

CEIST is the trustee body for the voluntary secondary schools of the Daughters of Charity, the Presentation Sisters, the Sisters of the Christian Retreat, the Sisters of Mercy and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Feature

Catholic schools are centres of Christian hope

Catholic secondary schools won't be found wanting in the spirit of service to the common good in these difficult times because that has always been part of their tradition, a conference on education was told this week.

Mr Noel Merrick, president of the Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS/JMB) told delegates at the organisation's annual conference in Killarney this week that to ensure a positive engagement and the ideal of pluralism, the State must also play its part and respect the rights of parents to having the choice of sending their children to a Catholic secondary school.

No new permanent Voluntary Secondary School has opened in over 20 years.

If it had not been for the AMCSS highlighting this fact Mr Merrick said, "the whole Catholic community would be sleepwalking into a situation where the parents in large areas of the country would no longer have the option of a Catholic school".

He said there is an urgent need for strategic planning by Catholic secondary schools.

He praised the tradition of Catholic secondary schools, saying that they had given education where there was no educational provision and had played a pivotal role in the Irish state, with many teachers who gave a service second to none, often spending their working lives in prefabs.

"Our schools are renewing themselves constantly and, due to a superb cohort of young people and teachers, they are centres of positive energy, of Christian hope and excellence," he said.

(courtesy of [The Irish Catholic](#))



CEIST News



A Day with Liam Lawton

CEIST teachers had a profound experience with Liam Lawton in Temple Bar on the 8 and 9th March in Firkin Crane.

The two days with Liam were a great success with very encouraging feedback from CEIST teachers who attended the events.

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Health and Safety

Health and Safety in Post-Primary Schools

We mentioned in a previous Enews publication the importance of managing health and safety in our schools. We draw your attention again to this area and highly recommend that you review the Health and Safety Authority's website.

The HSA has developed guidelines - 'Guidelines on Managing Safety and Health in Post-Primary Schools' - that set out the legal obligations and responsibilities that have been placed on schools. Health and Safety must be managed in all workplaces and the guidelines provide tools and instructions into how health and safety can be integrated into the school's planning processes. Click [here](#) to view.

The Guidelines are a management tool intended to offer guidance and practical advice to assist schools in planning, organising and managing a safe and healthy school environment for staff, pupils and visitors.

Annual Insurance Premium for Schools

Allianz plc has sent out the annual renewal premia for 2011-2012 and you should be in receipt of the documentation this week. As with previous years the premium is payable directly to Allianz plc in two moieties; one by 1st April 2011 and the 2nd by 1st October 2011. Please ensure that you pay your premium on time so as to ensure that your school has insurance cover at all times.

Education Matters



Religion & Education : A Human Rights Perspective

The Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP), an umbrella group providing support for all of the partners in Catholic schools in the Republic of Ireland, has reflected on many of the key issues facing all of the stakeholders in Irish schools at this time and presents this paper in response to the recent IHRC consultation document.

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Young Social Innovators Annual Speak Outs 2011

During the month of March some 5,500 young people, aged 15-18, have taken part in the Young Social Innovators' Speak Outs in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Donegal, presenting an outline of the 350 social action projects submitted to YSI for 2011.

This year 45 CEIST schools have participated in Young Social Innovators. Congratulations to all those students who have worked so hard to address social justice issues which they have identified, and who have had the courage to speak out publicly about their concerns and attempts to highlight and respond to those issues. Also sincere thanks to their teachers, for their enthusiasm and dedication in encouraging and mentoring the students in their projects.

Sixty projects will be selected for presentation at the Tenth Annual YSI Showcase which will take place in Citywest on 11th May 2011. Click [here](#) to view our article on Galway Students' YSI speak outs. The last of the regional speakouts took place yesterday in the Green Isle Hotel Dublin where students from CEIST schools, St. Bridgid's College, Callan, Presentation College Carlow and St. Leo's College Carlow, presented projects on well being, AIDS/HIV, litter and healthy eating.



SchoolWise is a cloud based Software-as-a-Service solution designed specifically for education. It empowers you to enhance your online presence by allowing you to design and edit a professional, comprehensive website for your school 'on the fly' without any technical or web design knowledge.

SchoolWise have created new websites for CEIST schools, Presentation Secondary School, Askea, and Presentation De La Salle, Bagenalstown. Go to www.schoolwise.ie for further information.

Notre Dame Information Afternoon hosted in Coláiste Bríde, Clondalkin

This information opportunity sought to make CEIST 5th and 7Y students aware of a Notre Dame Scholarship for Irish students.

Notre Dame's Ms Jennifer Nemecek flew in from Paris to disseminate the information.

Both teachers and students from several schools attended, they included; Coláiste Bríde, Clondalkin, Our Lady's College, Drimnagh, St Joseph's Secondary School Rush, Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore, Ardscoil na Tríonóide, Athy, Presentation Secondary School, Warrenmount, and Mercy College, Coolock.

Be the Change Symposium

Be the Change Symposium was held in Our lady of the Wayside Parish Centre, Inchicore, Dublin on 26th March.

Lloyd Bracken of CEIST, with fellow facilitators Donal Keogh and Amie Shiels, gave the symposium. A wide range of ages attended.

CEIST Education Conference

Date: 29th and 30th September 2011

Venue: Sheraton Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

Keynote Speaker: Abbot Mark Patrick Hederman, Glenstal Abbey.

Trustee Support Day for Chairpersons of CEIST School Boards of Management

Date: 14th May 2011

Venue: Tullamore Court Hotel

Time: 9.30am - 2pm

Faith-related Issues



Former teacher from Scoil Bhríde Tuam appointed Diocesan Chancellor

A former member of the teaching profession in Tuam has made history by becoming the first woman to hold the position of Diocesan Chancellor in the Archdiocese of Tuam.

Sr. Mary Lyons, a member of the Mercy order was appointed by Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. Michael Neary to the important position.

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News from CEIST Schools



Presentation Warrenmount Annual 'One Week World' Festival

Presentation Secondary School Warrenmount held their Annual 'One Week World' festival during week commencing 14th March 2011.

The festival is a celebration of the rich and diverse cultures in their school and community.

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Seachtain na Gaeilge i gColáiste na Toirbhirte, Tuaim, Co. Na Gaillimhe

Bhí ceolchoirm don Chéad Bhliain ar siúl i rith Seachtain na Gaeilge. Bhí amhránaíocht, ceol, rince agus craic.

Bhain chuile dhúine taitneamh as an gceolchoirm.

Tá an Ghaeilge beo i gColáiste na Toirbhirte, Tuaim.

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News from Sacred Heart Secondary School Westport

Sacred Heart Secondary School Westport has kindly shared photos and news from recent activities on Catholic Schools Week 2011 in the school, as well as St. Patrick's Day and Ash Wednesday.

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A New Dawn for Presentation Secondary School Waterford

Tuesday March 22nd marked the opening of a new chapter at Coláiste Na Maighdine as the sod was turned to begin construction of a new school building.

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Ardscail na Tríonóide Athy Wins Junior Achievement Award

Ardscail na Tríonóide Athy won the overall prize at the Eastern Regional Finals of Junior Achievement's Company Competition.

Ardscail na Tríonóide Athy was honoured at the awards, held at Chartered Accountants House, Pearse Street, Dublin 2.

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Coláiste Muire Ennis Students Big Clean-up for World Earth Day

Six students from Coláiste Muire Ennis, Saoirse Kearse, Orla O'Neill, Niamh Hamilton-Jones, Cliona Redington, Aice Mahony and Leila Ben-Fredj invited the public recently to help them mark World Earth Day, with their final beach comb at Doughmore in Co. Clare.

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Presentation De La Salle Inaugural Partnership Meeting

The future looks bright for Presentation De La Salle, Bagenalstown, Carlow. The school's inaugural partnership meeting was held on the February 18th and a great crowd attended to hear plans for the future of the secondary school.

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St. Raphael's College Loughrea Student Success in Worldwide Writing Competition

15-year-old student in St Raphael's College, Loughrea, has just taken her first steps into the literary world by having one of her short stories included in an anthology by UK Publisher Mirador.

Annabel Hynes entered a worldwide short story competition last November (2010), after she saw the writing competition advertised on the internet.

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Presentation College Headford signs up team for Formula 1 challenge

Presentation College Headford has signed up a team for the F1 in schools technology challenge, powered in Ireland by the Irish Computer Society.

Members of the team will be required to make an aerodynamic model F1 car which will be raced against other participating schools in the regional finals in March and the national final in April.

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CEIST Schools Participate in mock European Debate via Live Stream TV

Four CEIST schools participated with other schools from across the country in the annual Model Council of the European Union debate in Dublin Castle, on March 11th, 2011.

The Four CEIST schools who participated in the debate were as follows:

- Presentation Secondary School, Waterford
- Scoil Muire agus Pádraig, Swinford, Co. Mayo
- Mercy Secondary School, Tralee, Co. Kerry
- St. Aloysius School, Cork

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Reflecting CEIST Values



Mount Saint Michael, Rosscarbery Fashion Formula TY Project

Transition Year students from Mount Saint Michael, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork have initiated a charity based project called "Fashion Formula".

The student project was set up with the following three concepts in mind.

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A Day with Liam Lawton

Tuesday 15th March 2011



CEIST teachers had a profound experience with Liam Lawton in Temple Bar on the 8 and 9th March in Firkin Crane.

Both mornings began with Morning Prayer. Tuesday being Shrove Tuesday allowed us to embrace that lovely tradition and in like manner ashes were distributed on the Wednesday morning in Cork to mark Ash Wednesday. With the music of Liam Lawton the simple rituals made for powerful prayer experience. Both of these prayer services are on our CEIST website.

Liam Lawton, who was accompanied by Martin Quinn on guitar and Mark Cahill on the keyboard, shared stories, songs and prayer with the teacher audience. Liam was a teacher himself. He was able to key into this background during the performance. The whole day made a deep impact on all those who attended.

These are some of the comments that teachers made afterwards. They capture the essence of the day;

'What a day yesterday! My teachers were fired up in the staff room this morning at break sharing with the others the 'good news'. Never saw such enthusiasm after any day. It was a treat beyond measure and so appreciated by us. Well done to you for organising same... We were touched by the stories which pulled at the strings of our hearts and emotions. Such a talented, unassuming, spiritual man... Well done again to you and all at CEIST'. (Principal)

'I am writing to thank you most sincerely for including me in today's CEIST event. It was a very moving experience for me and provided a truly sacred space for reflection and contemplation through prayer and song for which I most grateful. (Deputy Principal)

It was lovely to meet you, Liam, Margaret, Ned and the other participants involved. You all made me feel so welcome. Today's experience will stay with me for a long time and I took away very positive feelings of hope which need to be communicated to a wider audience which I will endeavour to do as I go about my work. With deepest thanks and appreciation'. (Board Member)

'I want to thank you and your colleagues for the wonderful day last Tuesday with Liam Lawton. I thoroughly enjoyed the day and felt privileged to be part of it. What a wonderful opportunity. It was uplifting in every sense. ... Looking forward to the retreat'. (Retired Teacher)

'Words cannot explain what I got from the occasion. When I arrived this morning it was with something of a heavy heart... I sat and shuffled a bit and put on a mask to keep up the public face when suddenly I was told to choose a stone. Well let me tell you I felt a sense of letting go and really handing over something to God when I placed that stone in the water. From that moment on the sense of "All will be well" took over. Every moment of today resonated deeply and strongly within me. For me, your organising today, brought Hope and Trust back into my life and for that I thank you all. You truly brought my "Aingeal" alive again.

Tomorrow I'm bringing some of today back to my school and I will try and bring some of the essence of what was gifted to me today. Thanks to you all and may God bless you, may the Spirit guide you and may Jesus walk with you in the work you continue to do' (Teacher).

These are but a small sense of how the experience with Liam affected people. Our endeavour on such a day is to care for the carer. Teachers give such a huge amount to others without looking for much, if anything' in return. Some might say, 'Well, it's your job'. Of course it is but if it were not also a vocation the impact that teachers have on the lives of their students would be much reduced. As Carl Jung reminds us; 'One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child'.

Some of the teachers who attended the Day with Liam Lawton will also join us on our CEIST Annual Retreat during Holy Week in Glendalough. This is being directed again by Fr. Michael Rodgers and Sr. Breda Ahern CP. It was another amazing experience last year and promises to be again this year.

We pray the Holy Spirit will touch all your hearts in a personal and special way during the Season of Lent and Holy Week. Bail ó Dhia oraibh go léir.



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Religion & Education : A Human Rights Perspective

Friday 4th March 2011

Catholic Schools Partnership

Submission in response to the Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) consultation document on "Religion & Education: A Human Rights Perspective"

Introduction

Schools and their future require diligent reflection and consideration by all parties involved. Change in educational policy needs to be thought through carefully as the contribution of good schools to the development of social capital and the common good is inestimable. The Catholic Schools Partnership (CSP), an umbrella group providing support for all of the partners in Catholic schools in the Republic of Ireland, has reflected on many of the key issues facing all of the stakeholders in Irish schools at this time and presents this paper in response to the recent IHRC consultation document. The CSP welcomes the contribution of the IHRC in this area and looks forward to an informed debate on all of the relevant issues.

Schools are important places. We spend a lot of time in them. This includes a significant proportion of that most formative period in life between 4 years of age and 18 years of age. The formal education received at home and in the community is of crucial significance. The formal education of children in schools has its own integrity related to the stage of development of the pupils. When schools are working at or near their best they are truly a remarkable human achievement. Young children have a safe place to learn and play and pray, adolescents grow into a deeper intellectual, emotional and moral world; teachers use their personal and professional abilities to nurture and challenge new generations; parents, members of boards of management and other adults give of their time and money to support the educational enterprise. The hope is that by 17-18 years of age a young adult who is free, rational and capable of mature relationships will be able to cross the threshold into higher education or the world of work.

In responding to the IHRC the CSP first raises some concerns it has with the consultation document itself before proceeding to an analysis of the key issues.

Concerns with the consultation document

(1) In #1 there is reference to the majority of persons defining themselves as belonging to the main Christian Churches. Surely this should say the "vast" majority. The actual figures from the most recent census of population (2006) are – the four main Christian Churches 91%, other faiths 3%, no belief 4%, not stated 2%.

(2) #3 refers to "non private primary schools". The meaning of this term is wholly unclear and it is hardly acceptable to define the vast majority of our primary schools negatively. What we have are National Schools under different Patrons. These Patrons are private bodies (with the exception of the Vocational Education Committees) which established schools in accord with their ethos. In order to receive State funding such National Schools must be recognised by the Minister for Education and Skills. The Minister can withdraw this recognition.

(3) #4 speaks of a "certain minimum curriculum" prescribed by the State. This is completely at odds with the reality where the Department of Education and Skills (DES) strictly regulates the curriculum of schools through the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the inspectorate's Whole School Evaluation processes. Indeed Section 30 of the Education Act (1998) states that the Minister determines:

- (a) the subjects to be offered in recognised schools,
- (b) the syllabus of each subject,
- (c) the amount of instruction time to be allotted to each subject, and
- (d) the guidance and counselling provision to be offered in schools.

This could hardly be described legitimately as a "certain minimum curriculum"! Further, Section 9 of the Act defines in exact detail the functions of a recognised school. Section 13 describes at length the powers of the inspectorate, while Section 15 demands that a board of management of a recognised school carry out its functions in accord with the policies determined by the Minister. It is not correct to state that schools are "self-governing".

Although the Board of Management is the employer of all teachers paid out of monies of the Oireachtas, it technically is the Department of Education and Skills, which determines the terms and conditions of those teachers under Section 24 of the Act. Schools must comply not only with extensive legislation and the Rules of National Schools, but also the multitude of Circulars and Guidelines, which issue from the Department of Education and Skills. The exact composition of Boards of Management at primary level is prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills through its Constitution and Rules of Procedure of Boards of Management, not by the Patron bodies. The consultation document seriously underestimates the powers vested in the Minister and the DES with regard to recognised schools.

(4) In general the document embraces a very limited understanding of the human right to freedom of religion. It only deals with the negative right not to have any religion imposed on the human person. While this is important it must be balanced with the positive right to freely practise one's religion. Indeed the history of human rights theory and practice in this area evolved to protect citizens from State interference in the free practice of religious faith. It was never intended to be used to prohibit religious believers from freely expressing their beliefs through processes such as religious education and the establishment of denominational schools. Professor Robbers dealt with this issue in detail in his presentation at the IHRC/TCD conference on 27 November 2010.

(5) There is a lack of clarity as to the meaning of key terms. None of the following are defined yet the whole premise of the document is dependent on the meaning of these terms: neutral, objective, pluralism, indoctrination, religious education, public education, secular, multi-denominational, non-denominational. There appears to be little appreciation of the fact that the meaning of these terms is intellectually contested in all democratic societies. It is a pity that a deeper exploration by philosophers of education did not form part of the conference on 27 November or part of the consultation document itself. Failure to do so means that one can easily slip into the fallacy analysed by Dr Doyle at the IHRC/TCD conference of equating a secularist view with neutrality.

He said: "What underlies this position, I suggest, is a view that religious worldviews are inherently irrational and less worthy than a secularist worldview. It is such an attitude consistent with the injunction to treat people with equal respect Religious viewpoints cannot be selected for exclusion from public speech and religious parents should not be targeted as the one group that cannot have their children educated in the way that they wish. It is disturbing that this should be the outcome of a position that represents itself as neutral." Secularism is not the same thing as pluralism; indeed many secularists adopt a position that is anything but pluralist when it comes to the free expression of religious belief in schools.

The response of the Catholic Schools Partnership

In light of the foregoing the CSP would like to detail its view of the future of primary schooling in the Republic of Ireland. This approach is based on sound philosophical principles, is educationally informed and is compliant with human rights standards. It is offered here as a contribution to the further development of the democratic and liberal principles upon which our State is founded.

(a) The role of parents

Parental choice in education is recognised in most democracies and enshrined in the Irish Constitution, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in United Nations and European legal instruments. It is also strongly affirmed in the teaching of the Catholic Church. This principle clearly holds that parents do not have the right to educate their children in accord with their social, political, cultural, linguistic, religious and moral self-understanding. Whilst others may disagree with these views, in principle and except in the cases where a child's physical and/or emotional wellbeing are endangered, parents' decisions concerning a child's education should be respected and, where practicable, facilitated. The ultimate expression of parental choice in schooling is the children at home. Most parents do not take their children to school. Many who do make personal, educational and economic judgments, but its very existence in principle is an important statement with regard to parental rights in education vis-à-vis society in general and the State.

(b) Different types of school

Throughout the world democratic societies provide funding and legal protection for a plurality of school types. The spectrum of provision covers a broad range from schools provided by the State itself to various forms of communal and voluntary groups who come together to give expression to a particular vision of education. Many of these groups owe their inspiration to religious beliefs.

There is no such thing as a value neutral education. All schools, whether established by the State or by one or other voluntary groups, espouse a vision of the human person and give expression to a particular ethos. Some people argue that schools should adopt a neutral stance in relation to religion. The inference is that religious belief is purely a private matter and should have no role in the public sphere of education. However, those who would exclude religion from school also espouse their own ethos. They impart a worldview, a philosophy of life, just as much as the person of faith.

(c) Faith schools

The interaction between religious belief and education is as old as schooling itself. From the schools and universities of medieval Europe, through the growing rates of literacy promoted by the reformation and counter-reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and on to the furthest end of the spectrum with the atheistic schools of twentieth century communist regimes, the question of God cannot be avoided in education. Some schools in their structures and curriculum embrace a particular belief in God, others present all religions and atheistic humanism as equally valid responses to the question of God, others demand that such beliefs be left at home and not influence the life of the school, others ban all mention of God. But the question of God will not go away. Religious belief makes an absolute claim on the conscience of religious believers. To ignore, belittle or attack such religious belief is to ignore, belittle or attack the self-identity of religious believers. Their religious faith is not one more interest alongside others skin to a hobby or a leisure time pursuit or a family tradition. Rather, it is a fundamental option which frames and interprets all of life. To equate all religions in a real sense to empty them of any significance. No believer will ever do this. The study of religions and religious beliefs by the social sciences quite properly brackets out the question of belief and the truth claims of each religious tradition. But such studies, while contributing to our knowledge, are a limited lens through which to measure the conscientious option for religious belief. Many who make such an option are committed to the education and formation of their children in accord with their religious beliefs.

Faith schools exist in almost all countries except those where they are outlawed by non-democratic regimes. In many nations they form a central part of the education system while in almost all democratic societies they receive State funding. Such schools provide a real public service and they are a notable expression of the contribution of the voluntary sector to the development of a vibrant civil society. Jurisprudence has evolved in this area to emphasise two freedoms: the individual freedom of parents to choose the school they want for their children and the collective right to form and run schools of a particular denomination. There is a well-developed awareness among policy makers in western democracies concerning the need to provide space for structures of civil society to emerge between the powerful centralising forces of the State on the one hand and the impersonal dynamic of the market place on the other. The principle of subsidiarity might inform such a process. As an organizing principle it suggests that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authority. The principle is based upon the autonomy and dignity of the individual, and holds that all other forms of society, from the family to the State and the international order, should be in the service of the human person. Subsidiarity assumes that these human persons are by their nature social beings, and emphasises the importance of small and intermediate-sized communities or institutions, like the family, schools, the churches, and voluntary associations, as mediating structures which empower individual action and link the individual to society as a whole. All of this contributes to the common good.

Catholic schools are committed to a religious education which invites students to grow into a deeper understanding of Christian faith, that is respectful of difference, is holistic and is in dialogue with contemporary culture. Such religious education is philosophically justified, it is based on well established educational principles and it fully respects the human rights of all involved. But this does not mean that all religions are the same or that we can reduce religious beliefs to the lowest common denominator between them or that we merely need to address some of the information on all religions. Religious education at its best means acknowledging prejudice, cherishing difference, respecting the integrity and irreducibility of each religious faith, nourishing the religious identity of students, fostering encounter with the faith of the 'other', accepting failures, healing memories, creating the future. Such a rich panoply has nothing in common with indoctrination which amounts to a deliberate harming of students by undermining their natural ability to reason. In contrast, Catholic schools are committed to the deepest respect for both faith and reason and as such they contribute significantly to the formation of rational and mature citizens of our democratic society.

Catholic schools in Ireland and throughout the world are attended by students who do not come from Catholic families. In many cases parents opt for this type of education and welcome the ethos and values which underpin such schools. In some other cases parents may have little or no choice but to send their child to a Catholic school. This raises the question of opting out of some classes. The Education Act states: "The Minister shall not require any student to attend instruction in any subject which is contrary to the conscience of the parent of the student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student" (Section 30, 2 [e]). It should be noted that this stipulation is directed at the Minister, and applies to all subjects and not just to Religious Education. Catholic schools, for their part, respect and acknowledge the right of parents who require that their children be excluded from religious instruction. Facilitating such opt outs is a resource based issue. Schools are committed to facilitating parents in this regard but they can only do so as resources are made available so that the school complies with its own policies re curriculum, supervision and child safeguarding. The provision of such resources is the responsibility of the Minister. However, even with current resources Catholic schools have developed local arrangements to accommodate the valid wishes of such parents, and steps are currently in hand further to develop the practical arrangements required to be put in place in this regard. Some commentators have raised concerns about the integrated curriculum with regard to this issue. It should be noted that the philosophical basis of such a curricular approach is not the desire to integrate religion into all other subjects but the pedagogical principle that subject specificities are irrelevant in early childhood learning. Thus children are introduced into an integrated world rather than one arbitrarily divided into discrete academic subjects.

(d) Confusing terminology

In the Republic of Ireland we speak of denominational, inter-denominational and multi-denominational schools. The meaning of these terms is very unclear. Currently the Department of Education and Skills does not recognise the designation of non-denominational schooling. Consequently, there is a tendency to speak only of denominational and multi-denominational schools and to define the latter as more open and inclusive. Inevitably, this gives rise to negative representations of denominational schools as closed and sectarian. This is completely at odds with the experience in local communities throughout the country. In this context the Catholic Schools Partnership would welcome the establishment of clearly secular, non-denominational schools providing a non-religious alternative for parents. A non-denominational school would give expression to its own ethos but it would exclude, on clearly articulated philosophical grounds, all religious symbols, rituals and formation. It is notable that no Patron is providing such an education in Ireland today. It is obviously irrational to expect Catholic Patrons to provide such education.

(e) Primary schools

The primary school system in the Republic of Ireland has two notable characteristics. There is a preponderance of denominational schools and there are a very large number of schools per head of population. These two facts are inter-related. 97% of schools are under the patronage and management of a religious denomination (89% are Catholic). There are approximately 3,300 primary schools for a population of 4.5 million people. This is an extraordinarily high ratio of schools per capita. As a result there is a preponderance of very small schools.

Primary schools in the Republic of Ireland

No. of pupils	No. of schools	% of total
200 or less	2,300	70%
100 or less	1,500	45%
50 or less	620	19%
20 or less	100	3%

Many countries have established 200 pupils as the smallest suitable size for a primary school. 2,300 of our primary schools (70%) have less than this threshold of 200 pupils. This profile of a large number of small, denominational schools is a characteristic of the Irish primary school system since its inception. It is unlikely that such a large number of schools would have opened were it not for the close links with local parish communities. These parish structures were themselves a response to a uniquely scattered demographic settlement pattern whereby Ireland has a notably high ratio of rural dwellings. Even today over 50% of the citizens of the Irish Republic live in population centres of less than 5,000 persons. The contrast then with countries/states with similar populations is notable.

	Population	No. primary schools	Primary school per capita
Rep of Ireland	4,500,000	3,300	1,363
Nth Ireland	1,790,000	870	2,057
Scotland	5,200,000	2,150	2,418
Denmark	5,400,000	2,100	2,570
Kentucky (USA)	4,300,000	1,100	3,900
Louisiana (USA)	4,500,000	1,200	3,750

Not least because of the size of school enrolments, the Irish system has been dependent on local, voluntary effort with regard to management and finance. There are close on 20,000 volunteers acting on boards of management. They receive no pay, no subsistence and no travel expenses. This is a very notable example of local participatory democracy. The remarkable thing about these schools is that they are managed so well and at such little cost. In Ireland we have thousands of well functioning denominational schools. A primary school system rooted in local communities serving a dispersed population at little cost in terms of patronage and management is a notable reality in terms of social capital. This is quite remarkable in a country where all political leaders admit that the public service must become less expensive to operate and more responsive to people's needs. Where is the evidence in any walk of Irish life demonstrating a capacity to motivate such a level of volunteerism? The only other example on such a scale is the Gaelic Athletic Association and it is notably rooted in the same parish structure as the church. What would happen to all of the small schools around the country if the system of church patronage was removed? In many small communities the only infrastructure remaining is schools and churches.

(f) Re-configuring the primary school system

Some people have called for a re-configuring of the primary school system. In 2007 the Irish Bishops stated: It is sometimes the case that people choose the Catholic school simply because it is the only school available, and not because they wish their children to have a Catholic education. This can cause difficulties for parents who do not share the ethos of a Catholic school. It can also put an unfair financial and administrative burden on the parish. We feel that in such circumstances the Church should not be left with the task of providing for the educational needs of the whole community. As the Catholic Church accepts that there should be choice and diversity within a national education system, it believes that parents who desire schools under different patronage should, where possible, be facilitated in accessing them. In new centres of population it is incumbent upon the State to plan for the provision of school sites and to ensure, in consultation with the various patron bodies, that there is a plurality of school provision reflecting the wishes of the parents in the area. (Catholic Primary Schools: A Policy for Provision into the Future, 5.1)

(g) Social inclusion

In any such reconfiguration great care will need to be taken to avoid compounding other forms of social stratification. Religious affiliation is not the only measure of diversity in Ireland. Arguably, it is the least important such measure. Most religious organisations (educational and otherwise) are extraordinarily inclusive in their approach and very respectful of diversity. Catholic schools are caring and increasingly community. They have adapted to demographic change with significant net migration into Ireland and have led the way in integrating the "new Irish" into local communities. They have been leaders in areas such as special needs, social inclusion and traveller education. One of the great strengths of our primary school system has been that in most parts of the country children from various social strata have attended the same school together. In any reconfiguration there is a danger of much more streamlined social stratification as the evidence demonstrates that, given the choice, many parents will opt for a school which draws most of its pupils from the more upwardly mobile social classes. Thus the strength of our present system where most parents identify the local primary school as their school should not be underestimated.

Conclusion

One of the most notable characteristics of Catholic education is a respect for faith and reason. This helps to explain why such schools are so popular throughout the world. Faith and reason can live and thrive in the same person; while one cannot be reduced to the other they both can play a dynamic role in forming and educating a mature person. The Catholic Church continues to be involved in education because it forms a central part of its mission and because there are parents who wish to have their children educated in a context which respects both faith and reason. We hope that those educated in such a context will be able to make a dynamic contribution to church and society, to faith and culture and to the further development of democratic and liberal values. Christian faith is always lived in particular cultures. The dialogue between faith and culture takes place in the heart and mind of the individual believer, in families, in parish communities and, not least, in schools and colleges. Catholic schools and colleges stand as a reminder that faith is not a purely private, irrational commitment embraced by individuals of dubious intellectual ability but a rational exercise of human conscience seeking to live life in response to belief in God. There will always be a certain tension between religious faith and culture; some people reduce culture to religious faith and so withdraw into a fundamentalist ghetto where everything outside is seen as a threat; others empty culture of all religious reference so that religious belief amounts to nothing more than personal whim and traditional superstition. A true dialogue between faith and culture allows one to inform the other and calls individuals, families, communities, and yes, our schools and colleges, to an ever greater commitment to human maturity and freedom.

This submission to the Irish Human Rights Commission was approved by the Council of the Catholic Schools Partnership at its meeting of 10 February 2011.

Members of the Council:

- Kathleen Bradley, Retired School Principal
- P.J. Callanan, Catholic Primary School Management Association
- Marie Carroll, Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools
- Jim Cassin, Executive Secretary, Episcopal Council for Education
- Patrick Collier, Conference of Religious of Ireland
- David Corrigan, Conference of Religious of Ireland
- Mairead Doray, Pastoral Worker
- Tom Deenihan, Diocesan Secretary, Diocese of Cork and Ross
- Michael Drumm, Chairperson of Catholic Schools Partnership
- June Fennelly, Conference of Religious of Ireland
- Thomasina Finn, Conference of Religious of Ireland
- Eileen Flynn, General Secretary, Catholic Primary School Management Association
- Mairhead Ni Ghallchobhair O.P., Dominican Sisters
- John Hayden, Former Chief Executive of the Higher Education Authority
- Margaret Mary Healy, Catholic Primary School Management Association
- Brendan Kelly, Bishop of Achonry and Chairman of Episcopal Council for Education
- Fardia Kelly, General Secretary, Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools / Joint Managerial Body
- Gerry Lundy, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Dublin Ireland
- Anne McDonagh, Education Secretary, Archdiocese of Northern
- Mark McDonnell, Chairperson, Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools
- Dorai McKeown, Auxiliary Bishop of Down & Connor, Chairperson, Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Schools
- Denis McNeillis, Vice Chairperson, Catholic Primary School Management Association
- Maeve Mahon, Advisor for Religious Education, Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin
- Paul Meany, Secondary School Principal, Marian College
- Noel Merrick, President, Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools / Joint Managerial Body
- Lorcan O'Brien, Moderator of the Curia, Archdiocese of Dublin
- Brendan O'Reilly, Executive Secretary, Episcopal Council for Catechetics
- Leo O'Reilly, Bishop of Kilmore, Chairperson, Episcopal Department for Catholic Education and Formation
- Elna Quinlan, Vice President, Association of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools / Joint Managerial Body
- Paul Sexton, Association of Trustees of Catholic Schools
- PJ Sexton, Lecturer in Education
- Maria Spring, Chairperson, Catholic Primary School Management Association
- Ann Walsh, Deputy Secondary School Principal



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Former teacher from Scoil Bhríde Tuam appointed Diocesan Chancellor

Friday 11th March 2011

A former member of the teaching profession in Tuam has made history by becoming the first woman to hold the position of Diocesan Chancellor in the Archdiocese of Tuam.

Sr. Mary Lyons, a member of the Mercy order was appointed by Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. Michael Neary to the important position.

As Chancellor, Sr. Lyons' role will involve overseeing the canonical structures in the Archdiocese of Tuam. It also consists, among other things, in issuing official documents, granting dispensations, providing necessary indulgences and faculties, overseeing the application of the law and seeing to the preservation of documents in the diocesan archives.

Originally from Louisburg, County Mayo, Mary Lyons attended Mount Saint Michael Secondary School in Claremorris before joining the Sisters of Mercy in Tuam.

After graduating from NUI Galway with a BA in Latin and English and an H. Dip., she taught Latin and English in Scoil Bhríde in Tuam.

In 1994, Sr. Lyons was awarded JCL and MCL degrees in canon law by Saint Paul's University and the University of Ottawa, Canada.

Teaching and working as a judge in the regional marriage tribunal in Galway followed until June 2000, after which Sr. Lyons took early retirement to pursue doctoral studies in canon law at Saint Paul's University.

She was awarded a PhD in October 2002 for her doctorate on the governance and structures of the Mercy Congregation from its beginnings in the 19th century to recent years.

In December 2002, Sr. Lyons was appointed a judge/instructor in the regional marriage tribunal in Galway by the late Bishop James McLoughlin.

In addition to this work at the marriage tribunal, Sr. Lyons also served on diocesan commissions and as a canonical consultant to religious congregations.

In December 2010, she retired from the marriage tribunal and was appointed Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Tuam.

Over her career, Sr. Lyons has sat on a number of different diocesan committees and has been a canonical adviser to the Archdiocese of Tuam and other dioceses, as well as to a number of religious congregations both nationally and internationally on a range of canonical issues.

(article courtesy of The Connacht Tribune).



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Presentation Warrenmount Annual 'One Week World' Festival

Wednesday 30th March 2011

Presentation Secondary School Warrenmount held their Annual 'One Week World' festival during week commencing 14th March 2011.

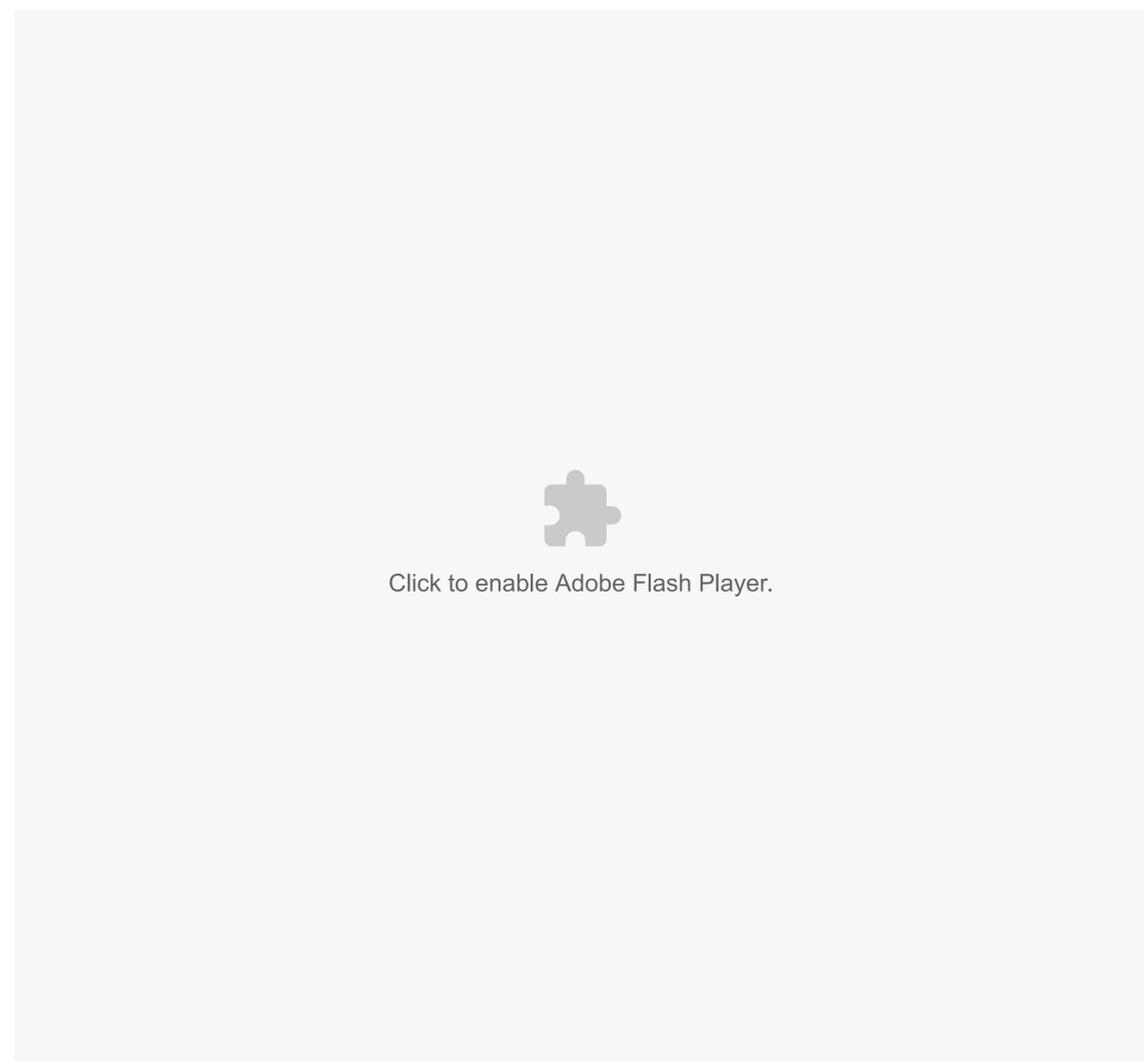
The festival is a celebration of the rich and diverse cultures in their school and community.

During the intercultural week, there was a strong focus on participating in a variety of activities. These included international dance, literature, art, sports, music, exploring other cultures and food.

The hope was that this exciting festival will challenge stereotypical ideas around difference and other cultures and lead to a stronger appreciation and understanding of diverse cultures and languages.

As part of the festivities an International Food Festival was held on Wednesday, March 16. The annual International Food Fair ran from 12.00 – 1.30pm and served as the grand finale to the schools celebratory intercultural week.

Intercultural Week Photos





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Seachtain na Gaeilge

Tuesday 15th March 2011



Nach iontach an rud é go bhfuil ár dteanga féin againn má labhraítear ach an lá í nó ó am go chéile is cuma mar tá sí inár seilbh againn mar Tír bhródúil. Is linn an ár dteanga féin.

Is seachtain faoi leith í seo Seachtain na Gaeilge. Is deis iontach í an Ghaeilge a chleachta sna ranganna Gaeilge, ach níos mó ná sin, taobh amuigh de na ranganna sna dorclaithe na scoile.

Bainigí triail as cúpla abairt a rá le bhur gcairde féin.

Seo thíos cúpla paidir chun rang a thosnú

agus roinnt dánta suimiúla ó mo pheann féin.

Go n'éirí an bothar libh go léir. Bigí bródúil as ár naitheantas ghaelach.

Lloyd O'Breacáin CEIST

Paidreacha

'Dréimire Pharthais is í an phaidir...



Beannú an Tí

Go mbeannaí Dia na teach seo óna bhun go dtí a bharr,
Go mbeannaí sé gach fardoras, gach cloch is gach clár,
Go mbeannaí sé an teallach, an bord ar a leagtar bia,
Go mbeannaí sé gach seomra i gcomhaí sámhchodladh na hoiche.
Go mbeannaí sé an doras a osclóimid go fial
Don strainséar is don bhochtán chomh maithe is dár ngaol,
Go mbeannaí sé na fuinneoga a ligeann dúinn an léas
Ó sholas geal na gréine, na gealaí is na réalta,
Go mbeannaí sé na frathacha in airde os ár gcionn
Is fós gach balla daingean atá ár dtimpeallú inniu.
Go bhfana síocháin dá réir sin dár gcomharsana, cion is grá.
Go mbeannaí Diat an mhuirear seo agam agus choimhead ó bhaol,
Is go stiúra sé sinn uile go dtí a ríbhru féin.



(Ní fhios cé cum)

Gan Tusa a Thiarna Íosa
Ní féidir liom súi ná siúil,
Ní féidir liom labhairt ná léamh
Gan chabhair uait féin a Rúin.
Fan liom, fan liom, i gcónaí,
Ná fág mé nóiméad liom féin.
Sin chugham do láimh a Chara
'S a Mhaoin mo chléibh.

Mórann m'anam an Tiarna,
agus rinne mo spiorad gairdeas

i nDia mo Shlánaítheoir.

Óir dhearc sé le fabhar ar ísle a bhanóglagh;
mar féach, déarfáidh na glúine uile feasta gur méanar dom.
Óir rinne an Té atá cumhachtach nithe móra dom agus is naofa
a ainm,
agus tá a thrócaire ó ghlúin go glúin
dóibh seo ar a mbíonn a eagla.
Thaispeáin sé neart a láimhe:
scaip sé an dream a bhí uaibhreach i smaointe a gcroí.
Leag sé prionsaí óna gcathaoirreacha,
agus d'ardaigh sé daoine ísle;
Líon sé lucht an ocras le nithe fóna,
agus chuir sé na saibhre uaigh folamh.
D'fhóir sé ar Iosrael a sheirbhiseach,
ag cuimhneamh dó ar a thrócaire -
de réir mar gheall sé dar n-aithreacha -
d'Abrahám agus dá shliocht go brách. Amen



A Mhuire na nGrást

A Mhuire na nGrást
A Mháthair Mhic Dé
Go gcuire tú ar mo leas mé
Go sábhála tú mé idir anam is corp
Go sábhála tú mé ar muir is ar tír
Go sábhála tú mé ar líc na bpian
Gárda na nÁingil os mo chionn
Dia romham is Dia liom.



Lúireach Phádraig

Críost liom, Críost ionam,
Críost romham, Críost i mo dhiaidh.
Críost faoim, Críost os mo chionn,
Críost ar mo láimh dheis, Críost ar mo láimh chlé,
Críost ar mo shuí, Críost ar mo luí, Críost ar m'éirí,

Críost i gcroí achan duine a smaointíos orm,
Críost i mbéal achan duine a labhras liom,
Críost i ngach súil a dhearcas orm,
Críost i ngach cluas a éistear liom.



Fáilte an Aingil

Tháinig aingeal an Tiarna
le scéala chun Muire,
Agus gabh sí ón Spiorad Naomh.
'Sé do bheatha, a Mhuire,
etc.

Féach mise banóglach an
Tiarna, Déantar liom de
réir d'fhocail.
'Sé do bheatha, a Mhuire,
etc.

Agus ghlac an Briathar
colainn dhaonna, agus chónaigh sé inár measc.
'Sé do bheatha, a Mhuire, etc.

Guigh orainn, a Naomh-Mháthair Dé, Ionas go mb'fhiú sinn geallúna Chríost.
Guímis
Dóirt anuas, impímid, a Thiarna, do ghrásta inár gceolthe, ionas,
Sinne a fuair fios, trí scéala an aingil,
Ar theacht Íosa Chríost do Mhac i gcolainn dhaonna, go dtiocfaimis,
Trí luaíocht a pháise agus a chroise, chun glóir a aiséirí.
Tríd an gCríost céanna ár dTiarna. Amen.



Go bhfana cabhair Dé againn de shíor. Agus go bhfaighe anamacha na bhfiréan suaimhneas síoraí trí thrócaire Dé. Amen.

Véarsaíocht

Seo dán a scríobh mé tar éis rud iontach is scanrúil a fheiceáil ar scoil. Bhí garsúin i dtrioblóid. Ní trioblóid ó thaobh droch iompair atá i gceist agam in aon chor ach trioblóid ó thaobh a chuid sláinte. Comh súil le roinnt mhaith daoine eile bhí 'Asthma' aige. Is tinneas dáiríre é. Chuaigh an eachtra seo i bhfeidhm go mór orm. Thuig me ansin bhféidir don chéad uair go rud fíor luachmhar é an anáil agus dá bharr sin an saol. Ní féidir linn maireachtáil nuair nach féidir linn anáil a dhéanamh. Gabh buíochas do Dhia a thosaigh an Cruthú iomlán lena hanáil féin uile chuamhachtach.

Ventolin S.O.S. Lloyd Ó'Breacáin

Glaoh callaire ar chúnamh.
Ventolin – anáil an tsaol – de dhíth.
De ruathar mear d'fhreagraíodar,
Lucht asthma.
Le hanáilathóir gorm i ngach láimh acu,
Tuiscint domhain i ngach intinn is croí,
Blais taitní na péine ar gach aghaidh óg,
Scanradh an bháis i ngiorracht scread asail go síoraí.



Ba chuma cé hé, cara nó namhaid.
Beatha nó bás a bhí i gceist.
Níl aon ní eile níos tabhachtaí.
Tarlaíonn tubaistí mar is eol do chách
Idir óg is críonna i gcónaí.

Chuaigh an dream seo i bhfeidhm orm,
Go ceartlár mo chroí,
Gan choinne.
Teagmháil leis an bhfirinne lom ab ea é.
Rian daonachta,
Comhartha tuisceana goillúnach,
Taispeántas trocaire tógálach
Ar dorclaithe na scoile.
A leithéid, ní chifí ró-mhinic.

Ach i measc na gruaimhe
Is na drámhaile
Maireann an grá geal
Ag faire na hocáide chun lonradh.

Nuair a léifidh sibh an dán seo beidh sibh ag ceapadh nach athair mhaith mé in aon chor ach amadán den scoth agus beidh an cheart agat. 'Sé cúlra don scéal seo ná faoin am a ndeachaigh mé ag siopadóireacht chuig an Chearnóg Tamlachta. Bhíos liom féin le mo bheirt mhac mar bhimo chéile ar turas scoile that lear. Bhíomar soar ár mbeartanna féin a dhéanamh. Shocraigh mé dul chuig Mc Donald's ar dtús agus ina dhiaidh sin dul ag siopadóireacht. Nuair a shroicheamar an t-ionad Siopadóireachta bhí Eoin ina chodladh sámh. Bhrisfeadh sé mo chroí dá mhúscloinn é as a chuid bríonglóidí lácha. D'fhág mé ann sa charr, sa charr chlós, ag rá liom féin go mbeinn ar ais sula n'éireodh sé. Ní raibh. Ochón ochón! Nuair a tháinig ar ais ní raibh sé sa charr. Ní raibh tásca ná tuairisc air.

Goite as Amhairc le Lloyd Ó'Breacáin.

Goite,
Ní féidir liom mo chuid shúile a chreidiúint
Goite, gan tásca gan tuainisc
gan rian gan chomhartha,
M' mhacsa, mo stóring,
M'fhearín bideach
Dhá bhliain d'aois.
Cad a dhéanfáinn?
Bhíos neamhchumasach,
Thit an lug ar an lag orm
Mo mhac cailte in ollmhargadh,
Cár chlós cailte,
Ní raibh duine ná deoraí ann
chun mé a chabhrú
Imithe óna a mhuintir
is a lucht aitheantais,
Bhíos as anáil
is as mo cheann
le sceon is faitíos
is sár imní orm.
Cá raibh mo chlisteacht anois
ar an lá ghrianmhar siúd
Cá raibh mo chríonnacht?
Easpa feasa is easpa céile
Ag an dtuismitheoir seo.
Amadán-tuiste den scoth.
Ach tháinig sé ar ais
I mbaclainn na noibrithe ollmhargaidh.
'Mea culpa', d'admhaíos go croiúil.
Maith mé! Thiománas abhaile
É gar do mo bhrollach bhriste,
Mo mhac mo mhaoin.



Giota as na Scriptiúirí:

'Agus nuair a bhí sé ina dhá bhliain déag, chuaigh said suas de réir an nóis, agus nuair a bhí comórach na féile thart, agus iad ar a bmealach abhaile, d'fhan an macaomh Íosa ina ndiaidh in Iarúsailéim. Níorbh fheasach sin dá thuismitheoirí, ach is amhlaidh a chuaigh siad aistear aon lae amháin, ag síleadh gur leis an gcuideachta é, agus iad á thóralocht i measc a ndaoine muinteartha agus a lucht aitheantais; agus nuair a theip orthu a fháil, d'fhíll said go hIarúsailéim ar a thuairisc... Agus bhíodh Íosa ag meádu in eagnaíocht agus in airde, agus gnaoi dé agus daoine air'.



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News from Sacred Heart School Westport

Tuesday 29th March 2011

Sacred Heart School Westport have kindly shared photos and news from recent activities on Catholic Schools Week 2011 in the school, as well as St. Patrick's Day and Ash Wednesday.

Catholic Schools Week in Sacred Heart School, Westport

Monday

A Prayer service was conducted by Ms. Margaret Hession (School Chaplain), over the intercom to start the week.

Tuesday

For St. Brigid's Day a Workshop was held by Miss J. Corley and Miss McQuaid.

Posters and icons of St. Brigid were displayed on the walls around the school by Mrs U. Canavan.



Wednesday

A lunch time lecture on Iconography was given by our guest speaker, Sr.

Susie Smith, a Franciscan hermit, living in Ballintubber, Co. Mayo.

Thursday

A lunch time talk on L'Arche, a Catholic charity, by our guest speaker Mandioneke Munyikwa, who volunteered in a French community, Pierrefonds, for almost one year.



Friday

A Prayer service over the intercom by Ms Hession, to close Catholic Schools' Week. St. Cecilia's choir sang "Sweet Heart of Jesus". (First Friday of the month, celebrating the Sacred Heart)



Catholic School's Week Chart



St. Patrick's Day

An intercom prayer service was held and posters were displayed throughout school. St. Cecilia's choir sang "Cead Mile Failte Romhat" and "Crist Liom".

Ash Wednesday



Posters of The Stations of The Cross, completed by

first years were displayed around the school.

A Prayer service was held to mark the beginning of Lent. Ashes were distributed by teachers while St. Cecilia's Choir sang "Lord, Jesus Think on Me".

Other Photos





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A New Dawn for Presentation Secondary School Waterford

Monday 28th March 2011

Tuesday March 22nd marked the opening of a new chapter at Coláiste Na Maighdine as the sod was turned to begin construction of a new school building.

Great news indeed at a time when it's badly needed. It is somewhat ironic that this build begins during a period of economic recession. It will stand in the shadow of the Pugin designed convent building constructed during the period of the Great Famine.



Picture above (LtoR) are Principal Mary Ryan, former Principal, Sr. Fidelis Purcell and Deputy Principal, Ruth Gallen.

Our new school has a story to tell even before it comes to being. Approval for a new building was sought from the Department of Education in January 1999. It has taken twelve years of lobbying on the part of the Presentation sisters, CEIST, and school management to bring us to this long awaited and much anticipated moment.

It's shameful to think that the boom years for the Irish economy came and went before persistence eventually won out and we can now replace the rapidly deteriorating current structure and prefab accommodation that have served us for far too long.



Pictured above former Principals' of the school Mr. Terence White and Sr. Margaret Mary Healy.

Our school community will soon enjoy a wonderful new facility. The new structure will contain 37 new classrooms with specialist facilities for many subjects. Science laboratories (3), Home Economics rooms (2), Art and technology rooms, Business studies and Multi-media rooms to name but a few. There will also be a Parents' Room, a Guidance suite, and a large performance and assembly area. The school will retain its existing sports hall facility and will enjoy a series of outdoor courts and activity areas when building is complete.

The outlook for students and staff at Presentation is optimistic. Within the year, we will find ourselves in a much changed environment. A major project of this type is a boost for the entire area and will breathe new life into the local community.

Tuesday's ceremony was presided over by mayor of Waterford, Councillor Mary Roche, with guests from the school community, Presentation sisters, CEIST, Design team, and Purcell Construction. Former Principals, Sister Fidelis Purcell and Terence White turned the sod(s) alongside current Principal Mary Ryan.



Pictured above (LtoR) Sr. Josephine Deegan (Board of Management Trustee), Sr. Margarita Ryan PBVM, Michael Lane (CEIST) and former Principal, Sr. Fidelis Purcell.

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Ardcoil na Tríonóide Athy Win Junior Achievement Company Competition Award

Thursday 31st March 2011

Ardcoil na Tríonóide Athy won the overall prize at the Eastern Regional Finals of Junior Achievement's Company Competition.

Ardcoil na Tríonóide Athy were honoured at the awards, held at Chartered Accountants House, Pearse Street, Dublin 2. The competition which was sponsored by the Chartered Accountants Leinster Society saw 40 budding young entrepreneurs pitching their ideas for new businesses.

Junior Achievement Ireland aims to teach young people about the world of work, encouraging them to remain in education. This year 66,000 Irish children, from Senior Infants to Leaving Certificate, will take part in Junior Achievement Science, maths and enterprise programmes in schools throughout the country.

Coasterz from Ardcoil na Tríonóide, Athy took one overall prize with their innovative product of coasters designed to promote local taxi numbers and drink awareness in local establishments.

Ardcoil na Tríonóide will now go forward to the Company of the Year National Final in May. The winner of this will then go through to the JA European Company Competition in Oslo in August 2011.

The competition provides a hands-on business leading experience, where students get the opportunity to create, operate and manage their own mini-companies, with the support of a business mentor volunteer.



Pictured above Ardcoil na Tríonóide Athy.



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Coláiste Muire Ennis Students Big Clean-up for World Earth Day

Tuesday 22nd March 2011

Mountains of butter cartons, veterinary equipment, German toothpaste and French shampoo comprise some of the debris which a group of secondary school students collected in a seven-month clean-up of a west Clare beach.

The students invited the public to help them mark World Earth Day last weekend, with their final beach comb at Doughmore in Co. Clare.

The six students from Coláiste Muire Ennis, Saoirse Kearse, Orla O'Neill, Niamh Hamilton-Jones, Cliona Redington, Alice Mahony and Leila Ben-Fredj - signed up for the weekly task when several of them began to notice the large collections of plastic on the shoreline.



They undertook research with their senior science teacher, Colette Redington, and discovered that much of the debris could be traced to containers washed from a ship off the Wexford coastline in January 2010.

The containers were filled with empty butter cartons that were deposited on several points on the west coast where tides and currents were slow enough for debris to accumulate.

The second-year students, all aged 14, opted to enter the Eco-Unesco environmental awards programme as part of their project.

The programme encourages young people to make a difference and create awareness about an environmental issue that affects them and the wider community.

"Apart from butter cartons, we also found that pieces of rope and abandoned netting were very frequent, and we even found a car bumper and number plate at one point," Alice Mahony, one of the students, said yesterday.

"We have only missed one weekend - the time of the really cold weather - since last September, and we've had great fun working together, with the support of families and friends."

The students initiated a public awareness raising project, and discovered that a local mineral water company used biodegradable plastic bottles.

Click [here](#) to learn more on World Earth Day.



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Presentation De La Salle Inaugural Partnership Meeting

Monday 7th March 2011



The future looks bright for Presentation De La Salle, Bagenalstown, Carlow.

The school's inaugural partnership meeting was held on the February 18th and a great crowd attended to hear plans for the future of the secondary school.

Just over 25 years ago two great school traditions came together to further the quality of education to the young people of Bagenalstown and the wider area. The Presentation Sisters and the De La Salle Brothers amalgamated their two schools into the Presentation de La Salle College. The amalgamation is considered by all to have been a great success.

The school has now decided to look to the next 25 years and put some thought and forward planning into how the school should develop over the next number of years.

Following an extensive school wide survey, all staff, the parents council, the students council, the Board of Management and representatives from the school Trustees CEIST gathered in partnership to discuss the future priorities for the school.

School Principal Gerard Watchorn said this was a very important opportunity for the entire school to look to the future and build upon the success of the past. He said that exciting developments in ICT facilities, improved school building facilities and the current application to the Dept of Education for a modern Sports Hall is just simply the tip of the iceberg in terms of where this school is going over the next few years.

He said that the school was blessed with a fantastic community of staff, students and parents that altogether have so much energy and drive for the future that anything was possible by way of future developments and success.

The partnership meeting was facilitated by Joe Harrison and all present agreed that this first and historic coming together of all in the school community to share a vision for the future of the school was a great success.



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St. Raphael's College Loughrea Student Success in Worldwide Writing Competition.

Friday 11th March 2011



A 15-year-old student in St Raphael's College, Loughrea, has just taken her first steps into the literary world by having one of her short stories included in an anthology by UK Publisher Mirador.

Annabel Hynes entered a worldwide short story competition last November (2010), after she saw the writing competition advertised on the internet.

Although the web page consisted of a large number of competitions, Annabel chose Mirador as they were looking for up and coming authors and they wanted to create an anthology of the weird, the fantastical and the terrifying by the best new writers from across the globe.

The worldwide competition was open to all ages, and Annabel - who turned 15 last December - decided to enter with her story, simply entitled 'Fantasy'.

Mirador Publishing subsequently contacted Annabel on December 20

by e-mail to let her know she had come in the top five overall in the competition and asked for her permission to publish her story in the anthology.

The book, which is called 'The Mirador Fantasmagoria- An Anthology of Wonder & Imagination', consists of twenty-eight stories by different writers, some of whom have had other books previously published.

According to a Mirador spokesperson, the publishing company was overwhelmed by the number and the quality of entries".

The spokesperson added: "Choosing the winners proved to be a monumental task. Our criteria centred on the gifts of storytelling and imagination. We believe these should be the overriding considerations, for the exploration of the human condition through the storytelling process".

The spokesperson noted Mirador took great pleasure in presenting their selection by some of the world's most promising new writers and we look forward to working with these immensely talented storytellers on future projects.

Annabel is now in her Junior Cert year in St. Raphael's College in Loughrea. Annabel always had an interest in reading and writing stories - long and short - and she has from a very young age aspired to be an author.

The book is available on Amazon and all other good book websites.



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Presentation College Headford signs up team for Formula 1 challenge

Friday 11th March 2011

Presentation College Headford has signed up a team for the F1 in schools technology challenge, powered in Ireland by the Irish Computer Society.

Members of the team will be required to make an aerodynamic model F1 car which will be raced against other participating schools in the regional finals in March and the national final in April.

This is the sixth year for the competition to run in Ireland under the guidance of the Irish Computer Society (I.C.S.) in partnership with Discover Science and Engineering.

Their reason for entering is explained by John Moroney, manager of "Team-O Supreme-O" the team participating from Presentation College Headford.

"Our school has a rich history in this competition and we are determined to carry this on in 2011. This is a very rewarding project and we are all putting our hearts into it. We submitted a five page plan which qualified our team for the regionals and we hope we can carry through to the nationals," he said.

Once a school team has qualified for the regionals they will receive a kit, which includes Balsa wood for making the model.

Ongoing support will be offered and the school will be paired with a Formula 1 make centre i.e. a college or university with the necessary equipment for milling the models. This interaction with the colleges will give the students an introduction to Engineering Science and Technology choices at third level.

The college will offer their paired teams the opportunity to visit their facilities for design tutorials, to show models being made and cars being tested. All participating schools also get free computer design software with which to form their creation.

Visit www.f1inschools.ie for more information on the challenge.

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CEIST Schools Participate in mock European Debate via Live Stream TV

Friday 11th March 2011

Four CEIST schools are participating with other schools from across the country in the annual Model Council of the European Union debate in Dublin Castle, today March 11th, 2011.

The Four CEIST schools participating in the debate include;

- Presentation Secondary School, Waterford
- Scoil Muire agus Padraig, Swinford, Co. Mayo
- Mercy Secondary School, Tralee, Co. Kerry
- St. Aloysius School, Cork

Teams of students from 29 schools are debating a mock EU Directive on extending the minimum duration of paid maternity leave in EU Member States.

The event was officially opened by RTÉ Broadcaster and President of the Association of European Journalists, Eileen Dunne.

This is the fifth annual Model Council debate. The event is organised by the European Commission Representation in Ireland. The complete list of participating schools is as follows:

Role	School
European Commission	St. Flannan's College, Ennis, Co Clare
Business Europe	Presentation Secondary School, Waterford
Belgium	Holy Child Secondary School, Killiney, Co. Dublin
Bulgaria	Jesus and Mary College, Our Lady's Grove, Dublin 14
Czech Republic	Loreto College, Mullingar, Co Westmeath
Denmark	CBS Thurles, Co Tipperary
Germany	Rockbrook Park School, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16
Estonia	Scoil Muire agus Padraig, Swinford, Co Mayo
Ireland	St Joseph's CBS Secondary School, Drogheda, Co Louth
Greece	Mercy Secondary School, Tralee, Co Kerry
Spain	St Brendan's Community School, Birr, Co Offaly
France	Abbey CBS, Tipperary Town
Italy	Waterpark College, Waterford City
Cyprus	Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine, Kenmare, Co Kerry
Latvia	Glenstal Abbey School, Glenstal Abbey, Co Limerick
Lithuania	Rockwell College, Cashel, Co Tipperary
Luxembourg	Dominican College, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
Hungary	Sandford Park School, Ranelagh, Dublin 6
Malta	Coláiste Cholm Cille, Indreabhán, Co na Gaillimhe
Netherlands	St Joseph of Cluny, Killiney, Co Dublin
Austria	Kilkee Community College, Co Clare
Poland	Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge, Co Kildare
Portugal	CBC Monkstown, Co Dublin
Romania	King's Hospital School, Palmerstown, Dublin 20
Slovenia	St Augustine's College, Dungarvan, Co Waterford
Slovakia	Ursuline Secondary School, Blackrock, Cork
Finland	Tullamore College, Tullamore, Co Offaly
Sweden	Loreto Secondary School, Kilkenny
United Kingdom	St Aloysius School, Cork

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Mount Saint Michael, Rosscarbery Fashion Formula TY Project

Tuesday 29th March 2011



TY students from Mount Saint Michael, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork

have initiated a charity based project called Fashion Formula.

The student project was set up with three concepts in mind;

1. To run a successful fashion show.

We ran our Annual transition year fashion show and reached our aim of raising €2,000 each for Co-Action and Marymount Hospice.

2. To produce a professional DVD.

This DVD follows our fashion show from the concept stage to the day, and is a "toolkit for Kindness". It will be of great benefit to other schools or organisations who want to fundraise money for charity too.

This DVD will be sold in selected Centra stores nationwide from the 4th April at €10 and also on the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind online shop. All proceeds raised from this DVD go to The Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind.

3. The idea

Our idea is to raise €100,000 for charities nationwide. We believe that through synergy we plan to raise €100,000 by getting schools and organisations to hold fashion shows for local charities.

The students run an annual TY fashion show and this years event held on the 14th of February in the Celtic Ross Hotel, Rosscarbery with the theme "It's a wonderful Life". Through admittance and raffle ticket sales the students reached their goal of raising €2,000 each for our local charities of choice, Co-Action and Marymount Hospice.

Fashion Formula won the West Cork Enterprise competition and will be travelling to Dublin on the 14th of April to the All Ireland competition.

For more information on the project, please visit the TY students website www.fashionformula.ie



Pictured above are all the TY students having their planning meeting for the project.