

In this edition:

- ◆ Anam Cara
- ◆ Dates for Diary
- ◆ School News
- ◆ A Trip of a Lifetime

We extend a special welcome to all our new Principals and Deputy Principals. We look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

Words to the Wise

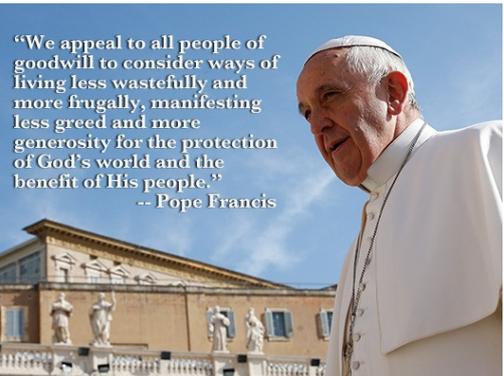
“In some parts of the world, students are going to school every day. It's their normal life. But in other part of the world, we are starving for education... it's like a precious gift. It's like a diamond.”
(Malala Yousafzai)



As we enjoy these beautiful Autumn days we are reminded of Pope Francis' publication on the environment, *Laudato Si'* - (“Be praised”) published in May this year. Care for creation is something that is close to the Pope’s heart and he wrote this, his second encyclical for ‘every person on the planet’ - Christians and non-Christians alike. Pope Francis believes that there are significant ecological problems today that need to be addressed. They include not only problems in the natural environment but also in the human sphere, particularly among the poorest.

Over the past number of years, there has been a growing interest among our students and school communities in the environment. A number of Le Chéile schools have not only one, but two or three Green Flags. This is a great achievement and one which we hope will continue to spread. Our young people hold the key to the future of our society and our world—our role is to invite them to live and to lead in a responsible way, based on Gospel Values, with a deep understanding and the will to care for the environment and for each other.

“Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us”.



Saint Wolstans Celebration



Saint Wolstans Community School in Celbridge recently marked its 60th anniversary with an uplifting and vibrant Mass. Appropriately, a tree was planted in memory of Sr. Euphrasia Bergin, who sadly passed away last August. Sr. Euphrasia devoted her life to nurturing and educating girls, having entered the Holy Faith Convent in 1940. She was a true pioneer of modern educational techniques and organisation. The girls in the school today have much to be proud of, as stated in an excellent speech by the Head Girl, Lauren O’Reilly. She praised the school for the warm and caring atmosphere, the traditions of the past but also the ongoing changes that help to prepare students for “the outside world”. She captured the essence of the school ethos in the comment “it instilled in us to look out for one another”.

Thanks to Tara Keegan and Lucy Bryan for this photograph of the tree planting by Sr. Una Collins, accompanied by Maria Barry (Principal) and Nigel Kerrigan (Chaplain)

Ag Obair Le Chéile - Cluster Meetings

The first Cluster Meetings for Principals and Chairpersons took place in four locations over the last few weeks. These meetings continue to provide a very important support for our school leaders, where we share ideas and experiences and remind ourselves of the Le Chéile mission and vision. We’re delighted that a small group from each Cluster agreed to reflect on issues relating to school Admissions Policies and report back to the Cluster Meetings in November/December. This will form the basis of a discussion document for use by Le Chéile schools to review their policies , based on the Le Chéile Charter.



Growing up on a farm I never failed to get a little thrill from bringing a lamb into the world, especially after a very difficult birth. I felt I was part in some small way of achieving the miracle of new life. It would be melodramatic to say it was a religious experience but a warmth flowed through my body like a sliding, sun-dappled river. The birth was a language of hope, lyrical yet maddeningly inarticulate, alive to the resonances of everyday life. The first sound of the breathing of the new lamb was the breathing of hope.

The new school year is always a time for the breathing of hope. There is a colour and a shape that constantly resists that which is too clear. It always surprises, and offers new vistas where wisdom and welcome conspire. It is ready to dispense insight to enhance our life experience. It can reach deep into the world that lives within us. Each new day can be a new beginning, a gift from God full of creativity and feeling, investing all our energies in an environment where our souls and intellects are fully engaged.

Pope Francis issued his memorable exhortation to religious that speaks equally to lay people: 'Wake up the world. Be witnesses of a different way of acting, of living. It is possible to live differently in this world. It is this witness I expect from you. Let us build a new world together. Let us together be instruments of hope and bring the good news of hope.'

Middle Leaders Course

In October almost a hundred teachers began another Middle Leaders' course which is run this year by Le Chéile and the Loreto, Jesuit and Spiritian Trusts. The course aims to develop teacher leadership in schools; to offer the opportunity for participation in learning networks and to encourage continuing professional development. Given the enthusiasm and engagement of the teachers at the opening session there is no doubt but that this year's course will again be a great success.

Next Sessions, 11th November, 2nd December 5.00 – 8.00pm, Talbot Hotel Stillorgan Dublin (2nd & 3rd of six Wednesdays).

Scoil Chaitríona Represented in the All Ireland Football Final

Bhíomar an-bhródúil as Ciarán Mac Giolla Choinnigh agus Philip Ó Riain ag imirt le foireann peile Bhaile Átha Cliath i gcluiche cheannais na hÉireann Vs Ciarraí. D'imir siad go díograiseach le foirne na scoile nuair a bhí siad ar scoil linn.

We were very proud of Ciarán Kilkenny and Philip Ryan playing with the Dublin football team in the All Ireland final against Kerry. They played their part in school teams when they were in Scoil Chaitríona.



But they were not the only winners who represented Scoil Chaitríona this year, the u18 hurling team won the Dublin Championship against Salesians in one of the



wettest days of the year and congratulations to the under 16 Camogie team who won the Dublin shield final in Clann na nGael. Comhghairdeas go léir!



Department of Education Inspection and School Self-Evaluation

The DES is currently reviewing their guidelines on inspection and evaluation and developing proposals for the next phase of school self-evaluation. Both will be discussed at the next Le Chéile Cluster meetings.

Reminder of Important Dates

10 th November	Deputy Principals Meeting
14 th , 21 st & 28 th Nov.	Board of Management Training - JMB / Trusts
24 th November	Dublin North Cluster Meeting
26 th November	The South Cluster Meeting
1 st December	Meeting for Community Schools Principals and Chairpersons
1 st December	Dublin South Cluster Meeting
3 rd December	The West Cluster Meeting
11 th January	Submit 2014-2015 Accounts (electronic and hard copy)
28th & 29th Jan.	Le Chéile AGM and Conference

Cluster Meetings for Principals and Chairpersons 1.30pm - 4pm If you are unable to attend your own cluster meeting you are welcome to attend any of the other meetings

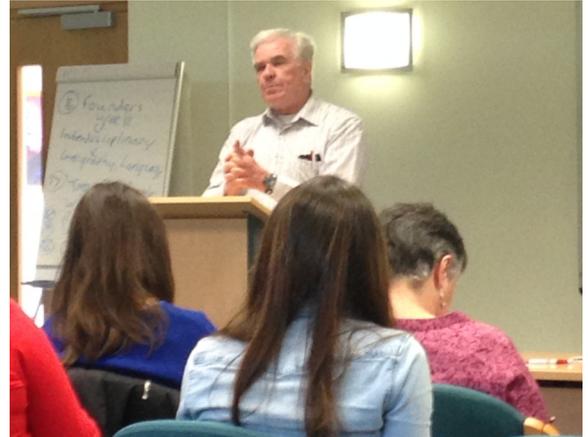
New Beginnings

On the 23rd of September we launched our new Anam Caras with a training day in the Avila Retreat Centre. Over 30 schools were represented and they will provide an exciting and invaluable link between Le Chéile and our schools and also between the schools of the Le Chéile family.

There was a great exchange of ideas and already since then some Anam Caras have implemented ideas they heard on the day in their schools. In addition the Anam Caras have begun to share ideas and resources not just with each other but with all the RE teachers and chaplains on our mailing list. This is a central part of the role of the Anam Caras to help create a 'community of sharers' within Le Chéile.

The guest speaker was Fr Peter McVerry who gave an inspirational talk on the link between faith and justice, a theme which will be at the heart of the role of the Anam Caras in the years ahead.

Thanks to all the participants for making it a day to remember.



Catholic Schools Partnerships (CSP) / Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools (ATCS)

At the AGM of ATCS in October CSP joined the Trustees and linked up by video with four schools to launch a Pilot Project, "Reflecting on School Ethos". St. Dominic's, Cabra is one of the four schools and extend our congratulations to them on the wonderful work on the day. We wish them well in this project and look forward to hearing more about it during the year.

Congregational Leaders Meeting

All fourteen of the Le Chéile congregations were represented at meeting of Congregational Leaders on the 17th June in the Margaret Aylward Centre in Glasnevin. It was a great opportunity for the Congregations to meet each other in the context of the work of the Trust. The gathering saw a high level of engagement between the participants and the tone was a uniformly positive one. It was very clear that an important consideration for each of the congregations is the vision of Catholic Education for the future and all those in attendance were of one mind in their desire to serve this cause.

Exciting Times at Saint Gerald's College Castlebar

It has been an eventful opening to the new school year in Saint Gerald's College Castlebar. Shane Martin, the noted Psychologist and teacher presented a valuable seminar to the sixth year students about resilience-building and stress management.

The chaplain Fr John McCormack celebrated the Opening School Mass. He asked all the students to make school a second home and follow the example of Jesus by caring for others and showing compassion and concern for each other.

The school has produced a new app to enhance communication with parents, students, alumni and others who have an interest in all that goes on in the school.

Some of the third year

classes, as part of their Religious Education Junior Certificate Journal Work, went to the Islamic Cultural Centre in Clonskeagh and to Glendalough.

The school also had a visit from GAA Royalty! In October the Kilkenny hurling legend Henry Shefflin visited the school. He shared his experiences about competing at the highest sporting levels and his thoughts about what one needs to succeed. The main points in his presentation were practice, resilience, perseverance, teamwork. A memory to savour for all present.





From Maryfield To Padua

Fifty lucky transition year students from Maryfield College travelled to Padua on a pilgrimage last April. Padua is a city that is most famous for its association with St. Anthony and his beautiful basilica. The day we arrived we were fortunate enough to visit this wonderful basilica. We saw the many different cloisters, the tomb and relics of St. Anthony. A number of our students left petitions here, as did many other pilgrims from other countries. We also blessed items by touching them on the tomb. As it was Palm Sunday, we attended a private mass with our teachers in a side chapel of the basilica, celebrated by an

English speaking priest, Father Ramano. This was a lovely experience for us. It felt very personal, and we had a special sense of unity during this mass. We all sang together, prayed together and laughed together. It was very memorable. It was particularly uplifting because being in Maryfield is a huge part of our lives and the mass allowed us to reflect on this and to pray for all our families and friends back home in Ireland.

We visited Venice and saw the amazing Piazza San Marco (St. Mark's Square). St. Mark's Basilica, was outstanding and very beautiful. While in Venice, we also saw the famous Rialto Bridge and the Bridge of Sighs. Everything we saw while in Venice reminded us what a phenomenal world God has created.

We did a walking tour of Padua. We began this tour with a visit to the Scrovegni Chapel. The chapel contains magnificent frescoes painted by the artist Giotto which tells the story of Jesus' life and his parents. The chapel's beauty was breath taking and we find it difficult to describe using mere words. The detail and beauty of the artwork in the Scrovegni Chapel was honestly very inspiring. While it was difficult to absorb everything in the chapel, we did have some time afterwards to process what we had seen. While reflecting we particularly remembered and considered the image created by Giotto to depict heaven and hell. This really made us think about eternal life and remember all of the people close to us that have passed away. Later that day we visited the Basilica di Santa Giustina. This is where the relics of St. Luke are held. We then visited a monastery which had St. Leopald Mandic's tomb. Father Roberto, a lovely Friar, brought us around the monastery and told us the history of Leopald Mandic. Father Roberto did not speak English but our wonderful tour guide, Mario, translated as Father Roberto spoke. This touched all of us, and we realised that no matter what language you speak or where in the world you are- faith can be a shared experience. By purely listening to his tone of voice and expression, we all felt what he was saying. We were very moved by the life of this humble saint and his compassion for others as he brought God's forgiveness to their lives as a confessor.

One of the most inspiring sights we saw while in Italy was the Sanctuary of Madonna della Corona. The journey there was long but really worthwhile because of the beautiful views of Lake Garda. The sanctuary is positioned on the cliffs of Monte Baldo and the view from there is stunning. This place is said to be one of the most inspiring places of prayer in the world, and we had the chance to experience this for ourselves. While there we completed the '28 Steps' (an act of penance- as you climb the steps in prayer on your knees, remembering Christ's trial and persecution). A large number of our group took part and we completed the steps together in prayer and silence. Completing the 28 steps was genuinely so prayerful. While saying a prayer on each step we had the opportunity to identify what was really important in our lives. This is something not many teenagers often do. We have many distractions in our lives but this gave us peace and quiet to step back from our hectic lives and gain an insight into what really matters.

That afternoon we visited the medieval city of Verona. We saw the romantic balcony from Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'. We explored Verona for a while and then returned to Padua for our last night.

Having the opportunity to participate in the pilgrimage was amazing and for that we are thankful. The pilgrimage provided time for us to relax, step back and view life from many different angles. It encouraged us to consider faith in its many different aspects. It was an inspiring experience and one that many of us may not get the chance to repeat. The memories of this pilgrimage will never be forgotten!

By
Holly Leech and Orla Carty
(pictured right)

