

Newsletter



29th January 2025

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Reflection from Canon Victor Darlington, Episcopal Vicar for Education

Beloved Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

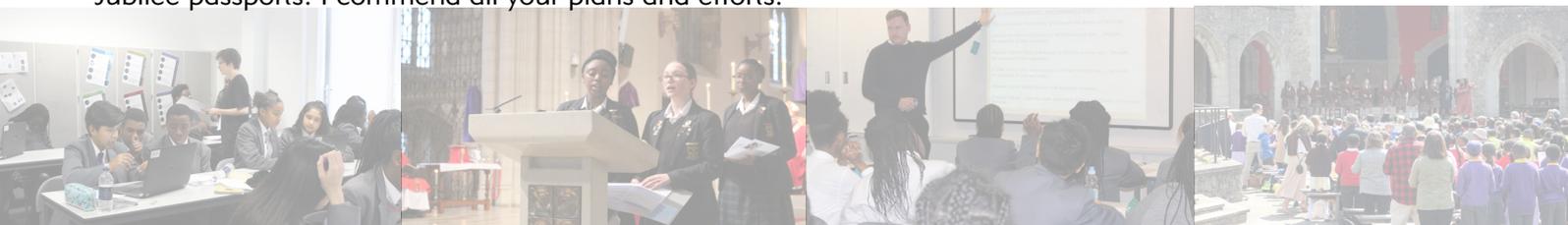
Happy New Year, and welcome back to school after a well-deserved rest during the Christmas holidays. This year is particularly special for us as Catholics because it is a Jubilee Holy Year.

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 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

Word on Fire Bible Conference

The forthcoming Bible conference in London next month, organised by Word on Fire, an organisation founded by the Rt. Rev. Robert Barron, Bishop of Winona-Rochester in the United States.

Evangelisation & Culture: The Bible, takes place 21-22 February 2025, at the Excel Centre in London, with speakers including Bishop Barron, N.T. Wright, Professor Tracey Rowland, among others.

Find out more: <https://events.wordonfire.org/the-bible-event>

Aspiring Leaders- New to leadership

Over the spring and summer term, the Education Service will be running another leadership course, this one is aimed at those new to leadership. This will support leaders to understand how to be an effective leader, including how to write an action plan, carry out, and give feedback for, monitoring, analysing data and leading CPD sessions. It would be ideal for middle leaders or anyone in a shadowing role. There will be seven twilight sessions at the St Edwards House (Education Service office) from 3:30 to 5:30pm. We are aware it is hard to release teaching staff which is why we have made it afterschool, but leaders may need to leave a little earlier than the end of the school day to arrive on time and we would really support your support with this. We would really appreciate it if heads could identify delegates and then book on the [aspiring leaders page](#).

Contact with Property

Please send all queries relating to property, land and buildings to ecbuildings@rcaos.org.uk in the first instance. This will be picked up by a relevant member of the team.



Admissions Clarification Update

In recent editions of the newsletter we made reference to how the Certificate of Catholic practice was to be used and distributed. A decision was made, stating that this document would reside with the parish priest exclusively. Following discussions with a number of headteachers, governors and admissions officers, we have taken on board their comments have adapted the guidance on the use of the CoP.

The relevant parish priest will still be able to provide parents and carers with a certificate and it will be for each individual parish to manage this process. In addition to this, schools will still be able to provide parents and carers applying with a copy of the certificate. This can be done with the inclusion of the CoP in the admissions pack or those applying can obtain a copy directly from the school. It remains the case that parents and carers are not able to download a copy from a school's website. The certificate is on the website for the purpose of familiarising applicants with the document.

We recognise that this is a further amendment to these arrangements and apologies for this but we have listened and responded to the points that have been raised with us. As always, if you have any questions please contact Daniel Coleman at danielcoleman@rcaos.org.uk

CES Annual Census 2025

The CES 2025 Census started on 16th January 2025 in England and 21st January 2025 in Wales. **All schools should complete and submit their census between the start date and Friday 14th February 2025.**

If you have a support query please follow the link on the website to [Help Centre](#) and raise a support request.

Update on RE Scheme of Work

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to look at the options for a RE Scheme of Work. These sessions will be taking place over the next month; an email has been sent to Heads or Heads of RE to confirm dates for attendance. As part of this work, we will create an evaluation document for the Archbishop, so he can make an informed choice about which one we will adopt. We will give more information about this once it is available.

Ten Ten Resources Response to the Voice of the Family Report

Please see Ten Ten Resources response to the Voice in the Family report here: [Statement from Ten Ten Resources – Ten Ten Resources](#).



School Early Years and Childcare Provision - Request for Information -Closes 31st January

We are keen to know which of our schools has a nursery or pre-school provision, either run by a PVI or school staff and which of our schools has before and after school child care arrangements already set up. We would ask that schools complete the form (link below). Should your school not provide these services already please indicate if you signpost families to other providers.

Thank you to those schools who have completed this form. This form closes on the 31st January 2025: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/school-provsn/>

Save the Date!

Headteachers' Conference 2025 -Ashford International Hotel - 20th and 21st November 2025.

Festival of Hope - Aylesford Priory - Wednesday 25th June 2025

Upcoming School Grants

[Kellogg's Breakfast Club Grants](#)

£1,000 grant - Priority for schools with over 40% of pupil premium eligibility - No deadline

[Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust](#)

£100 - £100,000 - Project schemes directed towards capital expenditure - No deadline

[Foyle School Library Scheme](#)

Up to £10,000 - Grant to help buy books, e-readers, library software, IT equipment and furniture - No deadline

Called to Bear Fruit- Get involved

You will have had the letter from Archbishop John Wilson read at all Masses in the diocese in the last few weeks. It calls us all to be missionary disciples in our parishes. As the consultation now moves to a second phase everyone in the Archdiocese is invited to a deeper reflection on the situation at parish and deanery level.

Please do get involved and encourage your young people to get involved in the parishes where they practise.

Academy Trusts - Annual Report

Academy trusts must publish their audited annual report and accounts on their website by 31 January each year. Guidance is available in the [academy trust handbook](#).



Sharing content from the CES website

The CES would strongly suggest that if a diocese or a school wishes to promote items from any external website (including the CES) that they do so through a link.

They regularly update items on their website and remove other items when they are out of date. By sharing resources through a link rather than a static upload, the accuracy and ownership of the material is more guaranteed. This is particularly important in relation to copyright and intellectual property.

[CES new website.](#)

Wintershall Newsletter and Travelling Crib feedback

Please [click here](#) to view the newsletter and Travelling Crib feedback.

A provisional date for the Travelling Crib at Lambeth Palace from 10th to 14th November 2025 has been booked. The date will be officially be launching this in April, but our booking form is open already for those schools wishing to book again from last year or previous years.

The Romero Rosary by Archbishop John Wilson

Archbishop John Wilson has written a new book entitled The Romero Rosary. With introductory chapters about St Oscar Romero and the rosary, this beautiful and creative new book contains reflections on the traditional mysteries of the rosary (Joy, Light, Sorrow & Glory) and the NEW Romero Mysteries (Charity, Compassion and Mercy, & Justice and Peace) - all illumined for reflection and prayer by the words of St Oscar Romero. The book is available from Pauline Bookshops and online at www.paulineuk.org.

The Archbishops warmly invites everyone to the book launch on Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 6.00 for 6.30pm at Amigo Hall, adjacent St George's Cathedral, Southwark, South London. SE1 7HY.

Upcoming Event: EAL Conference in Bexley

Monday, 10th February 2025 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. @ Bexley Civic Offices. £55 per delegate.

Who Should Attend?: This conference is ideal for educators, support staff, and school leaders who are passionate about creating inclusive and supportive environments for students with English as an additional language.

Please email: Lorraine.Bruce@bexley.gov.uk to book or [click here](#) to view more details.

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Recruitment

Vacancies can be viewed in full here: <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/recruitment/>

Deputy Headteacher, Our Lady of Grace Catholic Primary School

Charlton

Closing date: 10th February 2025

Deputy Headteacher, St Ursula's Convent School

Greenwich

Closing date: 10th February 2025

Headteacher, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

New Malden

Closing date: 24th February 2025

Deputy Headteacher, St Anne's Catholic Primary School

London

Closing date: 7th March 2025

Teach in Bexley – Event

7th February 2025 2-4.30pm

More details

Director of Performing Arts, St Ursula's Convent School

Greenwich

Closing date: 10th February 2025

Events & Training

CSED Writing

Multiple dates & venues

[Book](#)

Diocesan Chaplains Day

Tuesday 4th February 2025. 9.30am-4pm. £40.

Amigo hall, Lambeth Road, SE1 6HR.

[Book](#)

Handling Complaints for Governors

Wednesday 5th February 2025. 5.30-7pm. Zoom

[Book](#)

Religious Education Conference

Thursday 13th February 2025 & Friday 14th February 2025. The Kairos Centre, Mount Angelus Rd, Roehampton, SW15 4JA

[Book](#)

Buildings Termly Update

Tuesday 25th February 2025. 2pm-3pm. Zoom

[Book](#)

Greater Depth in Religious Education

Tuesday 25th February 2025. 3.30-5pm. Zoom

[Book](#)

Effective Support and Challenge for Governors

Tuesday 4th March 2025. 5.30pm-7pm. Zoom

[Book](#)

Prayer and Liturgy – Part 2

Multiple dates & venues

[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](#)

Oscar Romero Award Trust Mass

Thursday 27th March 2025. 12.30pm

St George's Cathedral, Lambeth Road, SE1 6HR

[Book](#)

Aspiring to Governance

Thursday 27th March 2025. 5.30-6.30pm. Zoom

[Book](#)



Establishing Breakfast Club

A letter has gone to all schools from Angela with links to the detailed guidance on establishing a breakfast club in schools. As you will be aware this is one of the provisions of the new Education and Wellbeing Bill going through Parliament at present. The DfE will be appointing 750 early adopter schools. The guidance sets out the timelines and other requirements as well as details of grants.

The Big Lent Walk

Join us for the Big Lent Walk in 2025! By taking on the challenge of walking 200km in 40 days, you will be part of a massive team supporting people as they overcome poverty. We are incredibly excited about the Big Lent Walk 2025 and would love you to join us as we walk, run, roll, or stroll 200km in the 40 days of Lent. Sign up at www.walk.cafod.org.uk. You can also join as a Parish or School, just use the same link, and choose from the sign-up options.

Chaplaincy Day

The second Diocesan Chaplaincy Day will be led by Tom Baptist, Director of Chaplaincy for Our Lady of Lourdes Trust in Nottingham, will be delivering on the breadth and depth of the Chaplaincy provision cross phase. Providing ideas to support social media outreach, making faith relevant and meaningful within the context of Chaplaincy. How can Chaplaincy respond to the needs of our schools today?

[Click here to book](#)

Religious Education Conference

RE Conference With the development of the RED in both primary and secondary we intend to lead a professional discussion around the curriculum changes and requirements to bridge the gap and provide support in a collegiate atmosphere. We are pleased to announce that this will be led by Dr Nancy Walbank, Writer and Series Editor, Lighting the Path. A new resource for primary RE in Catholic schools.

[Click here to book](#)



New School Building! St Mary's Catholic Primary School

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Deal marked a significant milestone with the grand opening of its new building on 28th January 2024. The event was attended by students, parents, staff and community members.

[Continue reading](#)



Jubilee Launch at Christ the King Sixth Form



As part of the Jubilee Launch on Friday 24th January 2025, Christ the King Sixth Form, Aquinas had their students decorate their chaplaincy display board for the Jubilee Year of Hope.

[Continue reading.](#)

