

## Winter 2016

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### Words to the Wise

#### Thought for the Week

"The doers cut a path through the jungle, the managers are behind them sharpening the machetes. The leaders find time to think, climb the nearest tree, and shout 'Wrong jungle!' Find time to climb the trees."

*Peter Maxwell, director of the Leadership Trust, writing in the "Guardian", 6 October 1999*



**P.S.**



**Please forward this newsletter onwards to your whole school community.**

### *Memory Awakens Hope*

*"Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope. It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope."*

*Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Seek That Which Is Above, 1986*



***As the school term draws to a close we wish all our school communities every blessing at Christmas.***

It has been a very challenging term, with industrial action in the background since the beginning of the school year and the very difficult days in November when schools were closed due to this action. It is our sincere hope that the dispute will be resolved in January so that normal school work can continue uninterrupted for the remainder of the year.

We'd like to thank the JMB for their advice and support but I would also like to pay a special tribute to all our Principals who were at the front line and had to call into play their strongest resilience and their best leadership skills to ensure that positive relationships could be maintained as they steered the ship through turbulent waters....

*We hope you will have time to rest and recharge the batteries over Christmas and we look forward to seeing you at the Le Chéile Conference in February.*

### Gaeilge – Is féidir linn!



I Laurel Hill Coláiste FCJ le déanaí, d'éirigh go h-iontach leis an bhfeachtas náisiúnta – Gaeilge 24 – go raibh sé mar aidhm aige scoláirí na tíre a chur ag labhairt Gaeilge i gcomhair ceithre h-uaire fichead. Faoi stiúr In. Ní Choileáin, In. Ní Sheaghda agus In. Ní Ríordáin, thaispeáin scoláirí Bhl. 5 agus 4 a ngrá don teanga agus dúthracht ar a son do chách timpeall orthu. Gníomh álainn, croí-oscailteach ó scoláirí LHC, Luimneach ar son na Gaeilge. Beatha teanga í a labhairt gan amhras. Tréaslaímid leo go léir!



### Unto us a child is born

*Some old customs can momentarily transfigure our existence and let the eternal shine through. One such custom is the singing of carols. They strike us as simple ways of expressing those parts of Christianity that ordinary people find most interesting. They are memorable because they are so tangible. They celebrate things that we can touch and see and warm to: a mother and a baby, a stable, donkeys, shepherds, straw and hay. Christmas reminds us that God has transformed our brokenness by taking it on.*

*Thomas Merton said: 'With those for whom there is no room is Jesus.' The message of Christmas is that Christ is made flesh not in the unreal beauty of the Christmas card, but in the mess that is our world. For those of us who claim to be Christian, Christ is made flesh in our neighbours.*

### Le Chéile AGM and Conference 2017 Theme: A Journey of Hope

We're delighted to welcome Senator Joan Freeman, founder of Pieta House, as our keynote speaker at the Le Chéile Conference on 3rd February 2017 in the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone. You will also have the opportunity to attend two workshops. The AGMs will be held on Thursday evening, 2nd February and, this year our Student Forum promises to be inspiring—with students bringing with them projects which they will have completed in advance. Further details and booking forms have been sent to all schools and all members. Please remember to return the forms by **20th January 2017**

## Le Chéile Education Trust (PJP)

A Public Juridic Person (PJP) is a legal entity under canon law that allows the Church's ministries to function in the name of the Catholic Church.

The Le Chéile Education Trust was approved as a PJP by the Irish bishops' Conference in 2012. It comprises the two civil law companies, Le Chéile Schools Trust and Síol Schools Trust.

The purpose of the PJP is to support and endow the development of Catholic education in schools. The PJP is governed by Administrators who are the members and directors of both companies. The Standing Committee is made up of the Directors of both companies and the Chairperson the Chairperson of Síol Schools Trust, Mr. Paul Meany. The first annual general meeting will be held in February 2017



## Le Chéile Teachers Retreat

Following our very successful first retreat for teachers last February the second Le Chéile teachers Retreat will take place on February 11th in the Avila Retreat Centre. This is an opportunity to take time out, reflect and pray together with fellow teachers from the Le Chéile community in a tranquil setting. The title of the retreat is 'The God I Believe in' and will be facilitated by Peter McVerry S.J. and John Scally. There is no charge and for further information contact John at: [john@lecheiletrust.ie](mailto:john@lecheiletrust.ie)



## Middle Leaders Training

A training programme for Middle Leaders is being provided at venues in Dublin and Waterford this year. This programme is offered in conjunction with three other Trust Bodies and both centres have been over subscribed. The participants have recently submitted a project template outlining the aims and objectives of group projects that they have started in their schools. The projects include work on attendance, wellbeing, the feasibility of hour long classes, peer observation, promotion of positive behavior, formative feedback and pastoral care provision. We would like to thank all our participants for their hard work and commitment to the programme. We look forward to meeting you in the new year. The next sessions take place on Wednesday 11th Jan. in Dublin and 8th Feb. in Waterford.

## Dates to Remember .....

### January

- 11th Jan. 2015-2016 Electronic and hard copy accounts (**NOT THE ORIGINAL**) to Le Chéile Office
- 11th Jan. Middle Leaders Training (S4) 5.00–8.00pm Clarion Hotel Liffey Valley
- 19th Jan. Chairpersons Meeting & Dinner Clarion Hotel Liffey Valley, starting at 4.00
- 29th Jan.- 3rd Feb. Catholic Schools Week

### February

- 2nd & 3rd Feb. **Le Chéile AGM, Conference and Student Forum, Athlone**
- 8th Feb. Middle Leaders (S5), Talbot Hotel Waterford
- 11h Feb. Le Chéile Retreat Avila Retreat Centre, Donnybrook, Dublin 4

### March

- 2nd & 3rd Deputy Principals Conference, Mullingar



My name is Aoife Cullen and I am a student in St. Dominic's College, Cabra. Our school is an all-girls school, located near the Phoenix Park in Dublin. Starting secondary school was scary for me as I did not know what to expect, but I have settled in well, have made new friends and really like my new school. Each year the first year classes are named by a different subject department. This year, being a very significant one in Irish history, our classes were named after some of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation. I am in Class MacDonagh, the other classes are Pearse, Connolly, McDiarmada, Clarke and Plunkett. Our school was founded by the Dominican Sisters. Each year a special Mass is organised by the RE teachers to make the First Years feel welcome and to help them to settle in. It took lots of preparation for the teachers to organise the Mass. Each religion teacher asked their class for volunteers to have a special role in the Mass such as doing a reading, singing or bringing up a gift. We learned that each first year was going to be given an opportunity to plant a daffodil bulb. These bulbs would be blessed by our priest, during the Mass which was held in our school Chapel. Everyone carrying out a special role was brought down to the chapel to practice, while everyone else was in class preparing for the Mass by learning all of the responses and the hymns.

The Mass started with all of the students singing the opening hymn while Fr. Michael walked up the aisle and onto the altar, introduced himself and opened the Mass. Some of the girls in my class read a commentary while others carried up six baskets containing daffodil bulbs for each class. The baskets contained a daffodil bulb for each first year student



and we heard about how daffodil bulbs are planted and how long it takes for them to flower. We heard about how planting these bulbs would be like us laying down our roots in St. Dominic's College and how we would always be part of the Dominican family. The bulbs will grow into many different beautiful shades of yellow, just like we will grow with individual talents, abilities and beauty as the years go on. After this, four girls read us some rules for growing daffodils. The first was that daffodil bulbs must be planted deep, she related this to us, we must be one hundred percent involved in the school and work hard so as to plant our roots deep. The second rule for growing daffodils is that you must allow the stems to brown after they blossom, again this was related back to us, there may be certain things we do not like or may find difficult, but we must learn to take the bad times with the good and learn from

this experience. The third rule we learned was that daffodils must be watered before they will germinate again; we were told that we too must look after ourselves and our health by eating well and exercising. The last rule for planting daffodil bulbs is that they are best planted in groups. Everyone in our school community is unique and valued. We must support each other and enjoy each other's company. Fr. Michael used a special prayer and blessed the daffodil bulbs.

When the Mass was over we went outside, class by class, to plant our daffodil bulbs in the garden. Most people compared the size of their bulb with their friends and I know that my friends and I definitely enjoyed the experience of planting the bulbs deep in the ground and covering them with soil. There will be many glorious shades of yellow and all different, just like us. Our teachers told us that every year daffodils will grow here. I think this is really special because every year we see them growing, we will be growing too, facing new challenges and new opportunities. We will do so with support from friends, teachers and our faith. We will remember what it was like to be in first year, how scared we were and how small we felt, just like the little green shoots in Spring. When we graduate in sixth year, we will remember that we were the ones who planted the daffodils, which will hopefully keep growing after we leave the school. They will remind the teachers of us and when we laid down our roots in the Dominican family in Cabra. Our daffodil planting was a very special time for us.

*Aoife Cullen*



**Is your school celebrating any special anniversary or event this year?? Do tell us and share your story.**

## May they Rest In Peace

Throughout November many of our schools have found many imaginative ways to remember lost loved ones. Gearoid McCartney, our Anam Cara in Dominican College Griffith Avenue, sent this photo of a different way of marking this important time. He explains: 'A little idea of ours instead of the remember tree we hung moons, stars and clouds over our autumn scene on the ceiling. The light hits at times wonderfully and we all can see it as a community that we have all lost someone that we would like to remember.'



**Ard Scoil Raheny** did not let all their hard work assembling shoeboxes overcome them or stunt their smiling nature!!

*Well done to all our students, parents and school staff around the country for their generosity and hard work on the Shoebox Appeal. There are children throughout the world opening their boxes with joy literally this week because of you.*

*Thank you.*



## Ursuline Sligo Opens Their New Astro Turf

The official opening of the new AstroTurf pitch at Ursuline College Sligo took place on 18th October 2016. The School Community were delighted to welcome Minister Michael Ring and Councillor Tony Mc Loughlin TD to formally open this wonderful facility. The new AstroTurf pitch will enable all school hockey and soccer matches to take place on school grounds as well as offering an excellent facility for other field sports at local, regional and national level. The Board of Management would like to thank the Sports Capital Programme, Parents Association, Ursuline Congregation and students past and present for their help in realising the completion of this project. We hope that the use of the pitch will enable generations of young people to develop their skills and talents to the full.

