



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
**ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON**

ST PHILIP HOWARD CENTRE, 4 SOUTHGATE DRIVE, CRAWLEY, RH10 6RP

12 December 2023

Dear Colleagues,

As we come to the end of another busy term, I want to take the opportunity to thank you for the hard work and service you have given to ensure our pupils receive the best possible education. Four schools have had OFSTED inspections and four have had Catholic School Inspections, under the new national framework. Two more primary schools have joined Xavier CET bringing the total number to seventeen in the Trust. Six Arundel & Brighton schools have featured as the highest performing secondary schools in The Times / Sunday Times Parent Power Guide. Aside from these successes, there has been much to celebrate when we look at all that is achieved daily in our schools.

### **In thanksgiving**

On December 4<sup>th</sup> the school hall at St Richard's Catholic College, Bexhill-on-Sea, was packed with staff, governors, parents, diocesan Heads and representatives, and former students to celebrate a mass of thanksgiving for Doreen Cronin who retires after 37 years at the school, fifteen of these as Principal. Alison Horan, Chair of Governors writes: "The end of this term sees the end of an era for St Richard's with the retirement of Miss Cronin. Governors, both past and present, feel very privileged to have worked alongside her and know we owe her a great debt of gratitude for her dedicated commitment and everything she has given to the school .... St Richard's is a very special school, and her leadership has ensured that it has flourished."

Warm tributes were paid to Doreen at the end of the mass, celebrated by Canon David Parmiter, by Alison as well as Pete Byrne and Debs Bligh who served as her Deputy Heads in the past. We wish Doreen a very happy and fulfilled retirement.

### **RE Directory**

The bishops agreed to defer the implementation of the Religious Education Directory (RED) to 2026 for ages 3 to 11 years at their plenary meeting in November.

Article 8 of the General Norms in the Religious Education Directory has, therefore, been amended for the purposes of ages 3 to 11 so that 2026 replaces 2025 at the request of the Bishops Conference. The compliance date for secondary remains as 2025.

**DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE**

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### **Prayer & Liturgy Directory**

Please do refer to the article in the November edition of Alpha Beta and sign up for one of the briefings, taking place in four locations across the diocese in February – March 2024.

[Alpha Beta Nov 2023 \(website-files.com\)](https://www.alpha-beta.org.uk/alpha-beta-nov-2023)

### **The Year of Jubilee 2025 and the Year of Prayer 2024**

The Holy Father has decided that 2025 will be a year of Jubilee, something which happens every 25 years. The theme is "Pilgrims of Hope."

Preparations for the 2025 Year of Jubilee begin in Advent 2023, which will mark the start of a year of prayer.

#### *Why the 'Year of Prayer?'*

In preparation for the Jubilee Year, 2023-24 has been designated the Year of Prayer by Pope Francis, with a particular emphasis on the Our Father. This presents our Church with a significant opportunity to revisit the basics of prayer, and for us to become even more a people of prayer.

The Year of Prayer asks us to consider how we might help others to pray, so that they can experience a personal encounter with the risen Jesus.

The Bishops' Conference will be producing resources for the preparatory year of prayer, focusing on the Our Father, as well as resources about Jubilee in the Catholic Church.

[The Year of Prayer - Catholic Bishops' Conference \(cbcew.org.uk\)](https://www.cbcew.org.uk/the-year-of-prayer)

### **Advent Message**

Bishop Marcus Stock, Chair of the Catholic Education Service, has written an Advent message to school leaders, teachers, learning assistants, chaplains and all those employed in diocesan schools and colleges:

"I offer my thanks for their dedicated work and for their vocation within Catholic education."

The full text can be found here:

[Bishop Marcus' Advent message to Catholic schools \(catholiceducation.org.uk\)](https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/bishop-marcus-advent-message-to-catholic-schools)

### **Thanks**

At the end of this term, we say farewell to Lauren Johnson, Acting Head of School at Annecy, and wish her well in her new post.

Thank you to Paul Barber, Head of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School in Rottingdean since January 2020, for his leadership of the school. He leaves to take up post as Principal of

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St Richard's Catholic College in January and our prayers are with him as he moves into this new role.

God, our dayspring and our dawn,  
We turn to you when we fear the dark  
And all around us weep.  
We pray you greet us with your shining light  
That we may spread your warm embrace  
And kindle the hope of Christmas  
In all whose lives remain in shadow.  
Come and be our strength  
O Lord, our hope and our salvation. Amen.  
*Annabel Shilson-Thomas/CAFOD*

With every best wish for a joyful and holy Christmas.

Julie Oldroyd - Director