

The Maximilian

A monthly newsletter for governors within the Archdiocese of Southwark

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January 2025

January Reflection - Canon Victor Darlington

Beloved Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Happy New Year, and welcome back to school after a well-deserved rest during the Christmas holidays. This year is particularly special for us as Catholics because it is a Jubilee Holy Year.

In the Catholic Church, a Jubilee or Holy Year is a time of forgiveness and reconciliation, inviting people to renew their relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. The word "jubilee" is derived from the Hebrew word *jobel*, meaning "ram's horn," as it was this very horn that was used as a trumpet to announce the beginning of the Jubilee Year. A Jubilee Year is celebrated by the Church every 25 years, a tradition established in 1470 when Pope Paul II changed the interval from every 50 years. On Christmas Eve 2024, Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica, officially inaugurating the 2025 Jubilee of Hope.

In his Pastoral Letter on the Solemnity of the Holy Family 2024, marking the Opening of the Jubilee Year of Hope, Archbishop John Wilson said:

"Today's Feast of the Holy Family marks the opening of the Jubilee Year in our Archdiocese and across the Catholic Church worldwide. Its theme is 'Pilgrims of Hope.'... In this Jubilee Year, I ask everyone in our Archdiocese to renew our commitment to building a culture of welcome and belonging within our parishes and schools. Let us seek out those on the margins — people who experience isolation, poverty, and despair. Let us be a Church where all feel at home, where the wounded find mercy, where the weary encounter rest, and where we all journey together in faith, hope and love."

I am aware that each school in our Archdiocese has its own unique plans to celebrate the Jubilee. Some of you are organising retreats and pilgrimages to holy sites, while others will be collecting Jubilee stamps in their Jubilee passports. I commend all your plans and efforts.

I would like to encourage everyone this year to embrace the Jubilee as a time for healing and reconciliation. It is an opportunity to mend long-standing quarrels, to reach out to forgotten friends or relatives, and to replace suspicion with trust. During this sacred year, we are called to reflect on our relationships, to let go of grudges, and to extend forgiveness to those who may have wronged us. It is also a time to evaluate how we interact with others, whether in our workplaces or families, ensuring that our expectations and requests reflect fairness, kindness, and understanding. In the spirit of the

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Jubilee, let us also focus on freeing others from burdens we may unknowingly impose, sharing joy, expressing gratitude, and welcoming the stranger into our lives and hearts.

I reassure you all of my prayers for this Jubilee Year, and I pray that we will truly journey through this time as Pilgrims of Hope, with a renewed assurance that God is always with us, even amidst the ups and downs of daily life.

Canon Victor Darlington

Episcopal Vicar for the Southeast Area,
Commissions for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion,
Education and Director of Caritas, Archdiocese of Southwark

Annual General Meetings

For the first time in the history of the Archdiocese of Southwark, the Members attended the AGMs of most single Academy Trusts and all five Catholic Academy Trusts in one month.

A most sincere thanks from Archbishop John Wilson to all the Chairs of Governors, Staff, Directors and Headteachers who attended.

At the meetings of all Single Academy Trusts, those present were informed of which Catholic Academy Trust their school will join. It is the Members expectation that the Single Academy Trusts will be within the Catholic Academy Trusts by the end of this current academic year. All five Catholic Academy Trusts must have schools within them to be viable. The list of which Single Academy Trust is joining which Catholic Academy Trust will be shared in February 2025 edition.

Ill health retirement in voluntary aided schools.

It has been brought to our attention that there are local authorities who are no longer funding any ill health related payments to staff who need to retire. Please ensure that the SLT in you school is aware of the position in your own local authority. Our schools have ended up with unexpected bills to pay of sums over 100K.

Consultancy work of school staff

There are a number of our schools where the Senior Leaders and other staff are providing a range of paid consultancy work to other CATS, schools, headteachers or the Local Authority. Please be aware that no member of staff in a school should be paid twice for the same time. If you are employed to work within a school, then any extra funding earned during your contractual hours belongs to school/ CAT that employs you.

ID verification for DBS applications for foundation governors/directors (Form 3C)

The Education Service has been requested by several headteachers within the diocese to allow our schools, colleges and academies and CATS to assist in the process of governors obtaining a DBS via a form 3c.



We are only able to use a DBS which has been issued by the Archdiocese of Southwark's Safeguarding Office.

ID can only be verified once an existing governor receives notification from Donna that their information has been submitted to the Safeguarding Office.

Please note the letter below is what is sent to the existing or prospective foundation governors.

Dear Joe Bloggs,

I have now received both of your references and have sent your information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office for them to obtain a DBS for you. The Safeguarding Office will send you a link and it will be sent to your personal email address. **(Please check Junk and Spam folders).**

There are two steps to the DBS process:

1. Complete the online application form via the link sent to you by the Safeguarding Office.
2. Once application form is completed online you will then need to get your ID verified by the following:
 - School Safeguarding Administrator
 - Parish Safeguarding Representative
 - Education Service Safeguarding Administrator

This has to be done in person with at least three forms of original documents that you used in your online application. The following link has to be completed <https://forms.rcaos.org.uk/identity-verifier-dbs-3c-form/>

Both of the above steps must be completed for you to obtain your DBS certificate.

The verifier at the school needs to complete the DBS for 3c above in order to meet the Diocesan Safeguarding requirements. A separate email is sent to both the headteacher and clerk to the governors with the Form 3c form also attached.

Courses & Events

Details for our upcoming courses and events for this academic year are available on our website. <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/governor-cpd/>

Effective Support and Challenge for Governors

Tuesday 4th March 2025. 5.30pm-7pm

Zoom

[Book](#)

Finance for Governors

Wednesday 12th March 2025. 5.30-7pm

Zoom

[Book](#)

Induction for New Foundation Directors, Governors and Clerks

Wednesday 19th March 2025. 4-5.30pm or
Monday 24th March 2025 5.30-7pm

Zoom

[Book](#)



Aspiring to Governance

Please share this with anyone interested in becoming a governor.

Join us for an informative session designed for individuals interested in becoming a Foundation Governor within the Archdiocese. This session will cover:

- An overview of Foundation Governance: Understand the unique role and duties of Foundation Governors in maintaining the ethos and values of our schools.
- Key Responsibilities: Learn about the specific tasks Foundation Governors undertake.
- Strategic Role: Explore how Foundation Governors contribute to the strategic direction and development of schools, ensuring they align with the Church's Mission and the Vision of the Archbishop for his schools.
- Support and Resources: Discover the support available from the Education Service and other resources to help you succeed in your role.
- Q&A Session: Engage with experienced diocesan representatives to get your questions answered and gain deeper insights.
- This session is ideal for prospective Foundation Governors, as well as anyone interested in the governance of diocesan schools.

Details:

Thursday 27th March 2025. 5.30-6.30pm

Zoom.

Please follow this link to book your space and receive joining details: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/aspiring-to-governance/>

Clerks to Governors Forum

The dates for the next set of Clerks to Governors Forums are Tuesday 13th May 2025 or Tuesday 20th May 2025.

Further details can be viewed here: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/clerks-to-governors-forum-topics/>

