



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE

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

15th December 2025

Dear Colleagues

As we reach the end of term, I want to express my thanks to you all for your continued service to our school communities. Each term brings new challenges and through them all, you continue to act with courage, wisdom, and hope on behalf of our pupils and students.

Thank you too for the many ways in which you have celebrated this season of Advent. These moments of prayer, worship, celebration, and joy help us to welcome Christ into our world with renewed faith and expectation.

Please see the Advent message from **Bishop Marcus Stock**, Chair of the Catholic Education Service and Bishop of Leeds.

[Bishop Marcus Stock's Advent message to Catholic schools and universities | News](#)

"Advent culminates with the joyful fulfilment of the long-awaited hope for a Saviour in our celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Shortly after, the Holy Year of Jubilee will close in Dioceses around the world on Sunday 28 December 2025, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The Jubilee has been a time of great grace and has brought to many of those in our Catholic schools, colleges, and universities a renewal of their faith through prayer and charitable works as 'Pilgrims of Hope.'

In his recent Apostolic Letter, Drawing New Maps of Hope, our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV has said, "the future demands that we learn to collaborate more and grow together" (§8.2). During the Holy Year, Catholic schools across England and Wales have done just that! Through a 'Jubilee Pledge' they have made a long-term, whole-school commitment to journey as Pilgrims of Hope and to live out Catholic Social Teaching by working together to build a better world through prayer, action, and solidarity."

Thank you to all of our schools who have engaged so joyfully in the Jubilee Year activities. It was great to see how many Arundel and Brighton schools featured in the **CAFOD celebration video**:

<https://vimeo.com/1120884434/8de23fe0ad?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>

We were so blessed to welcome **Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe** to our School Leaders' Conference in November. The Jubilee Year has provided Catholics around the world with an opportunity to foster a culture of encounter, campaign for and promote social justice, and affirm the theological virtue of hope as a gift from God. Exploring the theme of hope, Cardinal Timothy said:

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"The least dramatic expression of hope is doing small deeds of kindness accomplished not for their consequences, but for their own sake - even if it looks like they won't achieve anything. Small acts of kindness are pregnant with hope in ways we cannot imagine... When we get up, we must be alert to the small acts of kindness we can perform and that we may receive... Hope is the belief that, in the end, our lives will have meaning. We are 'meaning seeking' beings; our deepest humanity is nourished by the search for meaning... Teaching means we go on searching for the 'why', it prepares us for the moment of revelation, when we see the face of God and understand the fulfilment of our joy."

[Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe OP joins diocesan Headteachers & School Leaders | News](#)

Advent is a busy season for our diocesan **Schools Singing Programme**, with children participating in and contributing to Advent worship and Christmas preparations and celebrations in their schools, parishes and beyond. Thank you to all the schools for your participation in the SSP events during Advent, and for the lovely Christmas Card you have gifted us.

[Schools Singing Programme children join Advent celebrations | News](#)

We are delighted to announce that **Day by Day** Branch 3 resources are now live on the recently **updated St Mary's Platform**. Not only are schools in Arundel and Brighton benefitting from these excellent resources but they are now being widely used in schools across the country.

[The Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton | St Mary's University, Twickenham, London](#)

Please see the November Alpha Beta for the latest updates, including our farewell to Lucy Horne, Head of St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Arundel [Alpha Beta Nov 2025](#). The next edition is due to be published in January.

As our term draws to a close, we turn to **Pope Leo XIV**, who reflects on the importance of active waiting during the Advent Season, as we learn to hope and help bring the Kingdom of God closer through our good actions. He reminds us that Advent teaches us to pay attention to the signs of the times, since it takes preparation and effort to recognize Jesus in our world and daily lives. Our waiting for the fulfilment of creation and its redemption is not passive, he says, noting that God always seeks to involve us in His work.

"God involves us in His story, in His dreams. To hope, then, is to participate."

As we enter the Christmas season, I send my warmest wishes for a happy, holy, and restful holiday. May the peace of the Christ Child fill your hearts and homes.

Best wishes



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