moment when someone at my side says, ‘There! She’s gone!’, there are other voices ready to take the glad shout, ‘There! She comes!’.

And that is dying.

Words found in the wallet of Colonel Marcus, of the Israeli Army, when he was killed in action on June 11th, 1948.

The Beatitudes – Signposts for Christian Living

The Beatitudes have been described as the best sermon ever preached.

I have used the text from Matthew’s Gospel under the heading “The Beatitudes — Signposts for Christian Living”.

As you can see from the picture I have a pole standing upright covered in black and white contact with eight directional arrows just like a signpost. The text I use is a dialogue between Jesus and a group of students who are trying to understand what the Beatitudes mean in contemporary society. One student reads the Jesus part and eight others read the rest of the



script. I ask other class members to pick up pictures that represent what each Beatitude means and attach them to the appropriate arrows. I play music after every two pieces of dialogue. It is a lovely prayer service and one that can get all the class involved.

Jesus: Happy the poor in spirit. Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

_____ : Happy the poor! That is so not going to work today Lord. In our world, the person who has nothing is nothing. It’s more like happy the rich, because they can have whatever they want?

Jesus: But rich people are not always satisfied, money is not everything.

_____ : By “poor” then I take it you don’t mean being homeless and dressed like a scarecrow?

Jesus: Of course not. People need a certain amount of material things in order to live with dignity. But there’s a worse form of poverty than material poverty. A life without meaning, a heart without love – these are terrible forms of poverty.

_____ : What do you mean by “poor in spirit”?

Jesus: The poor in spirit are those who put their trust in God rather than in money.

_____ : But lets face it, in the world of the Celtic Tiger money is everything. It opens all doors.

Jesus: All doors but the one that really matters, the door to the kingdom of God.

_____ : But in reality money is the only God most people worship. Everybody wants loads of it.

Jesus: The pity is that they don't know what true riches are.

_____ : True riches? What do you mean?

Jesus: The riches of the heart and spirit. A scarecrow is still a scarecrow even if you dress it up in a fur coat.

_____ : In other words, it's not what you have, but what you are, that is important.

Jesus: Exactly. It's not the clothes you wear, or the amount of money you have, but the kind of person you are that matters in the eyes of God.



Jesus: Happy the gentle. They shall have the earth for their heritage.

_____ : Happy the gentle! You must be having me on! If you're gentle, people will walk all over you.

Jesus: You mean, it you want to get on, you've got to be tough and hard.

_____ : Exactly. Gentle people get left behind. The tough and hard people get on.

Jesus: Deep down, we all have a need for gentleness, and we can't open up and grow without it.

_____ : But people respect the macho image. Gentleness is seen as a form of weakness.

Jesus: Gentleness is not a form of weakness. It is a form of strength and is one of the most necessary qualities in life. Think of the gentleness required in the hands of a mother or a surgeon.

_____ : Are you saying that we should never stand up for ourselves?

Jesus: No. That is not what I am saying.

_____ : By gentle, then, you don't mean a timid little person who is afraid to speak up.

Jesus: Of course not. It takes a strong, self-confident person to be gentle. By strong I don't mean physical strength but strength of character. Which would you prefer to have as your friend: an aggressive person or a gentle person?

_____ : A gentle person, of course.

Jesus: Happy those who mourn. They shall be comforted.

_____ : Happy those who mourn! That is a hard one to understand, Lord?

Jesus: Today everybody is out for a good time, right?

_____ : Yea, that's right.

Jesus: But life involves pain and sorrow as well as fun and joy.

_____ : Pain and sorrow! People want to avoid stuff that makes them sad. And can you blame them? After all, who wants to go around with a long face?

Jesus: Sorrow is part of life, and makes life deeper and richer.

_____ : But sorrow usually means crying and this embarrasses people.

Jesus: You mean they see tears as a sign of weakness?

_____ : Yes, I think so.

Jesus: It's a poor human being that has no tears. Tears show that we have feelings and that we can be moved to compassion. In short, that we have a heart. Without a heart a person is no better than a block of marble.

_____ : But if you open your heart to others, you're sure to get hurt.

Jesus: Yes, but to open your heart is being to live. To close it is to being to die. If your concern for others causes you to shed tears, those tears are precious to God.

Jesus: Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right. They shall be satisfied.

_____ : What do you mean by that Lord?

Jesus: People work every day of the year to satisfy the hunger of the body, but hardly a single day to satisfy the hunger of the soul.

_____ : Hunger of the soul? I am not so sure I understand that.

Jesus: People hunger for a lot of things besides bread. They hunger for faith. They hunger for hope. Without hope one has no future. And of course they hunger for love. One cannot live without love.

_____ : So, then, the soul is fed by acts of faith, hope and love.

Jesus: I couldn't have put it better myself. All of you are made up of a body and a soul. People everywhere hunger for truth, freedom, justice and goodness. They search for what is right.

_____ : But, mostly the only things I see people hunger and thirst for are power, status, fame and fortune.

Jesus: No wonder they know so little happiness. Those who knowingly do what is wrong can't possibly be happy because they are not at peace with themselves. They are like an instrument that is out of tune.

To be concluded in the next edition.

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 Chaplains` Association.



Cuimhneachán na Marbh

Ceol:	“Ag Críost an Síol” agus ceol suaimhneach
Coinnle:	Ceann mór amháin, ceann beag le haghaidh gach duine, Cipíní solais, fáideoga
Billeoga:	Ainmneacha na ndaoine a fuair bás
Maisiúchán:	Póstaer, duilleoga

Failtiú agus Míniú

Cinnire: Tá fáilte romhaibh chuig an searmanas seo ina dtugaimid chun cuimhne daoine atá imithe ar shlí na fírinne. (a fuair bás)

Tá duilleoga áille, ildaite anseo ar an mbord. Tá dathanna áille, dathanna an fhómhair orthu. Tháinig siad amach san Earrach agus bhí siad beag agus glas. D’Fhás siad agus nuair a bhí a saol caite, d’athraigh an dath agus thit siad den chrann. Is rud nádúrtha é sin: **Breith, Fás agus Bás.**

Sin mar a bhíonn ag daoine freisin. Tagann siad ar an saol, beag agus óg. Fásann siad agus nuair a thagann an t-am geibheann siad bás. Is rud nádúrtha an bás, cuid de shaol an duine, cuid den phlean atá ag Dia dúinn.

Glaonn Dia abhaile orainn nuair atáimid ullamh agus is ag Dia amháin atá a fhios cathain a bhíonn an duine ullamh. Dia a thugann an bheatha dúinn, Dia a thógann ar ais í. Bronntanas sár-luachmhar ó Dhia is ea mo bheatha agus do bheatha agus níl sé de chead againn-ne, ná ag éinne eile deireadh a chur léi.

Lasadh na gCoinneal

Táim chun an choinneal mhór a lasadh anois. Is siombail an choinneal mhór seo d’Íosa a fuair bás cosúil linne. D’éirigh sé ó na mairbh agus gheall sé go n-éireoidh na daoine a chreideann ann ó na mairbh freisin. Tugann sé sin dóchas agus misneach dúinn.



Soiscéal

Dúirt Íosa: **“Mise an tAiséirí agus an Bheatha; an té a chreideann ionamsa, fiú amháin má fhaigheann sé bás, mairfidh sé, agus gach duine a mhaireann agus a chreideann ionamsa ní bhfaighidh sé bás choíche.”**

(Eoin 11 : 25 – 26)

Tugaimis chun cuimhne anois na daoine a bhfuil a n-ainmneach ar na billeoga atá agaibh. Bímis ciúin agus guímis ar son ár muintire a fuair bás.

Anois lasfaidh sibhse an choinneal bheag ón gcoinneal mhór agus iarrfaidh sibh ar Dhia na daoine atá marbh a thabhairt chun na Flaithis in éineacht le hÍosa Críost.

Cuirfidh sibh an choinneal agus an bhilleog leis na hainmneacha uirthi, timpeall ar an gcoinneal mhór a fhaid is a bheidh ceol suaimhneach á chasadh.

Canamis:

Ag Críost an Síol

Ag Críost an síol, ag Críost an fómhar,
In iothalainn Dé go dtugtar sinn.
Ag Críost an mhuir, ag Críost an t-iasc,
I líonta Dé go gcastar sinn.

Ó fhás go haois, is ó aois go bás,
Do dhá láimh, a Chríost, anall tharainn.
Ó bhás go críoch, ní críoch ach ath-fhás,
I bParthas na nGrást go rabhaimid.

Focail: Michael Sheehan (1916) *

Ceol: Seán Ó Riada
(“Veritas Hymnal” 6)

Paidir

A Dhia, guímis le chéile ar son ár ngaolta, ár gcomharsana agus ár gcairde a fuair bás. Tabhair suaimhneas síoraí dóibh ar Neamh.

A Thiarna, éist linn. A Thiarna, bí ceansa agus éist linn.

Beannacht

Guím beannacht Dé agus coimirce Mhuire, pátrún na scoile, oraibh agus suaimhneas síoraí dár muintir a fuair bás.

Áiméan.

* Is mar chomhartha comhbhróin le cara leis, a chaill a iniún in aois dhá bhliain déag, a chum Canon Michael Sheehan (údar “Sheehan’s Apologetics”) an dán seo sa bhliain 1916.

D’úsáid Muintir Uí Chiarghusa an dán ar chárta cuimhneacháin Bhrídín, an cailín óg a fuair bás.

Searmanas ag an gCró Nollag

Cinnire: Tá an Nollaig buailte linn arís, séasúr speisialta sa bhliain. Gabhaimis buíochas le Dia mar gur thaispeáin sé a ghrá dúinn trína mhac Íosa Críost a thabhairt dúinn mar Shlánaitheoir.

Léacht: Lúcas 2 : 3-7

Tá an Cró Nollag ullamh agus tá Muire agus Iosef ag fanacht. Anois cuirfidh an scoláire is óige sa rang an Leanbh Íosa sa mháinséar.

Canaimis :

Oíche Chiúin

Oíche chiúin, oíche Mhic Dé!
Cách 'na suan, dís ar aon,
Dís is dílse 'faire le spéis,
Naíon beag gnaoi-gheal ceannann tais caomh:
Críost 'na chodladh go séimh,
Críost 'na chodladh go séimh!



1. A Íosa, is tú mac Dé. Cabhraigh linn cur leis an ngrá atá againn dár muintir i rith na Nollag.
2. A Íosa, is tú mac Mhuire. Beannaigh gach teaghlach atá ag súil le leanbh agus gach leanbh agus páiste.
3. A Íosa, is tú a thug dea-scéal do na bochtáin. Cabhraigh linn bheith fial, flaithiúil leo siúd nach bhfuil dóthain bia, éadaigh agus dídine acu.
4. A Íosa, leigheas tú na heasláin. Cabhraigh linn sólás a thabhairt do dhaoine atá tinn agus do dhaoine atá uaigneach.
5. A Íosa, is tú Prionsa na Síochána. Cabhraigh linn síocháin a scaipeadh sa bhaile, sa scoil agus imeasc ár gcairde.
6. I rith na bliana seo romhainn go raibh deireadh le gach cogadh.

Canaimis:

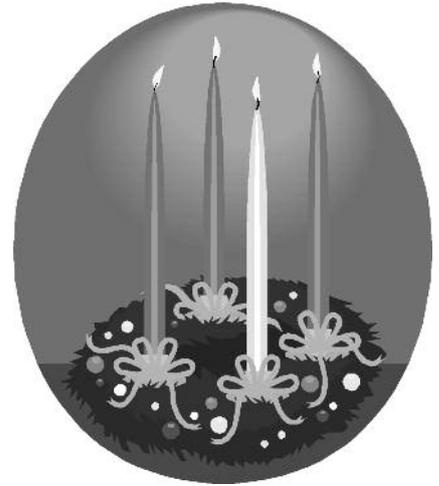
Oíche chiúin, oíche Mhic Dé!
Aoirí ar dtús, 'chuala an scéal:
Alleluia, aingil ag gloach,
Cantain suaírc i ngar is i gcéin:
Críost ár Slánaitheoir féin,
Críost ár Slánaitheoir féin.

Advent 2008 - Facts and Dates

In Western Christianity, Advent begins on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas Day, or the Sunday which falls closest to November 30, and lasts through Christmas Eve, or December 24. When Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, it is the last or fourth Sunday of Advent.

In Eastern Orthodox churches which use the Julian calendar, Advent begins earlier, on November 15, and lasts 40 days, rather than 4 weeks.

Advent is a period of spiritual preparation in which many Christians make themselves ready for the coming, or birth, of the Lord, Jesus Christ. During this time, Christians observe a season of prayer, fasting and repentance, followed by anticipation, hope and joy. Many Christians celebrate Advent not only by thanking God for Christ's first coming to Earth as a baby, but also for his presence among us today through the Holy Spirit, and in preparation and anticipation of his final coming at the end of time.



Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas, and therefore varies in length between 22 days and 28 days. (In 2008, it is 25 days long.)

The following is a list of the dates of the Sundays and major feast days that fall in Advent 2008.

- First Sunday of Advent (**Sunday, November 30, 2008**)
- Feast of Saint Nicholas (**Saturday, December 6, 2008**)
- Second Sunday of Advent (**Sunday, December 7, 2008**)
- Immaculate Conception (**Monday, December 8, 2008**)
Holy Day of Obligation
- Our Lady of Guadalupe (**Friday, December 12, 2008**)
- Feast of Saint Lucy (**Saturday, December 13, 2008**)
- Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) (**Sunday, December 14, 2008**)
- Fourth Sunday of Advent (**Sunday, December 21, 2008**)
- Christmas Eve (**Wednesday, December 24, 2008**)
- Christmas (**Thursday, December 25, 2008**)
Holy Day of Obligation

Christmas Prayer Service

You will need:

- A collection of Christmas cards, some with a religious theme, some with a non-religious theme, to be displayed on a board in a prominent position in the room where they can be seen by the students.
- A large lighted candle or the Advent wreath.
- An A4 sheet of paper with pens, markers for each student.
- An empty display board with pins etc
- Leader and four readers.

Leader: As we prepare to celebrate Christmas this year, the time when we remember the birth of Jesus, let us stop to remember some of the hopes and expectations of the Jewish people for the Messiah they awaited.

Reader 1: The prophet Isaiah said:
Tell everyone who is discouraged;
“Be strong and don’t be afraid!
God is coming to your rescue
Coming to punish your enemies”

Isaiah 35:4

Reader 2 Again the prophet Isaiah says:
“The blind will be able to see,
and the deaf will hear.
The lame will leap and dance,
And those who cannot speak will shout for joy.
Streams of water will flow through the desert;
The burning sand will become a lake,
And dry lands will be filled with springs.”

Isaiah 35:5-7

Reader 3 Isaiah promised:
“He will rule his people with justice and integrity.
Wolves and sheep will live together in peace,
And leopards will lie down with young goats.
Calves and lion cubs will feed together,
And little children will take care of them”

Isaiah 11:5-7

Leader: Let us think of the world in which we have to celebrate the presence of Christ this Christmas:



(play some music during the following reflection)

There are those who are discouraged, for many reasons, because of sickness, poverty, unemployment, because of situations of violence, discrimination, oppression; some of us may be discouraged because of failure, loneliness, lack of self-esteem. *(Pause)*. As we come into contact with this experience in ourselves and in the world around us, let us remember the promise of Isaiah: God is coming to your rescue.

How will we help to make this presence felt in our own lives and in the world around us this Christmas? In the midst of the colour and the glitter and the apparent happiness of Christmas will we be able to reach out to those who are unhappy? As we bring our experience of being discouraged to the crib on Christmas morning, will we be able to remember the assurance of Isaiah that “God is coming to your rescue”. *(Pause)*.

In our world there are people who are marginalised because of ethnic origin, because of social background, because of gender, because of religious belief, because of physical or mental disability, Isaiah promised that the coming of the Messiah would change their situation into one of freedom and hope. *(Pause)*.

Let us think of those who are longing for liberation this Christmas. Let us pray that we will always be alert to the sources of oppression and that we will have the courage to fight against it. *(Pause)*.

We think of the lack of peace and harmony that is a reality for so many people and in many countries throughout the world. *(Pause)*.

We remember some signs of hope – call to mind incidents where people and nations have stood against violence; where people have responded to violence with peace and forgiveness. *(Pause)*.

Reader 4: As we look at the Christmas cards displayed on the board we recognise that many of the hopes and wishes that are expressed on them for Christmas have little to do with the mission of Christ in the world which began on the first Christmas and continues today through us.

Let us then make our own Christmas cards with our own wishes for the world, its people and for ourselves and our families and friends this Christmas.

(Continue to play reflective music in the background as the cards are completed and placed on the board.)

Concluding Prayer

Leader: As we end this time of prayer, let us ask that the light of Christ will shine in our hearts, in our homes and in our school community this Christmas and that through us other people will experience Christ present in our world today.

A Coupon Christmas – gift ideas that cost less but mean more...

Gift giving at Christmas is a stressful time – there's the latest game to get for your nephew/younger brother, the tie in the perfect shade for Dad or the must-have make-up for your sister. Not to mention all the unwanted, unsuitable stuff you are going to receive over the Christmas season.

But we may have the solution to all that ... How about a Coupon Christmas – gift ideas that cost less but mean more... Impossible, I hear you say.

Nevertheless hear me out. This Christmas we can give pledges of service – even promises of fun and excitement – to the people we love. How? By giving *personal gift coupons*. These coupons don't have to replace material gifts, although if you're completely broke, they can!! They can be given along with other gifts or as a thoughtful addition to a smaller gift – thus saving you time and money – both in short supply in the run-up to Christmas.

Advantages

A Coupon Christmas has several advantages:

- Often, although not always, they don't cost money.
- They never have to be returned because they're the wrong size, colour, the same as the one they already have or just not something the receiver will ever use.
- They extend Christmas gift-giving long after the tree has been taken down and the ornaments stored away.
- They're a gift of self, which is what a material gift is supposed to represent.
- They're virtually 100% guaranteed to please.

Who are they suitable for?

Parents, grannies, grand-dads, favourite uncles, brothers and sisters or indeed anyone. The only limitations are your circle of friends, your time and your energy – not forgetting your generosity.

Coupons for Parents

Let's start with Parents. Help around the house is usually a winner – but don't "give" things that are usually your responsibility anyway! The possibilities are endless. For example, give a coupon offering to help with the heavy-duty cleaning and dusting that takes place before a houseful of guests arrives. Or take complete charge (yes, complete) of cleaning the kitchen and the dishes after the guests leave. You might want to go in with a sibling or two in giving a coupon of this size – it's up to you!!

Christmas can spill over into April or May with a coupon offering to plant flowers in the spring or clean the garage or attic. Coupons for washing the car are great as are Saturday breakfast in bed, unless all your attempts to scramble eggs in the past produced something like blackened rubber.

Grandparent gifts

Coupons make great gifts for grandparents too. Assuming they live near enough for you to get there, offer to help with a household task that's becoming difficult for them e.g. window cleaning, weeding the garden – almost any thing that needs to be done that you can do.

Or how about a coupon good for the rental of a classic film that they always talk about? You never know, you could be introduced to some great films. Watch it with them and bring their favourite snacks.

A coupon good for an afternoon of looking through all their photo albums and listening to the stories behind them will also be appreciated. You will learn a lot about your family and you will certainly understand and appreciate your grandparents a great deal more.



Brothers and Sisters

Coupons for brothers and sisters may be harder to make but they're also the most unexpected and perhaps more appreciated. You can expect these coupons to be redeemed the most quickly.

With sisters and brothers close in age, coupons good for taking over their household jobs for a limited time are very appropriate and welcome. Besides the tasks were probably yours at one time and you've got experience.

Coupons good for help with a school project or homework are also great gifts. The trick is help, not actually doing the project or homework for them! Give coupons redeemable for one-to-one lessons in any sport, art, music, cooking etc ...anything that you're reasonably good at and that interests your younger brother or sister. Added benefits: it gives you a chance to be a hero and gives your younger brother or sister a chance to boast a little. Younger cousins can also be included in this if you have no younger brothers and sisters.

Keeping Promises

Now we come to the important bit. You have to be willing to do what your coupon promises and not just when you're bored or have nothing else to do.

When you give coupons of service, you give the gift of your attention, interest, time and yourself. These things can cost more than something you can buy in a shop. They can also be more meaningful, especially appreciated, especially loving and very Jesus-like. He did give His time, His service, and His very self. That's what you're doing when you give Christmas coupons.

Use your artistic talents to come up with some unique gifts – remember your only limitations are your imagination and your generosity!

Have a Happy Coupon Christmas!!

