

Post Primary Diocesan Advisers News Update January 2022

Dear Chaplain and R.E. Teacher,

The start of a new year is a good time to reflect on the God who is always doing new things in our lives. He is always willing to give us a fresh start. He is there to lead us into a future ripe with possibilities. As scripture says, God knows the plans he has for us, plans to prosper us and not harm us.

As believers in Jesus, we commit ourselves to the notion that hope springs eternal. We can reflect on the year gone by and draw lessons from it. Where has God brought you from? Where were you at the beginning of the year? How has God worked to continue to conform you to the image of Christ?

In these very challenging Covid times we find ourselves faced with many decisions, who do I meet with, is it safe to gather, this is so alien to our culture and nature, but vitally necessary for our health and wellbeing at present. As I pen this blog, I have no idea what 2022 will bring, I trust that as God closes one door he opens another for each person.

Together we will continue to care for our school communities and if there are specific resources you would like to share with us, we will gladly act as the conduit to pass them on to others. Here in Education Secretariat we are updating the School Contact Record Sheet, if your school has not returned your form, perhaps you could do so to assist us in the delivery of information to as many Teachers and Chaplains as possible.

January is a very busy month, and we hope that the resources we share with you will benefit you in your interactions with your school and parish communities. If you would like us to arrange a call for any reason, please contact us and we will be more than happy to organise this with you.

May the Lord bless all your endeavours in this new term.

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January Blog 2022

January 1st Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

On January 1st the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, Our Lady's greatest title. Pope Francis urges the faithful people to join in "placing ourselves under the maternal and loving gaze of Mary Most Holy". Pope Francis' prayer is a lovely simple way of bringing our students into the presence of Our Lady as we begin a new year:

Holy Mother of God, to you we consecrate this New Year.
you, who know how to cherish things in your heart, care for us, bless our time, and teach us
to find time for God and for others.
with joy and confidence, we acclaim you Holy Mother of God, Holy Mother of God, Holy
Mother of God...

**"May Our Lady, who brought God into the world of time, help us to be generous with
our time"**

Amen



January 1 is the World Day of Peace!

With [St. John Paul II](#), [Pope Benedict XVI](#), and [Pope](#) Every year on January 1, the Holy Father marks the World Day of Peace with a special message inviting all people to reflect on the important work of building peace. [This year's message](#) is the latest in a long tradition of messages for this day that began with [St. Paul VI](#) in 1967 and continued [Francis](#). Read more about how to pray, learn, and act with this [World Day of Peace handout](#).

Prayer Service for the New Term January 2022

Beginnings

“Cast your net off the starboard side” Jn 21:6

Jn 21: 3 – 7

Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing”. They replied, “we’ll come with you”. They went out and got into the boat but caught nothing that night.

It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus called out, “have you caught anything, friends?” And when they answered, “No”, he said, “Throw the net out to the starboard and you’ll find something”. So they dropped the net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in. The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord”.

Lord, as we begin another year, let us hear again from you where to cast our nets. Speak to us as you spoke to the apostles who had laboured all night and caught nothing, but when you guided them and they listened, they, though professional fishermen, obeyed your word and reaped a very rich harvest. Please Lord, do it again for us.

Opening Song: Gather the Dreamers by Kathy Sherman

Some people dream dreams and ask why? Others say why not?

In a spirit of awe and gratitude I ask you, Divine Dreamer, to bless us during this coming year with a sense of your presence with us as we work to serve your Reign on earth. Spark New Hope in us and encourage the dreamer within us to dream.

BEGIN AGAIN

Begin again to the summoning birds
To the sight of light at the window
Begin to the roar of the morning traffic
All along Pembroke Rd
Every beginning is a promise
Born in light and dying in dark
Determination and exaltation of springtime
Flowering the way to work.
Begin to the pageant of queuing girls
The arrogant loneliness of Swans in the canal
Bridges linking the past and future
Old friends passing through with us still.
Begin to the loneliness that cannot end
Since it perhaps is what makes us begin,
Begin to wonder at unknown faces
At crying birds in the sudden rain
At branches stark in the willing sunlight
At seagulls foraging for bread at couples sharing a sunny secret
Alone together while making good.
Though we live in a world that dreams of ending
That always seems about to give in
Something that will not acknowledge conclusion
Insist that we forever begin.

Brendan Kennelly

Loving Saviour, as we begin another year lift from our hearts that cloud of uncertainty. Fix our eyes upon you that we may choose what gives life. We come to you asking that you transform us and our world.

Give us listening hearts:

Teach us to hold sacred each person's story, each person's dream.

Give us compassionate hearts:

Use our hands to ease the pain of others.

Give us vision to see the invisible poor among us:
Help us never to be blind to another's need.

Give us fluent tongues to name injustice:
Strengthen us to speak the challenging message of the gospel

Give us energy to grow weary of doing good:
Accept our lives, given in service of your people.

Concluding Prayer

Bold and courageous Lord,
I mean to love but I'm afraid of the consequences,
I dream big dreams, but seldom make them come true,
I plan to charge ahead, but often only retreat,
I pretend to be big and tough, but I am afraid of the little things,
the opinion of others, the laughter of friends,
the disappointment of those who matter,
encourage me Lord,
strengthen me to give my whole heart,
to the love, dreams, plans and people I hold dear. Amen.



January 6th The Epiphany

The feast of Epiphany brings to completion what the feast of Christmas began. The Lord has come to visit us, has made us clean, has joined us to himself most deeply. Born a man he has shown himself as God, has rescued us, changed us, and called us to live another way. We pass back from the banquet table to the life of everyday. We have seen God. We have become his children. This was written 2000 years ago yet today we join in prayer and the gift giving of the Magi by worshipping Jesus, Son of Mary, King of kings and the one whom we will adore for all eternity.



January 9th Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Today marks the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. Why did he seek out John the Baptist and present himself for cleansing? He wanted to show us that by being baptised, we share in the divine sonship. In the Gospel of Luke, we hear that “the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Lord thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” May we, in this New Year, be the Lord’s voice calling those in our care to meet Jesus daily.



We are the followers on whom he depends on to spread His message of love and peace.

January 16th World Religion Day

World Religion Day is celebrated every January on the third Sunday of the month. In 2022, that falls on the 16th of January. Its aim is to promote understanding and peace between all religions, encouraging people to learn about other faiths and their followers. The first such day was observed in 1950.

It was initially started by followers of the Bahá'í faith, which says that all religions have common features, and that they should be respected equally. They believe there is one God who is known by different names in all religions. Followers of the Bahá'í faith believe that all humans are born equal, and that we all have the same rights regardless of our faith.

World Religion Day aims to promote the unity of religious peoples so that we can overcome historical differences. For centuries, different religions and faiths have fought each other, and ignored their common values. The purpose of World Religion Day is to work towards a peaceful understanding between faiths. For ideas and resources see:

<https://www.twinkl.ie/event/world-religion-day-2022>

January 17th Martin Luther King Day

The speech on August 28th 1963 is still one of the most powerful addresses ever made. Dr Martin Luther King spoke about his dream. Each of us has a dream let us today explore that wonder and sense of our minds, hearts, and hands united to confront the injustices of our world.

<https://junior.scholastic.com/pages/content-hubs/the-civil-rights-movement.html>

January 18th – 25th Christian Unity Week/Church Unity Octave

2022 marks the 24th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Week. During these eight days in your parish there may be an ecumenical service that some of your students could attend. It is also an opportunity to invite in the local faith leaders to address your class groups in a normal year, at this time of uncertainty, a zoom call could be organised.

The following service was celebrated in Tallaght and was forwarded to us to share with you.



ECUMENICAL CROSS LITURGY

Opening Song:

A procession moves from the back of the Church / School Hall involving representatives from the School 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

Chaplain/Teacher

Why are we gathered here today? 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 unto 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 cross)

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 must carry in life we are not alone, we should not be alone!

(Student places his/her name on the cross)

Chaplain / Teacher

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.

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 cross)

Everyone now prays together

Most high and glorious God.
And light and 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 fulfilment 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 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 name enable us to draw closer to you as we continue our Christian Journey. Amen

(All Faith Community Members place their names on the cross)

Musical Interlude

(A number of those present as invited to place their name on the cross)

Reflection

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

(Student places his/her name on the cross)

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

Scripture Reading - Read by two 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 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 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 Cross)

Musical Interlude *as some members of the group are invited to place their names on the Cross.*

Prayer of the Faithful

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

It is easy to think that we have all the answers, that our way is the best way, but 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 the challenge to pray without ceasing.

Student

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

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

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.

Chaplain

We now pray together the prayer Jesus taught us

Our Father



Prayer and Final Blessing

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.

23rd January to 30th January 2022: Catholic Schools Week

Theme: *Catholic Schools: Living Life to the Full*

Again, this year, resources for Catholic Schools Week will be available online. All lessons have resources for both Junior and Senior Cycle. Each lesson contains practices which support the national Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, as well as self-reflective practices as a way of supporting assessment in the classroom. They also provide extension exercises as an option for your students. Log on to <https://www.catholicschools.ie> to download the Catholic Schools Week 2022 resources.

Other Feast Days this month are:

24 th January	Our Lady Queen of Peace	28 th January	St Thomas Aquinas
24 th January	St Francis de Sales	30 th January	St Aiden of Ferns
25 th January	Conversion of St Paul	31 st January	St Don Bosco
26 th January	St Timothy and St Titus		

Information available from

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm>

Information and other dates:

27th January is Holocaust Memorial Day

The theme for 2022 is ONE DAY. In the words of Iby Knill, survivor of the Holocaust “You didn’t think about yesterday, and tomorrow may not happen, it was only today that you had to cope with and you got through it as best you could”.

See <https://www.hmd.org.uk>

Archdiocese of Dublin

See the Archdiocese of Dublin website for information on events, which take place throughout the diocese during the month. Information for participants on World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon will be posted here. Some Teachers or Students may be interested as it is a fantastic opportunity for young people from around the world to delve deeper into their faith.

<https://www.dublindiocese.ie>

Don’t forget that Parishes are preparing for **the Synod** at present, and you might like to keep abreast of the latest information either on your local Parish website or through the Diocese. Perhaps you might pray the Synod Prayer with your students.



Prayer for the Intentions of Pope Francis

This January we are asked to pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be recognised, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family. Further information and reflections available at <https://www.vaticannews.va>

Prayer for the New Year

A new dawn breaks

A New Year opens

A letting go and a welcoming.

Let go of fear, of panic, of pain.

Let go of loss and loneliness,

Let go of isolation and suffering.

From the dying of the past,

Open the door of Hope;

Open the door of Courage;

Open the door of Wisdom;

Open the door of Compassion.

Let last year give way to a brighter dawn,

A new world of possibility and expectation.

Let our world heal itself and bring forth

A new Springtime, full of possibility.

Help us to stand tall,

Fill us with confidence.

In the midst of uncertainty,

Assure us of Your love.

We move beyond past events

And trust your plan this New Year.

*Surround us with Your presence
To enliven us, to nurture us,
To keep us safe.*

*Teach us to wait patiently for healing
In this time of pandemic,
Until under Your protection,
All things will be made new again,
As we look forward
To blessings yet to come*

Ann Crowley RSM

