

# Religious Education Update

May 2012

Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin



## SUMMER TERM

As you read this **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATE** the summer term is already well underway and hopefully you have returned from your Easter holidays refreshed and renewed for the final weeks of the school year. This term is always one of the busiest and hopefully you will find some useful suggestions in this Update as you plan your Religious Education programme for the coming months and prepare for next year.

## ALTAR CLOTH PROJECT

As you will remember all Catholic Primary Schools in the diocese were invited to participate in a project to make an Altar Cloth earlier this year. This was to coincide with our Diocesan Eucharistic Congress which took place in March and also to help create a living memory for the children in our schools in the year in which the 50<sup>th</sup> International Congress in celebrated in our country. The project was a huge success with 168 of the 173 schools in our diocese submitting a square and as you can see from the picture the finished cloth is absolutely beautiful. It was displayed in the Cathedral in Carlow during the Diocesan Congress and was then used for the first time during the concluding celebration of the Eucharist for that event. There was huge admiration for the cloth and it was the focus of a lot of attention during the Congress. I would like to take this opportunity to say a big **Thank You** to all the schools that participated and in particular to Betty Murphy from the Cathedral Parish who sewed the cloth together. You can see more pictures and continue reading about the cloth on [www.kandle.ie](http://www.kandle.ie). The cloth will be part of the **Children's Congress Space** in the RDS on **Tuesday June 12, Friday June 15 and Saturday June 16**. You can read more about this on the next page of this Update.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE THE ALTAR CLOTH IN YOUR SCHOOL OR PARISH?

Many parishes and schools have already requested the cloth for First Eucharist, Confirmation and other special celebrations. If you would like to have the cloth in your school or parish please contact Faith Development Services on 059 9164084 and talk to Christine or email [fds@kandle.ie](mailto:fds@kandle.ie) Please book well in advance as it is already proving to be very popular.

### CONTACT

Faith Development Services  
Cathedral Parish Centre  
College St  
Carlow

Phone: 059 9164084

Email: [maeve.mahon@kandle.ie](mailto:maeve.mahon@kandle.ie)

[www.kandle.ie](http://www.kandle.ie)

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## 50<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS CHILDREN'S EVENTS

The Congress organisers have designated **Tuesday, June 12** and **Friday, June 15** as **Children's Congress Days**. There will also be special events for children on **Saturday, June 16**. A special space will be set up in the RDS to help 7-12yr olds experience the festival atmosphere of this important event. The experience lasts for just over 2 hours from 10:20-12:30 each day and costs €5 per child. It is my understanding that the first 45 minutes or so will be spent engaging the children in a prayer experience to prepare for a celebration of the Eucharist with children at around 11:30. This experience will include drama, song, meditation and prayer. Our Diocesan Altar Cloth will be on display.

If you are interested in bringing a group of children to this event please email [children@iec2012.ie](mailto:children@iec2012.ie). All our schools were emailed booking forms and details from this office on Wednesday, April 25 and there are details on [www.kandle.ie](http://www.kandle.ie)

### DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE DAY: JUNE 12

You might also note that Tuesday, June 12 is the Kildare & Leighlin Diocesan Pilgrimage Day for the International Eucharistic Congress. If you are considering attending the Children's Congress please take this into account.

### DIOCESAN EXHIBITION STAND

The diocese has a Stand in the Exhibition Hall for the duration of the Congress. It is number **197**. Please call by.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The publication of the Forum Report on Patronage and Pluralism in the Catholic Sector ensures that Catholic Schools and their future continue to make news headlines. The report can be accessed at [www.kandle.ie](http://www.kandle.ie). The process to date has clearly shown that all those who believe in the project that is Catholic Education need to be aware of the issues and be prepared to articulate them in the public arena. It is important that staffs in Catholic Schools take time to consider the issues concerned and also to allow space to focus on areas such as ethos, mission, Religious Education Policies and Faith Development. Once again I would like to suggest that our Catholic Schools allocate some of the 36 hours of non-contact time (Circular 0008/) to Religious Education. The continuing professional development of teachers is obviously as necessary in Religious Education as in any subject area of the curriculum. Input can be offered in any of the following areas and the amount of time needed can be agreed individually with every school or cluster of schools.

- Religious Education in the Catholic School
- RE Policy Development
- Faith Development of Teachers
- Understanding, Teaching and Praying the new Mass Responses
- An Overview of Religious Education for NQTs
- Ethos of the Catholic School; Developing or Reviewing Mission and Ethos Statements
- Alive – O in the Classroom
- Preparation for Sacraments in the School.

If you are interested in organising a session in your school please contact me at 059 9164084 or [maeve.mahon@kandle.ie](mailto:maeve.mahon@kandle.ie)

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## MEDITATION WITH CHILDREN: A GIFT FOR LIFE

*Enclosed with this Religious Education Update you will find a brochure giving details of a seminar that will take place later this year. The purpose of this seminar is to promote the benefits of meditation with children in school. I would be happy to facilitate schools that would like to get involved in this initiative and support them in any way possible. If you would like further information or are considering getting involved in the Piloting Project as outlined below please do not hesitate to contact me. The following article has been written by Noel Keating:*

**Meditation with Children: A Gift for Life** is the title of a seminar being organized by Christian Meditation Ireland in association with Meditatio, the outreach of the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM). It will take place on **Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012**. The hope is that principals and teachers from schools will attend. The intention is to develop a pilot project following the seminar with schools who would like to explore the practice. Christian Meditation Ireland will offer full training to the staff of schools participating in the project.

Research and experience show that children have a natural capacity for meditation. At the seminar, Fr. Laurence Freeman, Director of WCCM, will explore how we can make this spiritual practice and universal life-skill available to more children and teachers, helping them to deal better with the challenges and pressures of life. The seminar will offer practical advice to schools on how to introduce the practice and will present one case study on DVD showing how schools in England and elsewhere have successfully introduced Christian Meditation to their schools, very often on a whole-school basis.

The forum will take place at the **Emmaus Retreat & Conference Centre**, Ennis Lane, Lissenhall, Swords, Co. Dublin, on **Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012** from **9.00 am to 4 pm**

To encourage early registration, there is an **Early Bird price** for those who book before **30<sup>th</sup> June**. This cost is just **€50** for one participant and **€40** for additional participants from the same school or organisation. The standard fee is **€65** for one participant and **€55** for additional participants from the same school or organization and will apply to all registrations posted after 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

There is a strong panel of speakers for the forum. **Fr. Laurence Freeman OSB**, Director, WCCM, will describe the practice and tradition of Christian Meditation and situate it in the context of a pluralist world today and the spiritual life of the child. He will also talk about the faith of children and their inherent aptitude for meditation.

**Kim Nataraja** will talk about the fruits and benefits of this contemplative practice. Kim has worked extensively on developing the Meditation with Children project. She will explore how meditation, with its emphasis on silence and stillness, is an antidote to the busyness of modern living.

**Charles Posnett** will outline how many different schools in the UK have adopted the practice of Christian Meditation on a regular, whole-school basis. Charles is Coordinator for Christian Meditation with Children in the UK, a role he shares with his wife Patricia. They have facilitated the introduction of Christian Meditation to over 100 schools in the last 18 months. His talk will explore the lessons learnt as the practice was implemented across the schools, the positive impact on pupils and teachers and what they offered schools in terms of training and resources.

**Noel Keating** will talk about our plans for developing the practice in schools and other centres across Ireland. Noel is Coordinator for Christian Meditation with Children in Ireland. Noel will summarise our plans for a pilot project with schools and other centres and will outline the support that Christian Meditation Ireland will offer to schools - including whole-staff in-service at primary level.

**TO BOOK, PLEASE COMPLETE THE ENCLOSED REGISTRATION FORM**

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## SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR THE 50<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

As you are all aware by now the 50th International Eucharistic Congress takes place in the RDS, Dublin, from June 10-17 of this year. Resources will be made available in the coming weeks to help school communities get a sense of what Congress is about and to encourage them to participate in this important event even though they may not be able to travel to Dublin during the week. The resources will be based on the daily themes of the Congress: Baptism, Family, Ministry, Reconciliation, Healing and Mary. They will also explore the Patron Saints of the Congress: St Columbanus, St Mary MacKillop and Blessed Margaret Ball. These resources will arrive in your school before the end of May. They will also be available on [www.kandle.ie](http://www.kandle.ie). Please keep your eye out for them.

## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2013

The dates for Catholic Schools Week 2013 are: **January 27 – February 2**. Please put them in the diary for planning purposes.



## SCHOOL VISITS

I plan to visit schools on an informal basis over the next couple of months. The focus of this visit will be schools where there are new or relatively new principals. The purpose will be to introduce myself to the principal, where necessary, and to spend a few minutes outlining the resources provided by the diocese and to listen to any concerns or needs that the principal has identified in relation to Religious Education. As these visits are very informal I will simply arrive to the school and if you have a few minutes to spend with me that will be very helpful, otherwise I can arrange to call back at another time. I look forward to seeing some of you on my travels.

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Veritas are in the process of sending an Educational Catalogue to all schools. I would like to draw your attention to two elements in this book:

**50% Sale on All Alive-O Teacher Books, Resource Packs, Full Sets of Posters and Teacher Kits.** This might be a good time to take an inventory of your classroom resources and replace what is missing.

### NEW: SACRED SPACE BOX

Many teachers spend a lot of time trying to find suitable objects to create a Prayer or Sacred Space for their classroom. Veritas has developed a Sacred Space Box which contains all that you need for this. It includes different coloured cloths, pictures and thirteen themed objects to see you through the Liturgical Year in the Classroom.

