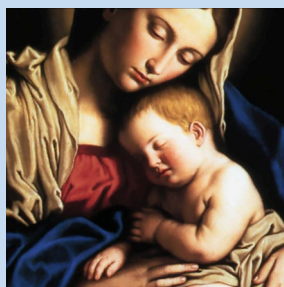


## May 2018

The Parent Involvement Working Group promote the active involvement of parents in their children's education in Catholic schools. They meet 4 times per school year and focus on developing support for parents, engaging with their views on important issues and encouraging them to support the work of Catholic schools and parishes.



Welcome from the Chair	2
R.E. focus on Mary	3
Praying the Rosary as a Family	4-5
Preparing for First Holy Communion	6
Family Stories	7
Memories	8

**We're on the Web!**  
**www.sces.org.uk**



“Devotion to Mary is not spiritual etiquette; it is a requirement of the Christian life. Looking to the Mother, we are asked to leave behind all sorts of useless baggage and to rediscover what really matters.”

Pope Francis Sermon on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God  
1st January 2018



Phone: 0141 556 4727  
Fax: 0141 551 8467  
E-mail:  
[parents@sces.uk.com](mailto:parents@sces.uk.com)

## Welcome

May 1st 2018

*Hello!*

*Spring is finally here and in the midst of the joyful season of Easter we reach the month of May, the month dedicated to honouring Mary our Mother.*

*At the parent working group our discussions around the month of May evoked many memories. Memories of children receiving sacraments, of our own First Holy Communion and of May processions in the sunshine. In this issue we would like to remind you of these traditions which are so much part of our Catholic culture and explore how they can be a source of spiritual growth for you and your family.*

*We also continue to reflect on the centenary of Catholic schools and look forward to more celebrations throughout the coming months. We are excited to be joining pupils and school staff from around the country at the National Schools Mass on 14<sup>th</sup> June and invite all parents to our Gathering of Catholic Parents in Paisley on 18<sup>th</sup> August - more details and registration information below.*

*We hope you enjoy reading the latest issue of PIWG News. If you have any comments please get in touch with us by emailing [parents@scs.es.uk](mailto:parents@scs.es.uk)*

*Our Lady, Queen of families pray for us!*

*God bless,  
Jo Soares  
Chair of Parent Involvement Working Group*

WELCOME PARENTS!

**CALLING ALL PARENTS:** The PIWG are from across the country and are passionate about ensuring that the voice of Catholic parents is heard. If your school, parish or cluster would like support in involving parents then please get in touch. And we will do what we can to help.

## Getting to Know Mary Through Religious Education in the Catholic School

Any of you reading this who attended Catholic primary schools probably have quite vivid memories of what happened in school in May: bringing flowers to statue of Mary; swathes of blue fabric; singing “Bring Flowers of the Rarest .” and “Immaculate Mary”. May was always a lovely time in schools, and that is still true today.

The person of Mary, Mother of God, is held in great respect and affection by Catholics. She is a constant figure for us from our very earliest learning of our faith and plays a central role in how we develop our understanding of Jesus and of what it means to live as a Catholic. It therefore comes as no surprise to see that she is a vital figure in the core learning of all pupils in Catholic schools, whether in their RE curriculum or in the wider prayer and pastoral life of the school.

The RE curriculum in Catholic schools (RERC) is laid out in the document “This is our Faith”. In this, and in its sister document for Senior Phase, our aim is to offer the young people in our schools, from P1 to S6, the opportunity to engage with Jesus Christ, and with the teachings and traditions of the Church, at a level suitable to their educational development. The documents also provide teachers with clear guidance which enables them to offer experiences of RE which are faithful to Church teaching and meaningful to the lives of our students. It would not be possible to remain faithful to our aim if Mary was not a central part of our RE courses.

From the very earliest stages in Primary 1, pupils are introduced to Mary as the Mother of Jesus. They learn the story of the Nativity, and will learn the Hail Mary as one of their first prayers. In Primary 2 they will learn about the Annunciation, seeing how the Holy Spirit helped Mary to say “Yes” to God, and therefore how the Holy Spirit can help them. They also will see in the wider life of their school how the Church honours Mary through prayer. By Primary 3, pupils are learning about the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary.

As pupils become older and develop their learning, so the content of the lessons changes to reflect this. They will learn about the major feasts connected to Mary, and about how Mary intercedes for us in prayer. By Primary 5, pupils are learning about the special role of Mary in God’s plan of salvation, and are writing their own prayers asking for Mary’s intercession. By the time they leave primary school, pupils should be familiar with all the major Marian prayers, and should be able to lead a rosary. They will have experienced how devotion to Mary shapes the day and the year of Catholics, by experiencing the praying of the Angelus, the importance of May and October, and the Marian feasts marked throughout the Church’s liturgical calendar.

In secondary school, the RE course continues to build on the students’ primary school experience, by helping them to deepen their knowledge of Mary’s role in the life of Jesus, and as Queen of all the Saints. Rather than learning **about** Mary and events in her life, as they did in early primary years, they learn **through** Mary, exploring the relevance of her role in the ministry of Jesus, and in the birth and the life of the Church. By the time students are in the senior phase of secondary school, they are studying and reflecting upon Mary as a model of prayer, and learning from what

other great thinkers have to offer about her; how her example can nourish us in our own faith and relationship with God. The scriptural accounts of Mary are now sources of reflection in terms of what they show about faith, prayer and trust in God, and an acceptance of his love for us. At the same time as this encourages a personal relationship with Mary, it helps students to understand her role as Mother of the Universal Church, so that when we see Jesus extend the motherhood of Mary to us, that is true for us both as individuals and as members of the Church.



## Praying The Rosary as a Family

We began praying the Rosary as a family once a week during Lent. I wanted to teach my daughter's how to pray using the beautiful rosary beads they had been given on their First Holy Communion, they were about ten and twelve years old. We kept it quite simple reflecting on each mystery for a moment and praying for someone in need or for peace. As they grew older we invited family members to join us, Aunties, cousins and some friends who asked if they could come along too. Gradually we began to extend the reflection using some lovely books on the rosary to guide us. There are many books available with suggested scripture, reflections and prayer intentions.

Setting up a little prayer table with a statue of Our Lady and some flowers or candles can help us to focus while we pray and if possible have it out permanently to remind us to pray to her daily as we walk by.

Our Lady asked that we pray the Rosary every day but in our hectic lives I know that can be difficult so if we try to make a start by praying the Rosary during Lent or the months of May and October at least we are setting an example of overcoming pressures that hinder family gatherings and prayer.

My love for the Rosary started on the day I visited my old priest when he was dying and he said, "Julie, always pray the Rosary." He had a deep devotion to Our Lady and I grew up remembering his last words to me. I am trying my best now to pass on this wonderfully powerful prayer to my children as it has helped me greatly along my journey in life.

The Rosary is the perfect prayer, it contains many of the principle themes and aspects of Christian life.

It is a Trinitarian prayer.

-we begin with the sign of the cross, invoking the three divine persons.

-we recite the Apostles Creed in which we call to mind the divine persons.

-we recite the 'Glory Be' after each mystery.

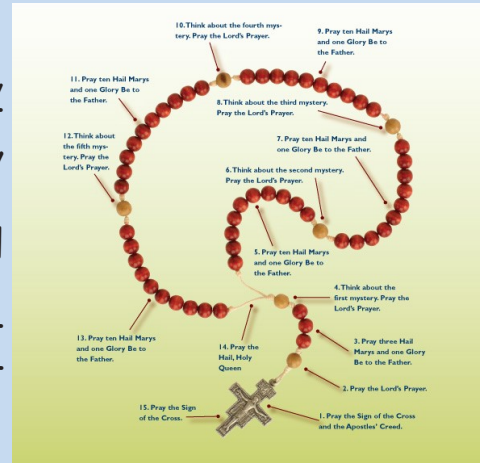


It is a Christological prayer.

-Christ is the centre of our faith, the mysteries of the Rosary reflect on the life of Christ from his infancy to glorification.

Meditating on these mysteries will help us to imitate his virtues.

-In every Hail Mary we honour Christ with the words 'blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus'.



It is best known as a Marian prayer.

-In reciting the Hail Mary 50 times, we not only praise Christ but his mother too. Jesus gave her to us from the Cross to be our Mother. The fourth Commandment asks us to honour thy Father and thy Mother.

-many of the mysteries consider moments in Mary's life.

-the Rosary ends with the prayer, Hail Holy Queen.

The Rosary with it's vocal fixed prayers, help encourage us to contemplate and meditate on the mysteries of Christ more deeply. When reciting it we pray for various intentions such as peace in the world.

It contains prayers of reparation 'forgive us our trespasses' and 'pray for us sinners'.

"To say the Holy Rosary, considering the mysteries, repeating the Our Father and Hail Mary, with the praises to the Blessed Trinity and the constant invocation to the Mother of God, is a continuous act of faith, hope and love, of adoration and reparation. "(St. Josemaria Escriva).

I hope that reading this will inspire you to discover the great benefits of praying the Rosary together.

God bless

Julie Makein

Understanding the Rosary by Father John Flader (CTS)

Praying The Rosary for Intercession by Catherine M Odell.

# Preparing for First Holy Communion

**One family share their memories from different generations about receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time**

"The first time your child receives Holy Communion, it is an exciting event for the whole family. The children prepare for this big event in their lives at school, with their families and in their parish during sacramental preparation days."



*"The Eucharist as you know, is the source & centre of our faith. Children are usually 7 or 8 years when they receive their first holy communion and this is the start of a life long journey with our Lord and should never be taken for granted. The joy we feel when we receive the Eucharist at our first holy communion should continue throughout our lives. Pope Francis has called it the "Sacrament of Love". It's an experience shared around the world and across time, a very special meal shared with family, friends and the wider parish community."*



"It is such a holy, joyful occasion and the children dress formally. Boys usually wear school uniform or sometimes the kilt. Girls wear special white First Communion dresses which can be plain or elaborate depending on taste and fashion.

The main thing to remember is having a celebration with family & friends is wonderful and the reason we are celebrating is to show our belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. We try to make sure we don't what the celebration is truly about; the receiving of the Holy Eucharist , with loved ones being there to witness that special day. "



*"First Holy Communion is a time of great joy for the whole family. The child preparing for this wonderful sacrament is going to be profoundly united with Jesus in a way that they never have before!"*



## Family Stories

Members of the PIWG speak to Tracey and Luigi from Dunkeld diocese whose eldest son is half-way through a six-month Initial Seminary Formation course at the Royal Scots College in Salamanca before embarking on training for the priesthood later this year...



### **Were you surprised when your son told you he felt a call to the priesthood?**

No, I think we always knew. He has such a caring nature, it was clear he was going to follow some kind of vocation and for a while he was considering a career in medicine. But his interest in the Church has developed since the age of 9 when he began serving on the altar. He showed great commitment from an early age and this commitment continued through teenage years and whilst at university. Through this commitment to the Church and a growing spirituality we could see his developing vocation.

### **You obviously set a good example to your son as he was growing up. Does he now teach you things?**

I can ask him things. He knows a lot about the Church and religion in general. (He's very interested in other world religions and spirituality in general.) When his brother asks questions it can be good for him to phone big brother to get his perspective and some advice.

### **What do you think of the priesthood as a way of life for your son?**

My viewpoint has always been if my children have a job or career to make their own way in the world and make a contribution I would support them doing whatever makes them happy and my son is very happy with his choice. The Church offers amazing opportunities – just now he is in Salamanca in southern Spain and after the summer holiday could be off to Rome to study for the next seven years. Of course there are sacrifices, obviously he won't now have children of his own for example, but that doesn't worry me.

### **You recently visited the Royal Scots College and saw your son where he is studying. Did you take comfort from seeing that he is happy and well?**

Yes, there is very good support for the students with a resident spiritual director. We were also taken to visit Religious Sisters whose vocation is to pray for the students and for an increase in vocations to the priesthood. It was

particularly lovely to meet them and know he is being prayed for.

My son is really happy. What more could you want for your child?

**PriestsforScotland**  
A LIFE WORTH LIVING

## Memories from our parents

As we look forward to the National Youth Mass celebrating the centenary of the 1918 Education Act, Norbert Grant shares his memories of a trip, as an S2 pupil, to Murrayfield Stadium when His Holiness Pope John Paul II visited Scotland back in 1982.

*"May 1982; tickets and transport booked for a long journey to Edinburgh, it was a long journey back in those days, as a 13 year old school pupil from Airdrie who signed up to go to Mass at Murrayfield as one way of getting out of school.*

*What I didn't expect, that it was the best day off school ever, in fact it was the best Mass, Rock Concert I have ever been to!*

*I had never experienced anything like it, and even today, nearly 36 years on, that day still reverberates as the day my faith was to become rock solid! His Holiness Pope John Paul proclaimed his love for us 'Young People of Scotland' which was replied with 44000 young Catholics chanting to a chorus of "John Paul, John Paul" & "You'll will never walk alone." I remember one of the new hymns of His Holiness's visit to Scotland was 'Our God Reigns'. New to me, as a teenager who attended Mass as a family, and whose mother was a member of the Parish Choir going to Bellahouston the next day for His Holiness's pilgrimage to see his flock of 1.2million accompanied by 6000 Police Officers to make it the biggest gathering in Scotland's history.*



*My mother told us that 36 years ago at my local parish and at home and I heard my mum sing this hymn as each parish had been asked to learn this new Hymn called 'Our God Reigns'.*

*As a teenage lad, I didn't pay much attention to the Hymns, this one was catchy but I all I ever seemed to learn was "Announcing peace and proclaiming news of happiness, Our God Reigns". The rest of hymn for me didn't seem to matter. To this day, I must proclaim that when I hear that hymn, it takes me back 36 years ago, to a time eternalised in the memories of those who attended Murrayfield. My own learned line of "Our God reigns" became the repeated reply of the day, to a point that if God didn't ever believe us, he certainly heard us!*

*Reflecting on those few days has left many memories for us young, now near 50 old Scots, that we never did walk alone! We walked together as one generation, and as we move on a generation, we know from that day in Murrayfield, that through His Holiness, Our God's Reign does flow through all of us, through the "Young People of Scotland" and even today, every young person in Scotland has that reign of faith flowing through them as it was spread amongst 44000 in Murrayfield and 1.2million at Bellahouston.*

*My mother's memory from Bellahouston was when she was talking to a Police Officer who stated that he was not a Catholic, but felt that there was something special, and this was the nearest to God he had ever felt. I asked her why she remembered this, and she said, it was because it was the same sort of thing that happened on Good Friday!*

*We never do truly walk alone, even when we feel like we are, there is a generation or two who are walking with us.*

*Norbert "*