



Archdiocese of Dublin
Education Secretariat

Post Primary Diocesan Advisers R.E. News Blog 16th April/31st May 2023

Dear R.E. Teacher and Chaplain,

Welcome to the latest issue of the R.E. Blog. I hope that you are renewed and ready for a new term. As we travel through the Season of Eastertide there will be many ceremonies taking place in your schools and we are here to support you in any way that you feel is beneficial. As a resurrected people may we be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and imbued with the evangelising traits of the Apostles.

We have an abundance of celebrations, not least the graduation of your Leaving Certificate Students, whom we hold before the Lord in prayer in the coming weeks.

We begin by reflecting on our inner relationship with God and what our vocation in life is. Vocations Sunday is on April 30th this year. Our Church needs Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life, please invite your students to consider this as a possible life choice. There is still time to consider travelling to Knock Shrine for the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage led by Archbishop Farrell on April 29th.

May is a month dedicated to prayer to Our Blessed Lady. Those old enough to remember the rendition of Sidney Mc Ewan's "Bring flowers of the rarest" know how important this month is in Ireland. Mid-month we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, and this year may we keep in mind all the people who have been displaced and living in unsafe conditions this day.

The R.E. News has the calendar of events and reflections that may be of assistance to you and your students as we continue our Easter Journey. Please note the information on the John Paul 11 Awards and Ember programmes on offer to all schools.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance to you in your work as Religious Educators. Thank you to all the RE Co-ordinators and Chaplains who have welcomed us into their schools this year. We look forward to meeting many more Teams this Term.

As we come towards the end of the school year, we wish to thank you for your openness and above all your care for the students you support daily. We look forward to continued collaboration in the new academic year. May the Lord and His Blessed Mother keep you safe and well this summer.

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April 16th Divine Mercy Sunday

This Sunday is popularly known as Divine Mercy Sunday. Between 1930 and 1938 Christ appeared to Sister Faustina, a Sister of Mercy in Poland who initiated the Divine Mercy devotion. She was canonized on April 30, 2000, the Sunday after Easter, the Feast of Divine Mercy. On Good Friday, 1937, Jesus requested that Blessed Faustina make a special novena before the Feast of Mercy, from Good Friday through the following Saturday. Jesus also asked that a picture be painted according to the vision of Himself as the fountain of mercy. He gave her a chaplet to be recited and said that it was appropriate to pray the chaplet at three o'clock each afternoon (the Hour of Great Mercy). On one occasion, I heard these words: "My daughter, tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. Everything that exists has come forth from the very depths of My most tender mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will contemplate My love and mercy throughout eternity. The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy.

"[Let] the greatest sinners place their trust in My mercy. They have the right before others to trust in the abyss of My mercy. My daughter, write about My mercy towards tormented souls. Souls that make an appeal to My mercy delight Me. To such souls I grant even more graces than they ask. I cannot punish even the greatest sinner if he makes an appeal to My compassion, but on the contrary, I justify him in My unfathomable and inscrutable mercy. Write: before I come as a just Judge, I first open wide the door of My mercy. He who refuses to pass through the door of My mercy must pass through the door of My justice.

"From all My wounds, like from streams, mercy flows for souls, but the wound in My Heart is the fountain of unfathomable mercy. From this fountain spring all graces for souls. The flames of compassion burn Me. I desire greatly to pour them out upon souls. Speak to the whole world about My mercy."

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

3rd Sunday of Easter Lk 24: 13 – 35 The Road to Emmaus

Mass Readings for the 3rd Sunday of Easter Year A

- **First Reading** – [Acts 2:14, 22-33](#): “God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured him forth, as you see and hear.”
- **Responsorial Psalm** – [Psalm 16](#): “Lord, you will show us the path of life.”
- **Second Reading** – [1 Peter 1:17-21](#): “He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”
- **Gospel** – [Luke 24:13-35](#): “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

Themes for the 3rd Sunday of Easter Year A

The readings for the 3rd Sunday in Easter for Year A encourage us to truly walk the path of discipleship. In the first reading Peter boldly proclaims the Good News. The psalm reminds us that God will guide us along the path of life. The second reading explains that Jesus Christ died so we could have new life. And in the gospel, two disciples encounter the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

- Discipleship
- Fellowship
- Letting God lead the way

See the [Homilies and Reflections](#) section and the [More Thoughts](#) section for further expansion on these readings and some reflection questions for the 3rd Sunday of Easter Year A.

[3rd Sunday of Easter Year A \(2023\) - Young Catholics \(young-catholics.com\)](#)

April 16th St. Bernadette Soubirous

Saint Bernadette Soubirous' Story

Bernadette Soubirous was born in 1844, the first child of an extremely poor miller in the town of Lourdes in southern France. The family was living in the basement of a dilapidated building when on February 11, 1858, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette in a cave above the banks of the Gave River near Lourdes. Bernadette, 14 years old, was known as a virtuous girl though a dull student who had not even made her first Holy Communion. In poor health, she had suffered from asthma from an early age.

There were 18 appearances in all, the final one occurring on the feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, July 16. Although Bernadette's initial reports provoked scepticism, her daily visions of "the Lady" brought great crowds of the curious. The Lady, Bernadette explained, had instructed her to have a chapel built on the spot of the visions. There, the people were to come to wash in and drink of the water of the spring that had welled up from the very spot where Bernadette had been instructed to dig.

According to Bernadette, the Lady of her visions was a girl of 16 or 17 who wore a white robe with a blue sash. Yellow roses covered her feet, a large rosary was on her right arm. In the vision on March 25th, she told Bernadette, "I am the Immaculate Conception." It was only when the words were explained to her that Bernadette came to realize who the Lady was.

Few visions have ever undergone the scrutiny that these appearances of the Immaculate Virgin were subject to. Lourdes became one of the most popular Marian shrines in the world, attracting millions of visitors. Miracles were reported at the shrine and in the waters of the spring. After thorough investigation, Church authorities confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions in 1862.

During her life, Bernadette suffered much. She was hounded by the public as well as by civic officials until at last she was protected in a convent of nuns. Five years later, she petitioned to enter the Sisters of Notre Dame of Nevers. After a period of illness she was able to make the journey from Lourdes and enter the novitiate. But within four months of her arrival she was given the last rites of the Church and allowed to profess her vows. She recovered enough to become infirmarian and then sacristan, but chronic health problems persisted. She died on April 16, 1879, at the age of 35.

Bernadette Soubirous was canonized in 1933.

For further information <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-bernadette-soubirous>

A film - The Song of Bernadette can be found free on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zAog8tRfI>

April 21st Feast of St Anselm

As a young boy in Acosta, Italy, Anselm thought of being a priest. His father, angered by this desire, introduced his son to court life. Anselm forgot about his vocation. But in 1060, Anselm learned of Lanfranc, the leader of monasticism in Normandy, France. Anselm entered Lanfranc's monastery at Bec. Three years later, Anselm became a prior, or head, and began to publish his writings on the existence of God.

Anselm was unanimously elected abbot in 1070, when Lanfranc was made bishop of Canterbury, England. When Lanfranc died in 1089, the English clergy wanted Anselm as their bishop. But Rufus, the son of William the Conqueror, would not approve. For four years, there was no bishop of Canterbury. Then, Rufus suddenly became mortally ill. In fear of hell, Rufus appointed Anselm archbishop of Canterbury.

Rufus recovered and fell into his former sins: taking Church lands and attempting to appoint his own bishops. Frightened over conflict between the archbishop and the king, the bishops and priests abandoned Anselm. The king then exiled him. In exile, Anselm wrote treatises and took part in the Council of Bari (1098). After the death of Rufus, Anselm returned to England. Henry I, brother of Rufus, was then the king. Like his brother, Henry wanted to appoint bishops. Anselm refused to accept his appointment from the king. Again, Anselm was exiled to Rome. Pope Paschal worked out a compromise between the king and the bishop.

Until his death in 1109, Anselm remained in England, defending the faith. Canterbury came to be recognized as the major see in England. In 1720, Anselm was given the title Doctor of the Church and Father of Scholasticism because he analysed and taught the truths of the faith by the aid of reason.

Through the efforts of Anselm, the National Council of Westminster (1102) passed a law prohibiting the sale of people. Discuss what Bishops do today to promote social justice.

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/saints/saints-stories-for-all-ages>

April 25th Feast Day of St Mark

Most of what we know about Mark comes directly from the New Testament. He is usually identified with the Mark of Acts 12:12. When Saint Peter escaped from prison, he went to the home of Mark's mother. Paul and Barnabas took him along on the first missionary journey, but for some reason Mark returned alone to Jerusalem. It is evident, from Paul's refusal to let Mark accompany him on the second journey despite Barnabas's insistence, that Mark had displeased Paul. Because Paul later asks Mark to visit him in prison, we may assume the trouble did not last long. The oldest and the shortest of the four Gospels, the Gospel of Mark emphasizes Jesus's rejection by humanity while being God's triumphant envoy. Probably written for gentile converts in Rome—after the death of Peter and Paul sometime between A.D. 60 and 70—Mark's Gospel is the gradual manifestation of a "scandal": a crucified Messiah.

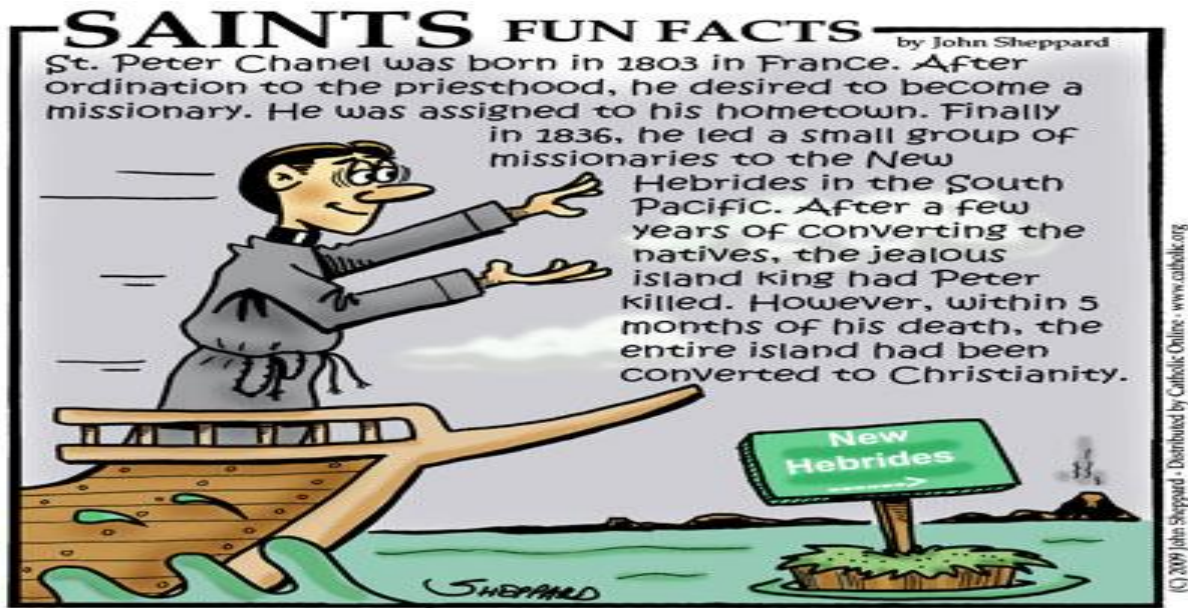
Like another Gospel writer Luke, Mark was not one of the 12 apostles. We cannot be certain whether he knew Jesus personally. Some scholars feel that the evangelist is speaking of himself when describing the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane: "Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked" (Mark 14:51-52). Others hold Mark to be the first bishop of Alexandria, Egypt. Venice, famous for the Piazza San Marco, claims Mark as its patron saint; the large basilica there is believed to contain his remains. A winged lion is Mark's symbol. The lion derives from Mark's description of John the Baptist as a "voice of one crying out in the desert" (Mark 1:3), which artists compared to a roaring lion. The wings come from the application of Ezekiel's vision of four winged creatures to the evangelists.

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-mark>

A short video about St Mark can be viewed here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Hek-xU96So>

April 28th Feast of St Peter Chanel



April 29th Feast of St Catherine of Siena Patron of Europe

The value Catherine makes central in her short life and which sounds clearly and consistently through her experience is complete surrender to Christ. What is most impressive about her is that she learns to view her surrender to her Lord as a goal to be reached through time.

She was the 23rd child of Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa and grew up as an intelligent, cheerful, and intensely religious person. Catherine disappointed her mother by cutting off her hair as a protest against being overly encouraged to improve her appearance in order to attract a husband. Her father ordered her to be left in peace, and she was given a room of her own for prayer and meditation.

She entered the Dominican Third Order at 18 and spent the next three years in seclusion, prayer, and austerity. Gradually, a group of followers gathered around her—men and women, priests and religious. An active public apostolate grew out of her contemplative life. Her letters, mostly for spiritual instruction and encouragement of her followers, began to take more and more note of public affairs. Opposition and slander resulted from her mixing fearlessly with the world and speaking with the candour and authority of one completely committed to Christ. She was cleared of all charges at the Dominican General Chapter of 1374.

Her public influence reached great heights because of her evident holiness, her membership in the Dominican Third Order, and the deep impression she made on the pope. She worked tirelessly for the crusade against the Turks and for peace between Florence and the pope.

In 1378, the Great Schism began, splitting the allegiance of Christendom between two, then three, popes and putting even saints on opposing sides. Catherine spent the last two years of her life in Rome, in prayer and pleading on behalf of the cause of Pope Urban VI and the unity of the Church. She offered herself as a victim for the Church in its agony. She died surrounded by her “children” and was canonized in 1461.

Catherine ranks high among the mystics and spiritual writers of the Church. In 1939, she and Francis of Assisi were declared co-patrons of Italy. Pope Paul VI named her and Teresa of Avila doctors of the Church

in 1970. Her spiritual testament is found in *The Dialogue*. Consider Catherine's advice. If you can't start by being brave about everything, identify one thing. Resolve to spread the light.

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit-blog/sisterhood-of-saints-catherine-of-siena>



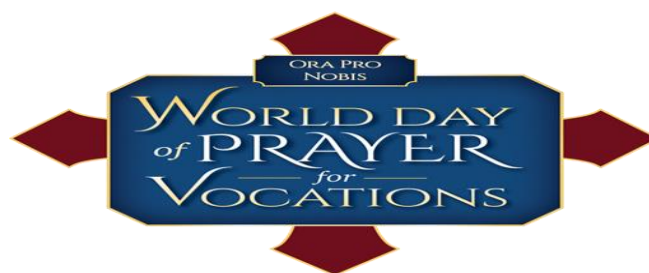
April 30th Fourth Sunday of Easter John 10: 1-10

The readings for the 4th Sunday of Easter Year A (Good Shepherd Sunday) remind us that Jesus Christ leads us through the gate of salvation. In the first reading Peter calls all to conversion. The psalm reminds us that God is always caring for us as a shepherd cares for his sheep. The second reading tells us that when we stray, we can return to the Lord. And in the gospel Jesus promises to lead his people to safety and warns us to be cautious about who we follow.

- Discernment
- Discipleship
- Recognizing the Lord's voice

See the [Homilies and Reflections](#) section and the [More Thoughts](#) section for further expansion on these readings and some reflection questions for the 4th Sunday of Easter Year A (Good Shepherd Sunday).

<https://young-catholics.com/5503/4th-sunday-of-easter-year-a/>



PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO DIOCESAN AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS

God our Father,
You made each of us to use our gifts in the Body of Christ.
We ask that You inspire young people whom
you call to priesthood and consecrated life
to courageously follow Your will.
Send workers into Your great harvest
so that the Gospel is preached,
the poor are served with love,
the suffering are comforted,
and Your people are strengthened by the sacraments.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Prayer Intention of Pope Francis for April 2023

For a culture of peace and non-violence.
We pray for the spread of peace and non-violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by States and citizens.



Prayer Intention of Pope Francis for May 2023

For church movements and groups.
We pray that Church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelization each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world.

May 1st / Lá Bealtaine

Month of Mary the Mother of our Lord

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. Mary's profound Prayer, her "*Fiat*" (Let it be done) in response to the visitation from the messenger of heaven, the angel, provides a pattern of prayer and a way to live for every Christian. It issues forth in her song of praise, her "*Magnificat*." This song begins with the words "*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*" "My soul doth magnify the Lord" (Luke 1:46-55). However, the "*Fiat*" is more than a prayer and the "*Magnificat*" more than a hymn of praise. Together they reveal the Way of the first disciple, Mary, and together they constitute a guide, for this journey of life that we all walk.



Our lives, so real and human, with all of the blessings and all of the pain, can be packed with meaning, purpose and destiny, if we have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to respond with the kind of voluntary surrender that was so beautifully expressed by the Virgin of Nazareth in her continuing surrender to God's invitation. <https://www.catholic.org/mary/disc.php>

It is a Catholic tradition to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary during May, with churches and homes erecting a May Altar with a statue of Mary, flowers, a candle and a picture of Mary. In a short pastoral letter, Pope Francis is encouraging families to rediscover the Rosary at home and has offered two new prayers to recite at the end of the Rosary.

<https://www.catholicbishops.ie>

<https://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/may-the-month-of-mary-resources>

May 1st Feast of St Joseph the Worker

May is the Feast of St Joseph the Worker, a day on which the Church encourages us to celebrate the value of work, and the dignity and rights of workers. "May Day" has long been dedicated to labour and the working man. It falls on the first day of the month that is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pope Pius XII expressed the hope that this feast would accentuate the dignity of labour and would bring a spiritual dimension to labour unions. It is eminently fitting that St. Joseph, a working man who became the foster-father of Christ and patron of the universal Church, should be honoured on this day. For more resources see:

<http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2014/04/22/may-1st-feast-of-saint-joseph-the-worker/>

May 3rd Feast of St Philip and St James Apostles

We celebrate both saints on the same day because their relics were brought to Rome together on the same day in early May. They rest there still, in the Basilica of the Holy Apostles. They are considered two of the favoured witnesses of our Beloved Jesus' Resurrection. Saints' Philip and James, bear testimony to us that their Master is truly risen from the dead, that they have seen Him, that they have touched Him, that they have conversed with Him (*1 John 1: 1*), during these forty days.

<https://www.catholicireland.net/saintoftheday/saints-philip-and-jamesapostles/>

May 5th Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice



"Let us do ever so little for God, we will be sure He will never forget it, nor let it pass unrewarded."

Blessed Edmund Rice, religious (1762-1844) came from Callan, County Kilkenny. After his young wife's early death, he sold his possessions and dedicated his life to the education of the poor. To advance the work, he gathered other like-minded men who took religious vows to work for the Catholic education of boys.

He is a model of patient and cheerful acceptance of the sufferings God sends, a true lay apostle and a deeply committed religious.

His Holiness John Paul II beatified Edmund Ignatius Rice on October 6, 1996, in St. Peter's Square. Speaking of Blessed Edmund Rice, the Pope stated,

"Here we have an outstanding model of a true lay apostle and a deeply committed Religious. ... Today, his spiritual sons, the Christian Brothers, and the Presentation Brothers, continue his mission: a mission, which he himself described in this simple and clear intention: 'Trusting in God's help, I hope to be able to educate these boys to be good Catholics and good citizens.'"

For more information on his life see:

<https://www.erst.ie/about-us/who-is-edmund-rice/>

May 7th Fifth Sunday of Easter John 14: 1-12

Mass Readings for the 5th Sunday of Easter Year A

- **First Reading** – [Acts 6:1-7](#): "As the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution."
- **Responsorial Psalm** – [Psalm 33](#): "Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you."
- **Second Reading** – [1 Peter 2:4-9](#): "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, and a stone that will make people stumble, and a rock that will make them fall."
- **Gospel** – [John 14:1-12](#): "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father."

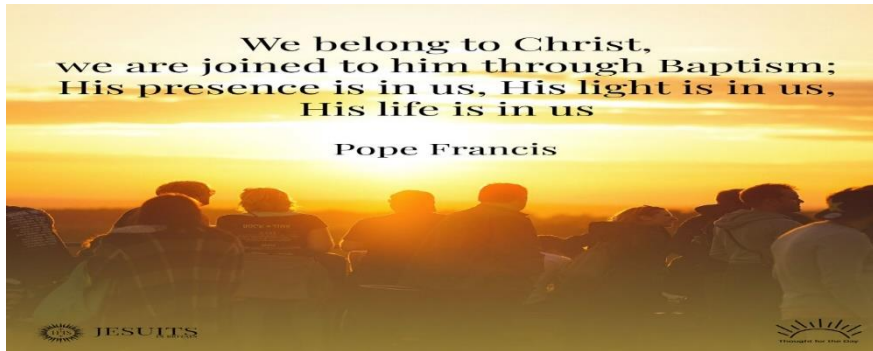
Themes for the 5th Sunday of Easter Year A

The readings for the 5th Sunday of Easter Year A tell us that we are called to follow Jesus and serve him, even though we don't know where that might lead us. The first reading tells how and why the first deacons were chosen. The psalm reminds us that God "loves justice and right". In the second reading Peter calls the people to be "a holy priesthood". And in the gospel Jesus tells us to have faith in him.

- Service
- Vocations
- Faith
- Jesus as the image of the Father

See the [Homilies and Reflections](#) section and the [More Thoughts](#) section for further expansion on these readings and some reflection questions for the 5th Sunday of Easter Year A.

[5th Sunday of Easter Year A \(2023\) - Young Catholics \(young-catholics.com\)](#)



May 13th Feast of Our Lady of Fatima

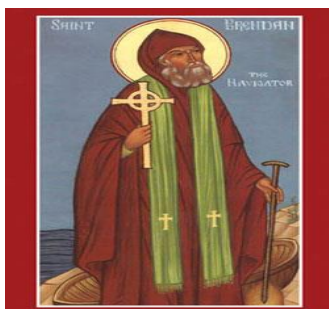
It was on this day that the Blessed Virgin Mary started her series of apparition to three shepherd children in the small village of Fatima in Portugal in 1917. Between May 13 and October 13, 1917, three Portuguese children—Francisco and Jacinta Marto and their cousin Lucia dos Santos—received apparitions of Our Lady at Cova da Iria near Fatima, a city 110 miles north of Lisbon. Mary asked the children to pray the rosary for world peace, for the end of World War I, for sinners, and for the conversion of Russia.

Mary gave the children three secrets. Following the deaths of Francisco and Jacinta in 1919 and 1920 respectively, Lucia revealed the first secret in 1927. It concerned devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The second secret was a vision of hell. When Lucia grew up, she became a Carmelite nun and died in 2005 at the age of 97.

Pope John Paul II directed the Holy See's Secretary of State to reveal the third secret in 2000; it spoke of a "bishop in white" who was shot by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows into him. Many people linked this vision to the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981. The feast of Our Lady of Fatima was approved by the local bishop in 1930; it was added to the Church's worldwide calendar in 2002.

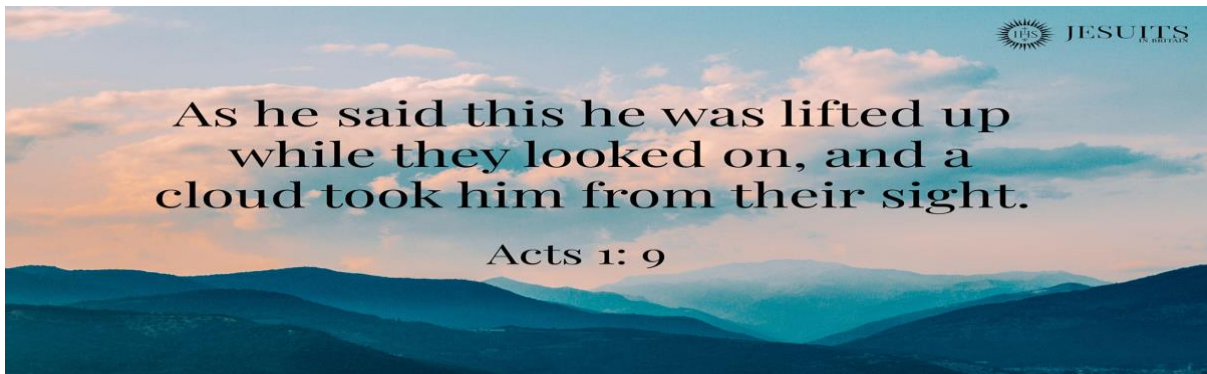
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/our-lady-of-fatima/>

May 16th Feast of St Brendan



Born possibly in Tralee, Ireland, and educated by St Ita and ordained by Bishop Erc, he became a monk and founded a large monastery at Clonfert. Many fantastic details have been added to this brief knowledge usually based on the fictional "Navigation" in which he is described as searching for the Isles of the Blessed, touching the Canaries, and even discovering America. It is possible that he made visits to Scotland and Wales.

May 21st The Ascension of the Lord



Traditionally the Ascension of Our Lord was held 40 days after Easter, falling on a Thursday. However in most dioceses, the observance of the Solemnity of the Ascension is moved to the following Sunday, superseding the 7th Sunday of Easter.

Mass Readings for the Ascension of the Lord First Reading – [Acts 1:1-11](#): “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.”

- **Responsorial Psalm – [Psalm 47](#):** “God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.”
- **Second Reading – [Ephesians 1:17-23](#):** “And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.”
- **Alternate Second Reading – [Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:19-23](#):** “Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself, that he might now appear before God on our behalf.”
- **Gospel – [Luke 24:46-53](#):** “As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God.”

Themes for the Ascension of the Lord

The readings for the The Ascension of the Lord encourage us to be witnesses for Jesus Christ, just as the early Christians were. In the first reading the ascension of Jesus is recounted and the Apostles are told they will receive the Holy Spirit. In the second reading we hear that Jesus Christ rules heaven and earth. In the alternate second reading we learn that Jesus Christ died for all people. And in the gospel, after Jesus ascends to heaven, the disciples can be found in the temple praising God.

- Evangelism
- Going out to the world
- Getting out of our comfort zones

The Ascension does not mark the end of Jesus’ relationship with His Church but the beginning of a new way of His relating to the world – in and through His Church. This way includes every one of us who now bear His name. When viewed with the eyes of living faith the Ascension can begin to change the way we view ourselves and live our daily lives.

The Ascension invites us to reflect on who Jesus is – and who we are empowered to become in Him, beginning now and opening into the life to come. He is indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (John 14:6) The Feast of the Ascension of the Lord Jesus helps to explain the Christian vocation and unveils the horizon which opens before us as we continue to live our lives now in this Way called Christianity. (Acts 9:2, 11:26) It points to the ongoing plan of redemption for each of us. It gives us a glimpse of the loving plan of God for the whole of creation. This Feast also points us toward a deeper understanding of the Feast of Pentecost which we will soon celebrate. The very Breath of God, His Holy Spirit, has been breathed into the Body of Christ, the Church – and into each one of us as members of that Body.

Prayer:

Lord, to depart from you is to fall, to return to you is to rise up,
To remain in you is to build on solid ground.
To abandon you is to become lost, to seek you is to love you,
To see you is to possess you.
Faith urges us toward you,
hope leads us to you,
Love unites us with you. Amen. St Augustine (+430ad)

[The Ascension of the Lord Year A \(2023\) - Young Catholics \(young-catholics.com\)](http://young-catholics.com)

May 27th Feast of St Augustine of Canterbury

St. Augustine was born in Rome and died in Canterbury, England, in 604. When Pope Gregory I heard that the pagans of Britain were disposed to accept the Christian Faith, he sent the prior of St. Andrew, Augustine, and forty of his Benedictine brethren to England. Despite the great difficulties involved in the task assigned to him, Augustine and his monks obeyed. The success of their preaching was immediate. King Ethelbert was baptized on Pentecost Sunday, 596, and the greater part of the nobles and people soon followed his example. St. Augustine died as the first Archbishop of Canterbury.



May 28th Pentecost Sunday

Mass Readings for Pentecost Year A

- **First reading** – [Acts 2:1-11](#): “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.”
- **Responsorial Psalm** – [Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34](#): “Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.”

- **Second reading – [1 Corinthians 12:3B-7, 12-13](#):** “To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”
- **Gospel – [John 20:19-23](#):** “He breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Themes for Pentecost Year A

So the Spirit is obviously the main focus for the Mass readings for Pentecost Year A. Empowered by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we go out to the world to preach the message of Jesus Christ. This is the birthday of The Church and is celebrated 50 days after Easter. It is the last day of the Easter season.

- The Holy Spirit
- Being empowered as disciples
- New life as Christians
- Evangelization

See the [Homilies and Reflections](#) section and the [More Thoughts](#) section for further expansion on these readings and some reflection questions for Pentecost Year A.

[Pentecost Year A \(2023\) - Young Catholics \(young-catholics.com\)](#)

**Lord, we thank you for this Easter season which we have now completed.
We thank you for the times when we have to stand hopefully
before an empty tomb,
times when we see you and live with you
and then have you vanish from our sight
and have to wait for you in Jerusalem for what seems an interminable time,
until eventually your promised Spirit comes on us and we can live again. Amen**

May 30th Feast of St Joan of Arc

Burned at the stake as a heretic after a politically motivated trial, Joan was beatified in 1909 and canonized in 1920.

Born of a well-to-do peasant couple in Domremy-Greux southeast of Paris, Joan was only 12 when she experienced a vision and heard voices that she later identified as Saints Michael the Archangel, Catherine of Alexandria, and Margaret of Antioch. During the Hundred Years War, Joan led French troops against the English and recaptured the cities of Orléans and Troyes. This enabled Charles VII to be crowned as king in Reims in 1429. Captured near Compiègne the following year, Joan was sold to the English and placed on trial for heresy and witchcraft. Professors at the University of Paris supported Bishop Pierre Cauchon of Beauvais, the judge at her trial; Cardinal Henry Beaufort of Winchester, England, participated in the questioning of Joan in prison. In the end, she was condemned for wearing men’s clothes. The English resented France’s military success—to which Joan contributed.

On this day in 1431, Joan was burned at the stake in Rouen, and her ashes were scattered in the Seine River. A second Church trial 25 years later nullified the earlier verdict, which was reached under political pressure.

Remembered by most people for her military exploits, Joan had a great love for the sacraments, which strengthened her compassion toward the poor. Popular devotion to her increased greatly in 19th-

century France and later among French soldiers during World War I. Theologian George Tavard writes that her life “offers a perfect example of the conjunction of contemplation and action” because her spiritual insight is that there should be a “unity of heaven and earth.”

May 31st Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary



This feast, going back only to the 13th or 14th century was established widely throughout the Church to pray for unity. The present date of celebration was set in 1969, in order to follow the Annunciation of the Lord and precede the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist.

Like most feasts of Mary, it is closely connected with Jesus and his saving work. The more visible actors in the visitation drama (see Luke 1:39-45) are Mary and Elizabeth. However, Jesus and John the Baptist steal the scene in a hidden way. Jesus makes John leap with joy—the joy of messianic salvation. Elizabeth, in turn, is filled with the Holy Spirit and addresses words of praise to Mary—words that echo down through the ages.

It is helpful to recall that we do not have a journalist’s account of this meeting. Rather Luke, speaking for the Church, gives a prayerful poet’s rendition of the scene. Elizabeth’s praise of Mary as “the mother of my Lord” can be viewed as the earliest Church’s devotion to Mary. As with all authentic devotion to Mary, Elizabeth’s (the Church’s) words first praise God for what God has done to Mary. Only secondly does she praise Mary for trusting God’s words.

Then comes the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55). Here, Mary herself—like the Church—traces all her greatness to God.

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/visitation-of-the-blessed-virgin-mary>

Life is for living. Do it boldly with these verbs.

With so much advice out there in the world—Franciscan Media bring us lovely verbs to live by!

“Life is about living, right? COVID-19, its restrictions, and how it all changed our world has certainly taught us that. But to live and to be fully alive requires action. And that means adding more verbs to our vocabulary”.

Never stop being curious. Every day offers discovery. Shake off the lethargy and explore the world around you. God can be found everywhere you look.

Life is serious, but living it is supposed to be fun. If the last year has taught us nothing, it’s that we need laughter, joy, and levity to lift our battered spirits. Don’t feel about wanting to feel better.

No one knows everything—thank goodness! Questions are not only OK; they’re the key to learning and growing. Be curious. Ask questions. Never stop moving forward.

It’s often hard to do, but it’s worth the effort. In Ephesians 4:32 it reads: “And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.”

Try. It wasn’t very popular in a galaxy far, far away, but it’s popular with us. If we didn’t try new things, we’d all still be in onesies and kid shoes. God loves our efforts!

Help. It’s easy to feel that there’s too much to do, that there are too many problems to solve. But even the least confident among us can usually agree there’s some way we can help—somebody, something, somewhere.

Create. Making something from scratch—whether it’s a meal or a piece of art or an essay—is essential to a fulfilling life. It’s a participation in God’s work of creation. It keeps us from getting stuck in a rut of living someone else’s story.

Take time on a regular basis to stop whatever you’re busy doing and look at the big picture. Think, pray, write in a journal, talk to a friend. Find one of a hundred ways that works for you.

Gratitude, love, and humility all are intertwined. God, our friends, our family, our co-workers—there is always someone deserving of a “thank you.”

Before we can love someone, we must know that person. To know someone, we must listen. And sometimes the best listening we do comes through prayer.





POPE JOHN PAUL II AWARD

“The Pope John Paul II Awards offer young people the chance to learn the way of service and to develop the skills of Christian leadership. Christian service gives them the opportunity to think beyond themselves and their own needs and to reach out to others. The way of leadership based on knowing the person and the teaching of Jesus gives them the skills to use their talents with enthusiasm and energy for the benefit of all.”

The Pope John Paul II Awards were created to commemorate the late Pope St John Paul who was so committed to young people. The Awards are open to young people of all abilities between the ages of 16 to 18. There are four Awards:

The Papal Cross Award

The Gold Award

The Silver Award

The Bronze Award.

The Award is being run by the Education Secretariat in Dublin Diocese supporting parishes, schools, and young people. The Award requires a commitment from the young person and a lead person in the school/parish. They also show young people a pathway back to their Parish Community with two areas covered: Parish Involvement and Social Awareness.

We warmly welcome young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years in schools and parishes to become involved this year.

For more information contact:

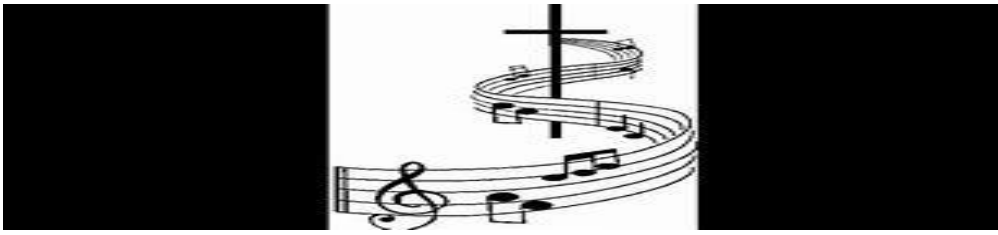
Sr Bernadette Carron bernadette.carron@dublindiocese.ie

or

Sr Concepta Foley concepta.foley@dublindiocese.ie

Education Secretariat, 51 Home Farm Road, Drumcondra, Dublin, D09 W5W4.

Dublin Diocesan PILGRIMAGE to Knock Shrine



Would you like to participate in a Choir of Many Voices for our Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock on Saturday, April 29? This will be a great way to bring people from our parishes together in honour of Our Lady of Knock. Our pilgrimage choir will provide a unique opportunity for people from every corner of our Archdiocese to participate in our pilgrimage Mass, which will be celebrated by Archbishop Dermot Farrell. The choir will be under the direction Ciaran Coll, who is well known for a wide variety of music ministry in our Diocese and participation in the Ember Programme.

If you would like to be part of the choir, please email knockpilgrimage@dublindiocese.ie with you name, your school / parish, the position you sing in and your phone number or email address. Alternatively, you can phone 086 369 1217 with this information. A number of rehearsals will be organised, and we will provide further updates over the coming weeks.

Ember Programme 2023



On **May 4th Archbishop Dermot Farrell** will concelebrate Mass at the Ember Graduation Ceremony in DCU, St Patricks Campus. Twenty schools from around the Diocese will be present and each of the 181 participants will receive a certificate in recognition of the work they have led in their school/ parish communities to enhance the faith life of their area. Congratulations to all, especially the Staff, who supported the young people. Our thanks to the DCU Chaplaincy Team led by Fr Paul Hampson, who have supported us as we gathered for a Renewal Day in January and for the Graduation Event.

Plans are already under way for the training of Ember Teams for the school year 2023/24. If your school is interested in being part of this faith-led programme please contact Sr Bernadette or Sr Concepta.

Graduation Season has arrived once again. The following resources were shared by Teachers and Chaplains to assist you.

These final weeks at school include many sad farewells, from teachers to students; from students to teachers and to staff members who are retiring or transferring to another school. We have moments of saying "goodbye" throughout our lives. Time moves on and while it is difficult to let go of the things we cherish, there are always other ways of being present to the people and places we leave behind; and we can look forward with hope to the new challenges and possibilities life presents. The "goodbye" of Jesus was full of comfort and hope; may God enlighten us to see the "rich glories promised" to all those who follow the way of Jesus.

A GRADUATION BLESSING

LOVING GOD,

LOOK UPON OUR GRADUATES AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH LOVE.

WE PRAY THEY MAY THEY BE AWARE OF YOUR CARING PRESENCE

THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES. BLESS AND STRENGTHEN THEM SO

THEY MAY PUT THE GIFTS YOU HAVE GIVEN THEM TO GOOD USE.

WE ASK YOU TO WALK BESIDE THEM, GUIDING THEIR

FOOTSTEPS ON THE ROAD AHEAD. MAY THEY FIND FRIENDS

WHO WILL ALSO WALK BESIDE THEM AND MAY THEY BE

COMFORTED IN THE DARKER MOMENTS OF LIFE'S JOURNEY.

AMEN

Communion Reflection by Henry Rohr

A Piece of Wood - Every possibility is sleeping in such a piece of wood.

It depends on you - How you look at it - What you see in it-

Some useless obstacles in your way - Fuel to light fire

Material - To build a fence around your isolation

To build a house – a door- a table OR a challenge - Waiting just for you

To be set free - To be called to life.

The woodcarver, the artist, sees it like that. He takes it in his hands

And sees the hidden life - And makes it speak - Of growth and death - Joy and pain

And all the mysteries of life.

All this is contained in a piece of wood. Our whole life - The world around us

Is like such a piece of wood. It depends on us, How we look at it,- what we see in it.

Shouldn't we all be artists?.



Final Blessing

May the beauty of God always surprise you.

May the freedom of God keep you centred and whole.

May the truthfulness of God bring peace to your heart.

May God's gift of Christ saturate you with love.

May the wisdom of God's dream always invite you deeper.

And may the blessing of God,

In the company of Christ and

The life-giving Spirit

Guide you now and every minute of your life.

Marking Graduation: A possible theme

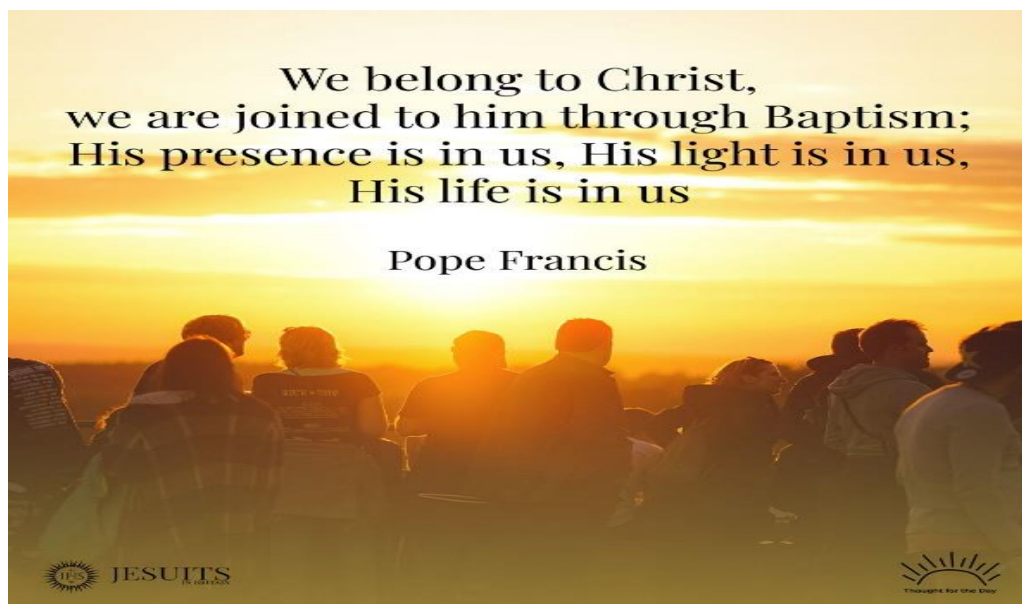
"The Future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams" Eleanor Roosevelt

A Prayer for all doing Exams.

Loving God, I turn to you today. As the exams approach I am nervous and so I ask you to help me. You know how important these exams are to me. Set me free from worry, give me your peace and help me to think clearly. Help me to remember what I have learned, to use my time well, not to panic, to do my best and not to worry about the outcome. Help me to realise that the exams are not there to catch me out but to find out how much I know.

Lord, keep me calm so that I can write down all I know. Keep my friends calm too, we're all in this together! Let me sleep each night so that I am refreshed and renewed for the next exam. Even if I struggle I must always remember that there is a bigger picture of which these exams are only a small part of.

Most important of all calm me down, keep me focussed, guide me along, get me through the scary moments and make sure I attempt every question. Thank you for being my friend today and always. Amen.



Our Final Weeks

May and June are summer months, Lord,
a time when the evenings are bright and holidays
beckon. This year these weeks are a time of work and
worry for Sixth Year students. Bless us with
health and strength during the coming weeks.
You have already blessed each of us with various talents;

mine are different to anyone else's,
and I thank you for what you have given me.

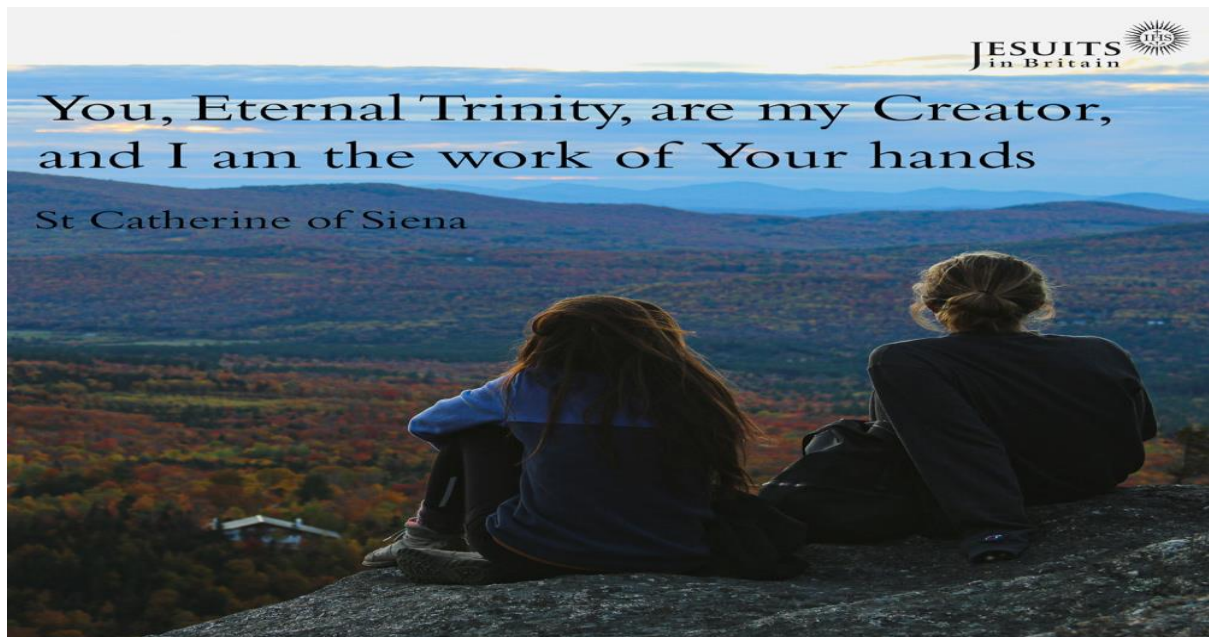
Help me to use my abilities well now
and to have the courage to do my very best.
Guide me in my preparation for the Exams,
and if things go wrong along the way,
keep me from getting disheartened
and let me begin my efforts again.

Lord, keep me calm when doing the Exams;
let me be content to do my best

and may I do justice to my talents and preparation.
You have known me since the first moment of my life.
You know what's in my heart and mind as I leave school:

guide me in my decisions about my future.
Help me to trust that I am part of your plan for the
world and that your plan for me is good.
Lord, lead me safely through the years ahead.

Be close to me always. Amen.



Veritas Religious Education Books available for 2023/24

Soul Seekers is a three-year course for Junior Cert RE, covering the Junior Cycle syllabus and is approved by the Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference.

- The STUDENT TEXT is available in print as well as in eBook format, with accompanying workbook.
- Engaging, easy-to-follow presentation of content.
- Clearly defined Learning Outcomes, Key Skills, and Key Terms
- Wide-ranging student activities that engage different learning styles
- Inclusive of diverse faith traditions
- Three-year course WORKBOOK
- Free Digital Library, with videos and interactive resources specially created for Soul Seekers
- Exam Key available online
- Free poster set for teachers.

For Transition Year

Look Up! is a new digital programme for TY Religious Education

- Student content is presented on slides, shown from teacher's whiteboard or screen.
- Links to videos, music and other resources embedded on the slides.
- Detailed teacher notes and instructions, along with discussion questions and classroom activities, visible only from teacher's device
- Content covered is inclusive of all the major world religions.
- Accompanying Student Journal contains reflective exercises, worksheets, and Glossary

For Senior Cycle (Non-Exam) Price: €200 per school

New Horizons is a digital module-based programme for Senior Cycle non-exam Religious Education.

The first three modules (available for September 2023) deal with life as a journey, climate justice, and finding meaning through art.

- The focus is on exploration and discovery, leading to action.
- Clearly defined learning and faith goals
- Teachers choose which modules to teach.
- Lots of video and audio content
- Creative individual and group activities
- Closing prayer or other reflective activity at end of each unit
- Suggestions at end of each module for additional resources on the topic

Future modules will cover topics such as morality, social justice, and meditation.



For Senior Cycle (Exam)

The Search for Meaning and Values (Revised Edition) is the textbook for Section A of the Religious Education exam syllabus.

- This first Student Text in the *Faith Seeking Understanding* series has been fully revised, with expanded content and updated examples.
- The series includes books covering all sections in the syllabus.
- A companion series called *Into the Classroom*, which provides background information and further reading for teachers, is also available.

Dates and Information

See the Archdiocese of Dublin website for information on events, which take place throughout the diocese or your local Parish website.

www.dublindiocese.ie