

Education Secretariat

Archdiocese of Dublin

Post - Primary Diocesan Advisers Blog - October 2024

Dear Chaplains and R.E. Teachers,

If you, like me, grew up in a world where children should be seen not heard, then perhaps the theme I am suggesting we reflect on during this month of October may not sit easily with you at first. Please bear with me!

I believe it is incumbent on us as educators to ask ourselves whether we are encouraging our students to be audacious, to question, to be independent critical thinkers, to be fearless, to make mistakes and learn from them or are we rewarding compliance, mediocrity, the safer routes rather than the more challenging, uncharted paths?

I am sure you are aware that the most often repeated phrase in the New Testament is, "Do not be afraid." Could that be our message to our students, to our colleagues, to the families we serve ... let it serve as an antidote to the anxieties that beset us as we are frequently bombarded by the demands of society, of social media, of our work, our peers and those closest to us.

God is on our side, Jesus is with us, we can trust, we can try and try again.

So many of us were inspired by our Olympians during the recent games. They serve as wonderful reminders of the power of self-belief. They dared to go for gold even on those darker days when victory seemed out of reach and progress was measured in aches and pains.

Denis Walsh writing of our Irish medal winners in the Irish Times says of them, "They are witnesses to greatness, eternal greatness."

Let us urge our students to be witnesses to eternal greatness, to be audacious, to dream big and to invest in their dreams.

As Post-Primary Diocesan Advisers, we are glad to advise and support you in any way we can.



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The Teacher

*In the garden of wisdom,
she did not step in as head gardener.
Instead, she tended her own planting.*

*She showed me how to weed
the stories we tell ourselves,
how inner spaciousness
is the richest soil for growth.*

She did not do the tilling for me.

Inquiry became my hoe.

*She offered questions free
as rain water.*

*And when it was time to sow,
from her own rows she gathered seeds.*

She did not do the planting.

She handed the seeds to me.

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Rosemerry Trommer wrote this poem in honour of her contemplative teacher, Joi Sharp, from whom she had learned so much about living contemplatively.

This poem speaks to the essence of teaching as a vocation.

As Parker J Palmer expresses it, ***“Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic self-hood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do so, we will find not only the joy that every human being seeks – we will also find our path of authentic service in the world.”***

Teaching is not about filling students’ heads with knowledge, but about helping them to discover who they are in the depths of their being. We introduce them to the culture into which they have been born and we teach them skills to interrogate it and see beyond it. This involves looking inwards as well as outwards. The best teachers help students to access their inner spaciousness and develop true self esteem. The greatest gift a parent or teacher can give a child/student is the capacity to question and to have confidence in their own inner wisdom.



(PHOTO: LAURENCE FREEMAN, SPAIN)

Today the world has changed out of all recognition, almost, from what it was like 30-40 years ago.

Religion is much more about seeking. Many of this younger generation, they are 'seekers' rather than 'dwellers.' A seeker is somebody who is genuinely seeking truths, seeking God, seeking a spiritual path, but they don't really have anywhere to do it from. They don't have a spiritual home – they don't have a tradition, they don't have a church where they can say this is where I belong. To relate to them, to communicate with them, to share with them, is very different.

And we need to be seekers ourselves, we who 'dwell in the house of the Lord' (Ps 23:6, 27:4), we who belong and will say 'Yes, I am happy and proud to say I am a disciple of Jesus, not a good one, but I'm doing the best I can'.

(Christian Life in the Light of Christian Meditation 3: Evangelisation by Laurence Freeman OSB)



The Audacity to Believe

With so much fake news coming at us from all angles, it is no wonder that the phrase “you wouldn’t know what to believe” is often repeated in many and varied situations across the globe. We can imagine Thomas shaking his head at the news that Jesus whom he had seen crucified and die on the cross was now risen and appearing to his friends.

A good place to start exploring our Catholic Faith with our students is the Creed which was pronounced on our behalf at Baptism and which we declared for ourselves at our Confirmation and at all Sunday Masses since then. We believe in God, Father, Creator, Source of Life, Love which has no ending, in Jesus, Son, Redeemer, Healer, Saviour, Lover of the poor, the humble Spirit, Life Giver, Encourager, Enabler from whom we come, to whom we go.

Belief does not include understanding, it does and must include trust. This month, perhaps ask your students to consider what belief means to them, and how they allow their beliefs to shape the decisions they make and their life choices in the small and in the bigger aspects of their lives.

The Audacity to Be Leaders

How can we encourage students to join in the life and leadership of their school and local parish?

Each year we invite students from all over the Archdiocese of Dublin to participate in our Faith Leadership Programme. Known as the Ember Programme, it aims to provide students with

the opportunity to grow as individuals and to focus on the richness of each person so that together as a team, students can enrich their school community by being true to themselves and their beliefs.

Vision of the Ember Programme

Inspired by the Christian message of love and service to others, our vision is to create a team of leaders within schools who will serve as an example of faith in action, striving to make a difference in the lives of those around them.

The Audacity to live in the Spirit

We can ask students to name times in everyday situations when they needed courage to deal with challenging situations.

These might include:

- Speaking up when something is wrong
- Standing up for others who are victims of social injustice
- Making tough decisions to achieve their goal

What are the students' hopes and dreams for a better world as they journey through life each day?

"In our current times it is truly important to encourage young people to talk about their dreams. To discuss their passions with them in meaningful ways, there is a need to be willing to ask oneself, "What is my dream?"

"Every dream begins with a step into the unknown, it is a journey open to trial and error and it should be a journey we do not make alone."

"In the sharing of our own dreams and in facilitating conversations with young people about their dreams, we have the opportunity to be real educators of the young, leading them into a horizon filled with hope."



The Audacity to be a Kingdom Builder

Jesus speaks a great deal about the Kingdom. His Kingdom is very different to what we usually imagine a kingdom to be. Jesus said, it belongs to the poor, to the peacemakers, the merciful, and those who hunger and thirst for God. In this kingdom the people from the margins and the bottom rungs will be lifted up to places of honour, seated at the best places at the table. This Kingdom knows no geographic bounds, no political parties, no particular language or culture. It advances not through power and might but through acts of love and joy and peace, acts of mercy and kindness and humility. The kingdom arrived not with a trumpet sound but with a baby's cries, not with triumph and conquest but with death and resurrection. The purpose of our Catholic schools is to help each student to a glimpse of the kingdom, to point in its direction, to help them experience God's love at work in their lives and to have the courage to witness to it and help others to experience it so that they too become kingdom builders.

The Audacity to be a Mentor

Fr. Richard Rohr, writing in the **Centre for Action and Contemplation** daily blog on August 19th described three characteristics of a wise mentor:

"I would name the first characteristic of mentors as "magnanimity of soul." He goes on, "Mentors have a generous acceptance of variety, difference, and the secret, unique character of each person and where they are on their journey. Without that inner generosity, we sometimes try to mould everyone into the person we would like them to be. We expect them to think, behave, and become exactly like us, because we are the reference point. We want them to be Catholic or educated or capitalists like we are. Without a magnanimity of soul we cannot affirm, validate, or mirror the souls and journeys of others."

"Secondly, to be a mentor, we have to have a capacity for simple friendship. We have to know how to accompany someone, befriend and walk with them simply, for the sake of relationship. If we're focused on it for the sake of an ego boost, professional advancement, or money, then we're not a mentor. Those concerns simply fall away for true mentors because they know that life is being transferred and shared. "

"Thirdly, if a mentor is not free to talk about going down just as much as going up, they aren't a mentor. C. S. Lewis once said that for him, "Nothing was any good until it had been down in the cellar for a while." A true mentor has the patience, the authority, and the courage to share when and how they've been "down in the cellar for a while." It's not all about climbing and achievement. If someone says we can have or be anything we want to be, that's an objective lie and it's a non-mentor saying that. Only wealthy people in the first world would be privileged enough to believe that. A mentor doesn't offer "entitlement training." They invite us on a journey and say, "You've got to go yourself." They also say, "I'll accompany you. I'll

walk with you on that journey. If you need me, call me.” We can only lead people as far as we ourselves have gone. If we haven’t walked our journey, how could we possibly lead or accompany anybody else on their journey? “Even if we are not in a formal mentoring relationship with others, if we keep maturing, if we use all we have experienced for our own soul work, then I think we are already giving something to the next generation. We become a generative human being, and life will flow out from us, just by being who we are. That is precisely what they said of Jesus: “power came out from him.” (Luke 6:19) He had inner authority, and when we have inner authority, we also, by our being and our bearing, offer self-confidence, grounding, and validation to those around us.

May the power of God’s love flow through us and prove life giving to all whom we meet and serve.



The Audacity to Hope

Listening to the debate on who should be elected to the White House next month, I am reminded of the title of former American President Barack Obama’s memoir, “The Audacity to Hope - Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream.” He writes “*Hope is God’s greatest gift to us, a belief in things not seen, and a belief that there are better days ahead.*”

It is not surprising that Archbishop Dermot Farrell has entitled his latest Pastoral letter “Building Hope with Open Hearts.” In reading it, we are invited to start again building a renewed Church with open, hope filled hearts.

Archbishop Farrell also invites us to embrace our smallness and step by step move towards a future which reflects Jesus’ vision of Kingdom:

**Blessed are the gentle
Blessed are the poor in heart
Blessed are those who hunger for justice
Blessed are those who mourn...**

We pray: Blessed are our teachers and chaplains who nurture faith in our students and let the words of Jesus give life and hope.

Building Hope with Open Hearts

Pastoral Letter - Archbishop Farrell

1 September 2024

JESUS' CONCERN IS FOR OUR HEARTS... he seeks to draw us close, heart-to-heart with him. 'Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest.' (Mt 11:28). Jesus calls us to closeness with God, into intimacy with the One who gives us life, and invites us into the relationship that brings us into fullness of life (see Jn. 10:10). It is in the depth of our hearts (see Mk 7:6) that we meet God as we respond to the mysteries of life, and are brought into silence and wonder.

This relationship is the deeper – one might say, sacred – foundation of our life in the Church. With Christ – through him, and with him, and in him – we live out the gospel, we live out of the words and actions of Jesus that have been handed on to us.

This relationship with Jesus is also the foundation of Building Hope, as we've been calling our journey of renewal in the Archdiocese of Dublin: as people of faith, 'encounter with the person of Jesus makes us who we are, and shapes what we do'. ([Statement of Mission, February 2022](#)).

It is in this context that I speak to you today about the Building Hope Pastoral Strategic Planning Resource 2025–2027. After three years of prayer, reflection and tentative action, this Planning Resource brings us to a significant new phase of Building Hope. It asks of us an 'open heart', open to Christ and to his Spirit, as together, we seek to build our partnerships of parishes – Building Hope with Open Hearts. These materials are the result of broad consultation and dialogue, prayer, reflection, action, and further reflection, undertaken in parishes and partnerships of parishes. I ask you all to join with me in using the resources developed here, as you explore creative and courageous ways to renew the Church in our diocese.

In order to support this initiative in the coming weeks, Workshops associated with the *Building Hope* Planning Resource, which I ask parish leaders to attend, will seek to guide us, using a synodal method of PRAYER – REFLECTION – PLANNING, taking action together in parishes and partnerships of parishes over the coming three years, 2025–2027. In engaging with this resource, we are called to encourage each other. This will mean moving beyond certain worries that we understandably have, as well as facing up to the 'resistance' that often surfaces when we need to change. This is the vision of *Building Hope with Open Hearts*.

In his letter for the World Day of Prayer for Creation, published today (1 September 2024), Pope Francis puts it this way: 'As people who dare to dream, we must dream with our eyes wide open, impelled by a desire for love, fraternity, friendship and justice for all' ([Pope Francis, *Hope and Act with Creation*, 2](#)). As he always does, the Holy Father underlines how

the Holy Spirit guides us ‘in embracing the humility of those who care for others and for all of creation.’ (*Hope and Act with Creation*, 5).

Strange as it may be to our ears: nothing fruitful happens in the Church without the Holy Spirit (see Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium – Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 4, and Saint John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 18). Nothing changes for the good without the Holy Spirit, ‘the Lord, the giver of life,’ as we constantly pray in the Creed. We have much to learn in this respect. When we look at the story of the early Church, in the Acts of the Apostles, or in the letters of Saint Paul, we see ‘that the true protagonist in the history of the church is the Holy Spirit... Opening up to listen to the Spirit is not about detecting rare and subtle signals; it means looking at how, in concrete terms, the gospel challenges [our] life,’ our way of being with each other in our parishes and in the world (see Cardinal José Tolentino Mendonça, *The Mysticism of the Present Moment* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 2021), p. 111).

Our faith calls us to open our hearts, not only to renewing our own commitment to Christ, but to rediscovering our parishes and partnerships of parishes as places of mission. It is the whole Church that is missionary, not just priests and religious (see Second Vatican Council, *Apostolicam Actuositatem – Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, especially 1–2). Long before the Second Vatican Council, this was one of the great insights of Frank Duff, a man of profound faith, and a Dubliner through and through. As we pray in our *Building Hope Prayer*: ‘May our hearts and minds be filled with your Word, bringing forth truth, justice and peace.’

In all our parishes, in every parish of this Diocese, there are vibrant communities who live out the gospel, who live out of the words and actions of Jesus that have been handed on to us. Those vibrant communities may now be small, but smallness is not the issue. Smallness was never an issue for Jesus, and smallness is never an issue for his heavenly Father, with whom he is one (see Jn 10:30): ‘Do not be afraid, little flock...’ (Lk 12:32). Remember “the Mustard Seed... *the smallest of all seeds...*” (Mt 13:31–32)! Smallness is not an issue for the Father of Jesus, because the Creator sees the potential in what He has created: God sees what things can be. God looks at what creation can give, what all can become.

The Church in Europe finds itself in a time, both of decline and of new beginning. The decline is there for all to see. However, Christ calls people of faith to look at the Church from the standpoint of his Father. Let us look at the Church – and the world – with the eyes of God. Smallness is not an end-point, but a beginning. This is how the Church began. It is always how the Church begins. Let us find our way, step-by-step, working more deeply together, as we build our partnerships of parishes, embracing the road the Spirit is bringing us on, in such a way that, as Pope Francis says, ‘our lives can become a song of love for God, for humanity, with and for creation’ (*Hope and Act with Creation*, 9).

May God who has begun this good work in us bring it to completion.

Dermot Farrell
Archbishop of Dublin



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



<https://www.popesprayer.va/>

<https://popesprayerusa.net/>

Small Group reflection

<https://popesprayerusa.net/popes-intentions/>

Pope Francis has given us specific prayer intentions for each month of 2024. These intentions invite us to join in prayer and reflection on various important themes. They reflect Pope Francis' concern for various aspects of human life, the Church and the world.

October 2024

FOR A SHARED MISSION

We pray that the Church continue to sustain in all ways a Synodal lifestyle, as a sign of co-responsibility, promoting the participation, the communion and the mission shared among priests, religious and lay people.

Towards October 2024

**Summary of Contributions from
Dioceses and Groups of the Catholic
Church in Ireland**



**Presented to
the General Secretariat of the Synod**

15 May 2024



When bishops and laypeople meet for the second part of the Synod on Synodality during October, we are asked to pray that “the Church continues to sustain a synodal lifestyle in every way”

Summary from the Archdiocese of Dublin

Following an open invitation through diocesan communications, the consultations in Dublin took the form of synodal *Conversations in the Spirit* with representatives of pastoral councils, parish synodal animators, pastoral workers, clergy and religious present. Prior to the *Conversations in the Spirit* participants were invited to prepare by prayerfully reflecting on two questions. First, where do you notice your parish is growing in co-responsibility? Second, what steps could be taken now to grow in co-responsibility? They were also invited to reflect on an address of Pope Benedict on co-responsibility (10th August 2012.) The gatherings were structured around 5 moments of prayerful engagement where participants were arranged in small groups in circles using the method of listening to understand. In the first part of the gathering participants practised listening to understand in a synodal manner. This led to a fuller sharing of insights, naming practical ways ahead as well as noticing further development needs.

Experiences Lived

Most parishes in Dublin have now experienced the *Conversations in the Spirit* method, sharing about the joys and sorrows of our reality and the hopes and fears for the future. Pastoral Councils are encouraged to be discerning about decisions, making use of the *Conversations in the Spirit* method in their regular meetings. Now in training and formation opportunities small group sharing is always utilised. The Synodal Pathway also helped to steer the course of our diocesan strategic planning. Our *Building Hope* diocesan renewal process has identified a strong consensus about the need to grow voluntary ministries, to develop further our understanding and practice of co-responsibility, adult faith formation and servant leadership. This is deeply rooted in the ways we are living our *Diocesan Statement of Mission* and the synodal principles that inform it. In keeping the diocesan family informed about the Synodal Pathway, Archbishop Dermot Farrell issued a Pastoral letter marking the opening of the First Assembly of the Synod on Synodality (Rome, October 2023.) On subsequent Sundays, *Synod Newsletters* accompanying the Synod as it progressed, were published online and distributed throughout the diocese. As well as a renewed focus on Pastoral Councils, we are intentionally developing the ministry of catechist, and offering Servant Leadership training with sessions on baptism as the gateway to ministries, leading small groups and exploring co-responsibility in practice. There are also pilot projects modelling the difference between decision-making and discernment in parish partnerships.

Emerging Good Practice

In the responses submitted from this recent consultation there was a very strong consensus around the need to grow voluntary ministries and more fully embrace issues of formation for service and the promotion of lay leadership. However, there are also emerging pastoral practices in the diocese influenced by the synodal journey.

These practices include:

- seeing the value of small groups to enable listening and sharing
- clergy taking part in small group sharing alongside laity

- taking time to prayerfully consider issues and directions
- encouraging the growth of an adult faith and prioritising adult faith formation
- building new capacities for leading and team ministries
- more lay people coming forward for training
- building pathways for young adults to share their faith
- a new emphasis on accompanying families for sacramental preparation

Growing in co-responsibility

There is awareness that we have not always managed to reach out to those beyond the gates of the parish. However, there are signs of growing in co-responsibility evident by the establishment of the Parish Partnership Pastoral Councils who engaged with the question: What can you do together that does not need to be done separately? There is also a new awareness of how our understanding of ministries rests on how we affirm and embrace the importance of baptism. This is a change from the model where only those ordained need be concerned with the tasks of ministry, to one where all feel called and responsible. This brings with it a sense of ownership for all which, in turn, encourages everyone to take the call to participation, and the need to invite others, more seriously. As we grow in responsibility, we grow in awareness of the gifts of all the baptised and what we lose when these are not acknowledged or utilised. The Synodal Pathway is enabling us to recognise the gifts in the People of God and promote them for the good of the community.

(Synodal Pathway Synthesis, p.9 Archdiocese of Dublin).

Questions for Reflection

How can we address and bring new life to “Emerging Good Practice?”

What does the Summary of Contributions mean to you as a teacher and chaplain?

What responses can you make that can be expressed in specific concrete ways?

How can we build pathways for our students to share their faith?

How can I implement the Pope’s intention for October of SHARED MISSION in my life?

I can be a witness by



IRISH CATHOLIC
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
COMHDHÁIL EASPAG CAITLICEACH ÉIREANN

Season of Creation 2024 – To hope and Act with Creation

The Season of Creation is marked throughout the Christian world from 1 September to 4 October, Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi - and celebrates the joy of creation as well as encouraging awareness-raising initiatives to protect the natural environment.

Leadership in a faith school has a particular end and it cannot just be to an idea, it has to be in terms of a person; the person of Christ. Walking with Christ, Catholic schools link faith to service and to justice. That service in these times must surely speak to climate justice as it is without a doubt the most pressing issue facing our planet. Linking leadership, service, justice and climate change in prayer resources such as these really challenges schools to think about leadership in faith schools in a new and very concrete way and invites schools to seek out ways of putting beliefs into concrete actions in their own contexts, for the common good, where it matters most.

Climate change is a key issue that the founding congregations of many of our Catholic schools are working on themselves. So individual schools can, if they wish, link back to the global reach and work of the congregation that founded their school, as relevant. Climate anxiety is a very real issue for a lot of young people. (See <https://www.walkinmyshoes.ie/library/blogs-and-articles/2023/april/climate-change-and-mental-health>). These prayer services give a space for hope (which is a key part of the theme of Season of Creation) through reflection and action, empowering young people to think of themselves as leaders in this area.

Finally, and very obviously the spirituality piece is key here. The resources are not simply a 'to do' list of 'ways to save the planet'. Rather, they challenge Catholic school communities to look with fresh eyes on the world and on themselves as agents for change in the world. The challenge is to see the imprint of our creator God on all of creation.

While these resources are linked to opening year services in schools, they can be used at any time during the Season of Creation.

We thank CEIST and in particular Mr Gerry McGuill, CEO CEIST for sharing these resources, originally developed for CEIST schools, with other Catholic schools, primary and secondary, in Ireland.

Click on any link below to view and download resources.

- [Season of Creation Assembly for Primary School](#)
 - [Season of Creation 1st Year Assembly 2024](#)
 - [Season of Creation 2nd Year assembly 2024](#)
 - [Season of Creation 3rd Year Assembly 2024](#)
 - [Season of Creation 4th Year Assembly 2024](#)
 - [Season of Creation 5th Year assembly 2024](#)
 - [Season of Creation 6th Year Assembly 2024](#)

Month of October



Saints

A saint is a person who has died and is now in heaven. A canonized saint is a person who the Church officially acknowledges to be in heaven. Anyone who follows Jesus, can be a saint. The formal process of canonization is used to determine who is a saint. It declares that a person has lived a holy life, is in heaven and can be honoured as a saint.

There are 4 steps to the canonization process.

1. The local bishop where the person has died investigates his or her life and writings for evidence that a holy life has been lived in faithfulness to a heroic degree. All documentation goes to Rome.
2. The church chooses a panel of scholars to study the case of the candidate for canonization. When the panel with the cardinals of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, approve the cause, the Pope then proclaims the person "Venerable."
3. The third step is beatification which requires evidence of 1 miracle, obtained as a result of specific petition to the candidate. Miracles are considered proof that the candidate is in heaven and can intercede on our behalf, before God.
4. One more miracle is required for the Pope to canonize the candidate and then the saint's feast day can be celebrated throughout the world.

Excerpt: 'Faith In The Family' - Anne Burke - Gaffney & Fr. Marcus Holden

***Saints Are Friends of Jesus.* Matthew 7:7-11; Mark 11:24; Luke 18:1-18; John 14**

These readings tell us to pray persistently to God for our needs. It is the same with friends. Good friends share their needs with each other. Saints realize this. They become close friends of Jesus because they talk with him very often. Saints have a really strong friendship with Jesus. Their friendship becomes so close that they mirror Jesus for others. Saints are our friends in heaven, praying for us we continue our journey.

***Saints Are Sent.* John 17:18**

Saints live the Word of God every day. It takes a lot of work to be a saint. Listening and talking to Jesus in prayer is the first step to becoming a saint.

Some Questions for Reflection:

- How does your friendship with Jesus make you feel? Why do you feel this way?
- What are the qualities of saints?
- Who do you think is a saint? Why do you think this person is a saint?
- How is Jesus going to help you become a saint?

Feast Day - 1 October

Patron of Missions

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

1873 - 1897



Marie - Françoise - Thérèse was born in 1897.

She grew up in Lisieux, a town in Normandy. When she was fifteen years of age, she told her father that she wanted to become a Carmelite nun. Her bishop and the Carmelites thought she was too young, but she persisted and they eventually relented. At the age of sixteen, she entered the Carmelite cloister which was completely shut out from the world. She would have gone to China as a Carmelite missionary but she began to haemorrhage at the mouth. Suffering from incurable tuberculosis, she died in the convent infirmary on 30 September, 1897 at the age of twenty four. In 1997, Pope John Paul II declared her a Doctor of the Church. In the year after her death, the Carmelites published her spiritual autobiography - *The Story of a Soul*.

Thérèse longed to be a saint, as she believed any ordinary person could be.

"In my little way, are only ordinary things." In the book is the idea that even the humblest, more mundane task, if done for the love of God can draw one closer to him and make one grow in holiness.

Thérèse said that, Jesus alone, through His Word, had taught her the Little Way of Spiritual Childhood.

"Jesus has no need of books or teachers to instruct souls; He teaches without the noise of words. Never have I heard Him speak, but I feel he is within me at each moment; He is guiding and inspiring me with what I must say and do. I find just when I need them certain lights which I had not seen until then, and it isn't most frequently during my hours of prayer that these are most abundant, but rather in the midst of my daily occupation."

One of St. Thérèse's favourite prayers:

"My life is a moment, I am only the breath of God."

My life is a moment, I am a passing breath.

Oh my God, give me grace to know that for loving you and loving my neighbour I have only today. For my life is a moment."



It is a wonderful gift to know that God has given us the gift of life for a purpose; and that we have the opportunity to love God and each other *every new day*.

St. Francis of Assisi

1181 - 1226



Feast Day - 4 October

Francis was born in Assisi, a small town in northern Italy in 1181.

He was the son of a wealthy cloth merchant and he enjoyed the benefits of his father's success. Love of adventure led him to join the army, fought in the fourth Crusade and became involved in wars through cities and regions of Italy. He was captured soon after and eventually made his way home. Returning to Assisi, he experienced a great change within himself. He met a leper on the road and attended to his needs. From that encounter, Francis began to visit the sick and support the poor.

At the age of 26, praying one day before a crucifix in a deserted church, he heard a voice saying to him, "*Francis, repair my church, which has fallen into disrepair, as you can see.*" Francis took the words literally and began to repair the dilapidated church. He went on from there to repair the poor churches in his neighborhood and to care for the poor and those in need. He left home to travel through the country preaching and living the Gospel message. His mission was to live the love of God through his actions and not just by words. He was ridiculed, but a small group of people began to travel with him. In 1210, he went to Rome to seek approval of his way of life from Pope Innocent III who blessed his endeavor and officially recognized the Franciscans.

Francis helped to reform the Catholic Church in the thirteenth century through his example of personal poverty. Living among the poor, his followers grew in numbers.

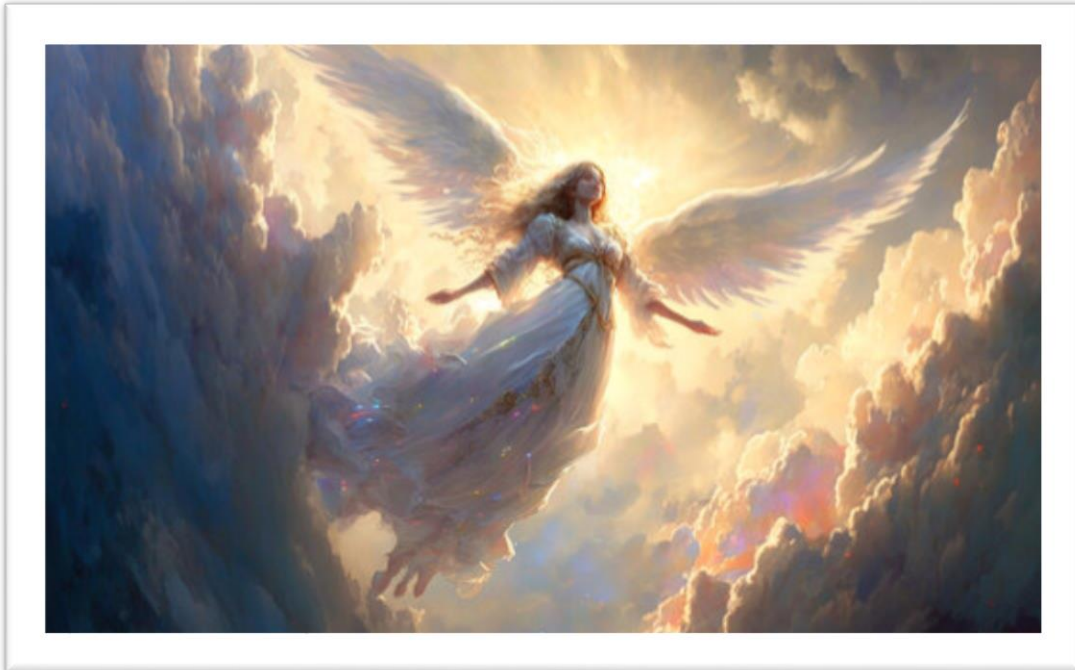
Near the end of his life, spending forty days in solitary prayer, he asked Jesus that he might experience, as much as he could, the love, pain and grief that Jesus had experienced in his passion and crucifixion. In response to his prayer, he was given the stigmata – wounds in his hands, feet and side. The wounds remained, never healing for the remaining two years of his life.

Francis of Assisi had a great love for God, people, animals and the environment. In *Laudate Si'* we read that "*St. Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness.*"

His famous "Canticle of the Sun" is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God for all the wonders of creation.

Francis of Assisi died in Assisi on October 3, 1226. He was canonized on July 16, 1228. In 1980, Pope John Paul II officially proclaimed Francis, the patron of ecology and the environmental movement.

**October is the month of the Guardian Angels.
May they guide us in our schools.**



The Feast of the Guardian Angels on October 2nd is a special day to remember our guardian angels and to thank them for their protection.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church proclaims:

“It is a truth of faith that God, ‘maker...of all that is seen and unseen’, created a realm of spiritual beings who do not share the limitations of a physical body and yet exist as the result of his all-powerful, loving act of creation. We call these spiritual beings angels.

Angel: A spiritual, personal, immortal creature with intelligence and free will, created by God to serve him unceasingly and to act as a messenger to carry out the plan of salvation.

Some references to Angels in Scripture:

- The angel comes to visit a woman named Mary who is betrothed to Joseph. The greeting of the angel, “Hail, full of grace” may perhaps be the most famous greeting in the New Testament. The angel explains that she will bear a son and tells her, “Do not be afraid,” “The Lord is with you.” The angel says her child will be “Son of the Most High” and “Of his kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:26-38)
- Mary Magdalen and a companion go to the tomb to anoint the dead body of Jesus. They find the tomb empty. They meet an angel, who tells them, “He is not here, for he has risen.” (Mt. 28:6) They are told to bring the Good News to the Apostles.

Blessed Columba Marmion

Feast Day - 3 October

Joseph, his baptismal name, was born in Dublin in 1858 and ordained priest in Rome in 1881.

He served as curate in Dundrum Parish and then as professor in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, before entering the Abbey of Maredsous, Belgium, in 1886. Elected as abbot, he received his abbatial blessing on 3 October 1909.

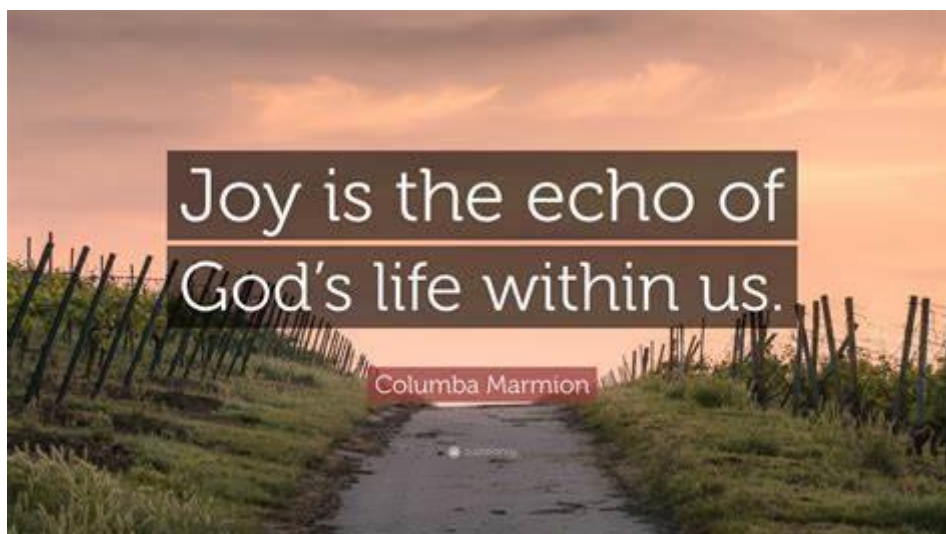


He died on 30 January 1923. His trilogy, *Christ, the Life of the Soul, Christ in His Mysteries and Christ, the ideal of the Monk*, has been some of the most influential spiritual writings of the twentieth century, nourishing the lives of generations of to God and to bring God to people. He was beatified in Rome on 3 September 2000 seminarians, priests, religious sisters and monks. His writings, letters and retreats fulfilled his aim in life: to bring people. **Liturgical Calendar for Ireland 2024.**

Columba Marmion Quotes

"The ways of God are entirely different from our ways. To us it seems necessary to employ powerful means in order to produce great effects. This is not God's method; quite the contrary. He likes to choose the weakest instruments that He may confound the strong:

"God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong."

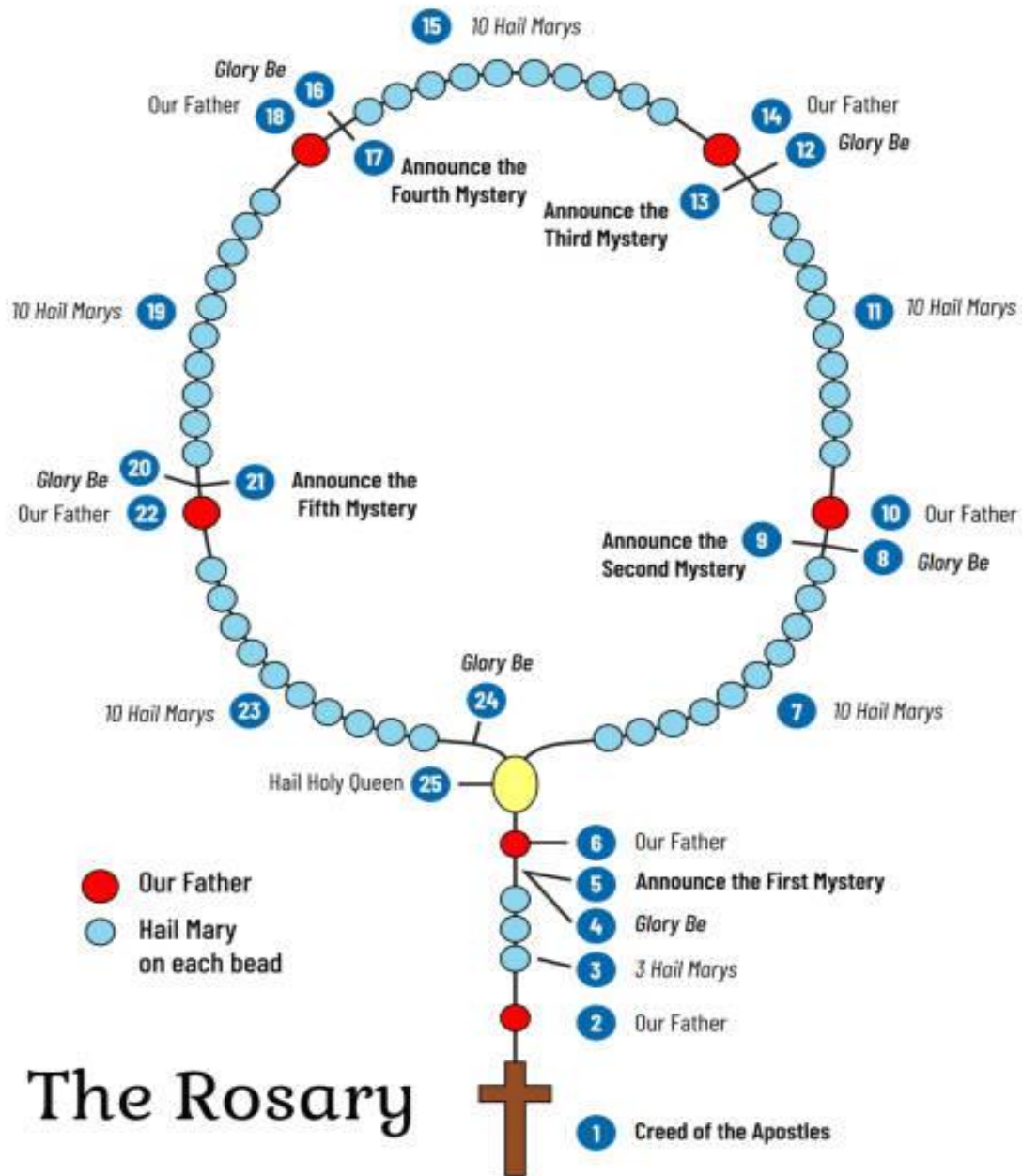


October is the Month of the Rosary

Feast Day – Our Lady of the Rosary, 7 October

“The Rosary is the shortest ladder to heaven”

Blessed Carlos Acutis



The Rosary is an ancient form of prayer which has developed from a long tradition of reciting and pondering on the psalms. The legend of the Rosary begins with St. Dominic in the early thirteenth century. It is to be found in some form or other among Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and Jews.

The Rosary is an uncomplicated and simple form of prayer. It can help to slow us down and is helpful in the busyness of daily life. Whilst praying the Rosary, we can quietly rest in the presence of the Lord.

“The Rosary can be an oasis amidst the stress of everyday life, because it is psychologically calming and so confers spiritual healing. The repetitive method can aid relaxation.”

Finding Happiness through Faith - **Karl Josef Wallner**

Invitation to Pray the Rosary

- Look to Mary
- Think on Mary
- Call upon Mary



“Follow her and you will never go astray. Call upon her and then you can never despair. Think on her and then you will never go wrong. Hold fast to her and you cannot fall. With her to protect you, you have nothing to fear! With her to lead you will never grow tired. If she shows herself gracious to you then you will safely reach your destination!”

Bernard of Clairvaux, Cistercian

**Pope John Paul II shortly after his election said,
“The Rosary is my favourite prayer.
A marvelous prayer! Marvellous in its depth.”**

We Pray the Rosary

The sequence of prayers is recited whilst, at the same time, meditating on the life of Mary and Jesus. There are 2 parts to praying the Rosary: knowing and saying the prayers and reflecting on the mysteries. We can first become familiar with each of the mysteries, without saying the prayers. Then we can take one mystery, reflect on it for a few minutes and then say one decade of the Rosary, increasing the number of decades as appropriate.

The Mysteries of the Rosary

The Rosary is divided into four parts, each having five mysteries.

| The Joyful Mysteries (Mon. & Sat.) | The Sorrowful Mysteries (Tues. & Fri.) | The Glorious Mysteries (Sun. & Wed.) | The Luminous Mysteries (Thurs.) |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1. The Annunciation | 1. The Agony in the Garden | 1. The Resurrection | 1. The Baptism in the Jordan |
| 2. The Visitation | 2. The Scourging at the Pillar | 2. The Ascension of Our Lord | 2. The Wedding at Cana |
| 3. The Birth of Our Lord | 3. The Crowning with Thorns | 3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit | 3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God |
| 4. The Presentation in the Temple | 4. The Carrying of the Cross | 4. The Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven | 4. The Transfiguration |
| 5. The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple | 5. The Crucifixion | 5. The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary | 5. The Institution of the Eucharist |

Rúndiamhra na Corónach Muire

| Na Cúig Shólás Dé Luain, Dé Sathairn | Na Cúig Dhólas Dé Máirt, Dé hAoine | Na Cúig Bhua Dé Domhnaigh, Dé Céadaoin | Na Cúig Geala Déardaoin |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Teachtaireacht an Aingil | 1. Anbhroid Íosa sa gháirdín | 1. Aiséirí ár d'Tiarna | 1. Baisteadh Íosa |
| 2. Cuairt Mhuire ar Naomh Eilís | 2. Sciúirseáil Íosa | 2. Deasgabháil Ár d'Tiarna | 2. Pósadh ag Céana |
| 3. Breith ár d'Tiarna Íosa Críost | 3. Corónú Íosa le deilgne | 3. Tuirlingt an Spioraid Naoimh | 3. Teacht Riochta |
| 4. An Toirbhirt sa Teampall | 4. Íosa ag iompar na croise | 4. Deastógáil na Maighdine Muire | 4. A t-Athrú (Gné) |
| 5. Íosa í measc na n-ollúna | 5. An Céasadh | 5. Corónú na Maighdine Muire ar neamh | 5. An Suipeár Deireanach |

The Rosary is so powerful because through Our Lady, we are led and drawn closer to Jesus. It provides a practical and inspiring way to make prayer a part of our own lives and the lives of the students.

Praying the Rosary together as a small group in the morning, or as a class or a year group helps students to not only build their personal relationships with Jesus, but also helps them to build a bond with each other. We can encourage the students to pray for their loved ones, each other, their school staff and families. We can also pray for those in the Holy Land, Ukraine and Sudan – reminding us all of the need to unite our prayers to those suffering around the world.

“The Power of the Rosary is beyond description.” Venerable Fulton Sheen

Questions for Reflection

- What does Mary mean to you?
- How do you relate to her?
- What significance has Mary in our lives?
- How can we make Mary a role model for us and our students?
- Can we pray the Rosary as a small group, a class year group?
- Could we research Marian devotions and customs and choose one for our class/school?

Let us encourage students to think of Mary as an extra mother to whom they can turn to when they need help.

Pope Francis:

“I invite everyone to rediscover, especially during this month of October, the beauty of the prayer of the rosary, which has nourished the faith of the Christian people through the centuries.”



“I invite you to pray the rosary, and to carry it in your hands or in your pockets. The recitation of the rosary is the most beautiful prayer we can offer to the Virgin Mary; it is a contemplation on the stages of the life of Jesus the Saviour with his Mother Mary and is a weapon that protects us from evils and temptations.”

Children's Day of Mission Prayer 2024:

Young People Sharing Hope and Solidarity

With The World's Poorest Children

Children's Day of Mission Prayer is celebrated on the second Friday of October each year.

Its purpose is to enhance the prayer lives of children, encouraging them to pray for each other and for overseas missionaries on mission with children.

This special day fosters an awareness of mission, and the need to help and serve others. It is aimed at children on the whole island of Ireland, teaching professionals, priests, chaplains, religious congregations and all those who are in ministry with children. A resource is available on www.missio.ie which includes prayer resources to help schools and parishes to celebrate mission with children.

The official charity for overseas mission, **Missio Ireland Children Helping Children** supports the physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing of children around the world. Children are encouraged to pray together, for each other, and for children living in poverty and fear. They are also encouraged to share what they can, no matter how little, to help with the material needs of their brothers and sisters. From the support received, the Missio family can support millions of the world's poorest children every year.

To learn more about **Children's Day of Mission Prayer** or **Children Helping Children**, email info@missio.ie or call Missio Ireland at 01 4972035.



**World Mission Sunday
20 October 2024**

The entire global Church comes together in support of mission.

Playing our part in supporting each other.....

Mission Sunday: *provides Church centered infrastructure by helping communities build churches, schools and clinics; prepares the future leaders and carers of the Church by supporting the training of sisters, priests, religious brothers, and catechists; supports missionary programmes that protect and care for children's wellbeing by offering safe shelter, healthcare, education, and hope for the future.*

Liturgical Calendar for Ireland 2024

School Retreats

WITH THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

Office Address: Salesian Youth Pastoral Office, St. Catherine's Centre, Maynooth University.

VENUES/PLANNING OF RETREATS

- Usually in School premises
- Invitation from the hosting school
- In collaboration with RE teachers
- single sessions, half-day or full day

TYPES OF RETREAT

Flexible according to the needs of the school/students

1. With an emphasis on prayer and reflection
2. With an emphasis on the sacraments (Eucharist, Confession, liturgy of the word)
3. With an emphasis on recreation (holy sports), religious movies and music/production
4. With an emphasis on social justice, environmental issues and Catholic faith in action issues
5. With a combination of various emphases above

FACILITATORS

Members of the retreat Team

- Male and Female Religious
- Lay people
- Priests
- College students in training (Youth Ministry and other related courses)
- (team work approach) average for 5 people per retreat

NUMBER OF RETREATS

2023-2024

- Pilot visits to inviting schools and retreats with different classes in the junior and senior cycles (present situation: 6 invitations. 2 completed, 3 postponed, 1 upcoming)

2024-2025

- An average of one retreat per month (a total of about ten retreats per year)
- More than one retreat can be organized in a school that provides the support and needed assistance, especially if we have more than one (class or) year group

METHOD

- Workshop approach (students moving to different sessions in rotation and getting a variety of inputs/activities and some general group sessions)
- Student activity (with materials for writing, painting, praying, etc, to be prepared or purchased)
- Presence of School teachers to help with supervision
- The use of learning /teaching aids like projector and audiovisual and RE curriculum materials

Contact Details: Fr. Cyril Odia

Telephone Number: 089 9623456

In September and October this year, the relics of St. Bernadette will journey from Lourdes in France on a pilgrimage around the cathedrals and dioceses of Ireland.

The visit of the relics will be a fitting prelude to the launch of the Jubilee Year 2025 with its theme “Pilgrims of Hope”.



The pilgrimage around Ireland of St. Bernadette’s relics will be a source of hope, great joy and inspiration, especially for the many people of Ireland who have travelled to Lourdes over the years and for the dedicated groups across the island who work all year round to plan pilgrimages at parish and diocesan level. Of course Lourdes is synonymous with care and love for sick and disabled persons and is a special sanctuary for those who struggle with worries or decisions of one kind or another.

The relics of St. Bernadette will help to remind us of Lourdes as a place of prayer and compassion for the sick and vulnerable. Irish people of all ages have volunteered to help in various ways in Lourdes and have been uplifted themselves by the experience of serving and caring. In welcoming the relics, faith communities around the country will pray in the ‘spirit of Lourdes’ and come to know the message of Our Lady, a message of enduring relevance for us today.

St. Bernadette once wrote: *“One who loves does not notice her trials; or perhaps more accurately, she is able to love them. I shall do everything for Heaven, my true home. There I shall find my Mother in all the splendour of her glory. I shall delight with her in the joy of Jesus himself in perfect safety.”*

Together with my brother Bishops in Ireland, I look forward to welcoming the relics of St. Bernadette to all parts of the island. I encourage you to take the opportunity to encounter the beautiful and inspiring person that St. Bernadette was, and to hear the powerful message she was able to convey to the world from Our Lady.

Please pray also that many gifts and graces will be granted during this pilgrimage.

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All Ireland

*“If one dream should fall and break into a thousand pieces...
never be afraid to pick one of those pieces up and begin again.
...Enjoy God’s amazing opportunities bestowed on us.
Have faith in Him always.” - Bernadette*

Find Out More:

www.stbernadette.ie

**Mary Immaculate,
Inchicore
23 - 24 October
(Oblates)**

**Adam and Eve’s
Merchants Quay
25 - 26 October
(Franciscians)**

www.oblates.ie

www.dublindiocese.ie

www.franciscians.ie

Useful Websites and Resources to Explore

Topic

Website

Pray the Rosary

Videos of Ascension

https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=d8dea08d27f13f96JmltdHM9MTcyNzEzNjAwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYTUxODVjOS1mNTYxLTY5MjltM2E1ZC05MTk0ZjQ4MTY4M2lmaW5zaWQ9NTE1Ng&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=3a5185c9-f561-6922-3a5d-9194f481683b&u=a1L3ZpZGVvcy9zZWVfy2g_cT1hc2NlbnNpb24rcHJheSt3aXRok3VzK3RoZStob2x5K3Jvc2FyeSZxcHZ0PWFyZ2Vuc2lvbitwcmF5K3dpcGgrdXMRdGhK2hvbHkrCm9zYXJ5JkZPUk09VkrSRQ&ntb=1

Building Hope

Archdiocese of Dublin

<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=bb07306fd93811dbJmltdHM9MTcyNzEzNjAwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYTUxODVjOS1mNTYxLTY5MjltM2E1ZC05MTk0ZjQ4MTY4M2lmaW5zaWQ9NTlwOA&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=3a5185c9-f561-6922-3a5d-9194f481683b&psq=archdiocese+of+dublin+website&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9kdWJsaW5kaW9jZXNlLmllLw&ntb=1>

Guardian Angels

Fr. Mike Schmitz

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Daily Meditation

God in all things – An Ignatian Life

<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=cd0d1a332477472bJmltdHM9MTcyNzEzNjAwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYTUxODVjOS1mNTYxLTY5MjltM2E1ZC05MTk0ZjQ4MTY4M2lmaW5zaWQ9NTE1MQ&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=3a5185c9-f561-6922-3a5d-9194f481683b&psq=god+in+all+things&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9nb2RpbmFsbHRoaW5ncy5jb20v&ntb=1>

Just Youth

Broadening horizons today for a just tomorrow

<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=ca480032639405b7JmltdHM9MTcyNzEzNjAwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYTUxODVjOS1mNTYxLTY5MjltM2E1ZC05MTk0ZjQ4MTY4M2lmaW5zaWQ9NTE5OQ&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=3a5185c9-f561-6922-3a5d-9194f481683b&psq=just+youth&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9qdXN0eW91dGguY28udWsv&ntb=1>

Goodness of God

Simon and Audience cry when they are touched with...

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To Conclude:

As we look forward to the mid-term break, may we experience the wonder of God in our lives.

May our lives be filled with energy, enthusiasm and joy.

In the words of St. Thérèse of Lisieux:

“May you use the gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.”

Sr. Bernadette and Sr. Concepta



“Don’t be afraid to open your heart to him and to ask him to renew the fire of his love, so that you can embrace life with all its frailty and flaws, but with its grandeur and beauty. May he help you to discover the beauty of being alive.”

Words from Pope Francis to Youth at World Youth Day.