

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE

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

April 13th, 2026

Dear Colleagues

The season of Easter, spanning fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, invites us to journey with Jesus from the empty tomb to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, celebrating the triumph of life over death and the promise of new beginnings.

At the heart of the Easter season is the celebration of Christ's resurrection. The empty tomb stands as a powerful symbol of hope and victory, proclaiming the triumph of life over death and the promise of eternal salvation. We rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which affirms our belief in the power of God's love to bring new life to all who believe.

In his *Urbi et Orbi* ('To the City and the World') message, Pope Leo XIV called on world leaders to lay down their weapons and choose "encounter" over domination. Speaking to the tens of thousands of pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square, Pope Leo urged "those who have the power to unleash wars" to choose peace. This should not be a peace "imposed by force", he stressed, but one achieved through dialogue – "not with the desire to dominate others, but to encounter them".

We are "becoming indifferent", he said, not only to the deaths of thousands of people, but to the "hatred and division" war causes, as well as its "economic and social consequences". Borrowing a phrase from the late Pope Francis, Pope Leo warned of the "ever-increasing 'globalisation of indifference'".

The Pope stressed that Easter peace is not merely "the silence of weapons" but also an inner peace which "touches and transforms the heart of each one of us". "Let us allow ourselves to be transformed by the peace of Christ", Pope Leo urged, entrusting to the Lord "all hearts that suffer and await the true peace that only he can give."

[READ THE FULL TEXT OF THE URBI ET ORBI MESSAGE](#)

May we, in our school communities continue to pray for peace.

*God of peace, Father of all, at this time of fear and violence
draw near to every family living under threat.*

*Protect the innocent, shelter the displaced, comfort the grieving,
heal the wounded and strengthen all who bring relief and care.*

Turn the hearts of leaders from pride and anger.

*Give them wisdom, restraint, and courage, that the weapons may fall silent
and honest negotiation may begin.*

*Save the peoples of the Middle East from a widening war.
and keep hatred from hardening into lasting division.
Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ,
make us peacemakers in our homes, our schools, and our communities.
May our prayers bear fruit in mercy, justice, and reconciliation.
Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us.
Saint Joseph, protector of families, pray for us.
Saint Francis of Assisi, pray for us.
Amen.*

Our next edition of **Alpha Beta** will be published in early May. In the meantime, a couple of reminders which may be helpful as you start the term.

Liturgical resources for the Easter Season can be found here:

[The God Who Speaks](#)

[The Mark 10 Mission](#)

[Ten Ten Resources – Changing the world with creative Catholic content](#)

[Prayer resources](#)

Ten Ten have issued a briefing, updating dioceses on their progress in updating Life to the Full resources for September and explaining their change of approach regarding placing all statutory content in Life to the Full.

Please read this update here: [Schools Briefing March 2026.pdf](#)

Chaplains Retreat

We are delighted to invite school chaplains and prayer and liturgy coordinators to a dedicated overnight retreat at **St Columba's House in Woking on 18th - 19th May**. This is a purposeful pause designed to help them in their ministry. Retreats such as this can often feel like a luxury, but for those working in ministry they are more often than not a lifeline to strengthen relationships with the One we are entrusted to bring others to.

Please click the link below to sign up, or contact Chaplaincy Coordinator Theresa McNamara with any queries <https://abdiocese.churchsuite.com/events/q1ljwoxw>

Review of the National Framework for the Inspection of Catholic Schools

In early March, we communicated with schools regarding this consultation, which seeks the views of those involved in the life and mission of Catholic education, including school leaders, staff, governors, clergy, and parents. It focuses on the process, substance, and outcomes of inspection, while confirming that the fact, purpose, and areas of inspection are not under review.

The consultation survey can be accessed here:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SSQzRY2ft0OpJmB_Xy63KLfjEZ6a7UxMnONE_DY6s8p5UNEtRRUNCVTdKQTVUMzFXR0tITk1ENFINNy4u

The deadline for responses is **1 May 2026**.

Good Shepherd Celebration: Anchored in Hope

Schools will gather in Worth Abbey with Mgr Tony Barry on **June 18th at 11.00am** for the Good Shepherd celebration, during which the decorated anchors will be presented by each of our diocesan schools. Please see the January 2026 edition of Alpha Beta page 13 for details.

[Alpha Beta Jan 2026](#)

Missio will be present as we make our annual donation to their work.

Mass of Thanksgiving

The Mass of Thanksgiving at the end of the academic year will take place at Arundel Cathedral on **July 2nd at 3.30pm**, celebrated by Mgr Tony Barry. A warm welcome is extended to all school leaders, Heads and Chairs of Governors, to join us and please do sign up here:

[School Leaders' Mass of Thanksgiving \(02-Jul-2026\) · ChurchSuite Events](#)

Please complete this form [2026 Mass of Thanksgiving – Fill out form](#) if you would like the Education Service to invite any member of staff from your school who is retiring, leaving, or stepping down after long service, so that we can celebrate their contribution to our diocesan family of schools. This can be teaching, support staff, governors or volunteers who have given great service to your school. They will receive a personalized invitation to bring someone with them. All recipients will be presented with a certificate and those with 10 years' service or more will be presented with a diocesan Education Service medal.

CPD Summer term 2026

As well as the two key events above, there is ongoing training and support from the Education Service in the summer term, including our Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator's Day led by Jo Boyce of CJM Music, so please do check out what else is available and sign up on ChurchSuite. [Catholic Leaders & CPD | Education Service](#)

Recruitment

It is a busy time for school recruitment and a timely reminder that the Education Service must be advised of any reserved posts which schools are seeking to fill. All the information can be found on the website [Recruitment | Education Service](#). Equally, if you have any vacancies you would like us to advertise on the diocesan website and through parish newsletters, please do send these to claire.martin@abdiocese.org.uk

In the coming weeks, the Education Service will be holding in our prayers all pupils and students preparing for statutory assessments and public examinations, and those teaching and supporting them.

With every best wish for the term ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie'.

Julie Oldroyd - Director

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