



# The Vine



**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF IN-  
TEREST:**

**LOOK INSIDE  
FOR A NEWS  
UPDATE**

**Don't forget the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 16th June at St. Paul's High School for Girls Birmingham.**

**Come along and have your say**

**Read what a Parliamentary Inquiry says about R.E Teachers and the lack of support they receive.**

**Interested in receiving a grant to help you with your Educational Research Project See inside how could qualify for a CATSC grant**

VOLUME 17 .3 SUMMER TERM 2013



## **2013 SUMMER TERM MESSAGE FROM ACTING PRESIDENT MARY SAINSBURY**

I am writing this message to you all on the evening of the Ascension Sunday Celebrations. We are told in the Gospel that the disciples left feeling happy when Jesus had gone and went to tell people in the Temple about Jesus. They were even more strengthened by the arrival of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday.

At this time of year many of our young people are receiving the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. This helps us to realize how we in our Faith Journey were granted the same grace when we were Confirmed.

This morning in my home parish I was delighted to hear of the number of children who had received their First Holy Communion and the number of teenagers who had been Confirmed. After taking out Holy Communion to some Housebound parishioners on returning the pix to the church I was overwhelmed by two groups of families bringing their babies forward to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. All the young mums and dads, grandmas, granddads, aunties, uncles, brothers and sisters all present to welcome two babies into the Catholic Faith. WOW!! They almost filled the church.

When we take time to step back and reflect we realize how much God is at work through each and every one of us be we tiny people or the housebound who affect their visitors in their Faith Journey.

My friend reminded me about the farmer sowing the seeds. Yes- many things happen to those seeds. You all know the story-BUT -did the farmer know with which seeds he had success ? NO, he probably did not! Neither do we know where our influences – teaching, acts of kindness– and witness may make a difference. All the hard work which is done in our daily lives in school, which we think is landing on stony ground may well flourish without us knowing the true results.

ONLY GOD knows the true results SOOOOOOOO friends- PLEASE keep up the great work which is happening in our schools and colleges. Pray for the young people being confirmed and the little ones or big ones making their First Holy Communion. Keep smiling through the work of the Summer Term which is always HARD and ENJOY a good rest in the Summer Holidays ready to start all over again with the usual wonderful enthusiasm of spreading the "GOOD NEWS".

## VOLUME 17 .3 SUMMER TERM 2013



*The CATSC WEB SITE has been up -dated and we have now started a Twitter account. The conference in April went well and we will be following the advice of some of the comments received. The speakers and workshops were great and some ideas were inspirational and have helped people in their own lives and in their teaching practice. The liturgy was up-lifting and Fr. Cunningham certainly inspired many of the delegates to think and reflect about their own Faith Journey. Susan from CA-FOD was a revelation!! We will have a full report on the web-site for you to take a glance and the reports and further reading material and resources will also be there. See below a first hand account of one of the workshops written by Alex Smith a student attending his first conference*

I'm usually quite cynical about any form of charismatic liturgical activity however it is evident from a video shown by Maureen Clarke of Holy Name Primary School that it is having a very positive effect amongst the children at her primary school. As I watch the video of her liturgical activities I look on fascinated as the school hall is quickly filled with faces of excitement and anticipation. Some children carry in banners bearing words such as 'love' 'Gloria' 'friend' and 'praise' whilst others carry in musical instruments or coloured strips of ribbon. Clearly everybody is involved with this activity and it is a welcomed sight to the children's Friday afternoon with one of the students eloquently stating "it is the perfect start to my weekend" The show kicks off with a praise song they have learnt over the previous weeks. Each child gets themselves involved with an aura of grace and gentle respect.

Spread out on the floor are a series of cut outs in the shape of doves, clearly representing the Holy Spirit, arranged into a horseshoe shape with tea lights forming the shape of a cross in the centre of the room. In front of the children stands an altar with a bible, crucifix and several candles placed on top. Throughout the liturgy there are an even mix of calm, contemplative, meditative moments followed by up-beat and excitable moments of gleefulness where the children are encouraged to sing and dance. During these moments of song and celebration the children are told to be creative with how they embrace the session. As I watch the children take advantage of this autonomy I can't help but acknowledge how this is such a brilliant way for the children to let off some much needed steam as well as entering into a deeper relationship with Christ. The songs in which the children are singing and dancing along to I am told by Maureen have not been taught. Instead the children themselves have gradually picked them up throughout the weeks they have been participating in this wonderful opportunity. The songs and dances have become a second nature to them.

Knowing from my own previous experiences of participating in such activities especially when I was much younger I sit back aghast as how comfortable the children are to openly pray and then quietly meditate. If this would have happened in one of my classes as a child it would have been greeted with fears of embarrassment and without a doubt a nervous laugh. But yet through this liturgy the children have built up an impressive confidence and any embarrassment went out the window a long time ago. It has built a level of trust amongst the pupils in the class where they are able to bond with each other whilst retaining an immense respect for one another.

After what can be described as the main event the children are led back to their classrooms where they will continue to meditate quietly in smaller groups. In the classroom the children sit in a circle facing one another and gently lay out two pieces of cloth; one on top of the other.



On top of the cloth again a cross and a bible are placed whilst also the children place small rocks each with a different inscription and together reading 'joy, hope, love, welcome and peace' Maureen tells me that after this the children sit quietly and pray, which they do in absolute stillness. They will sit like this for roughly 5-10 minutes, usually one minute for each year of their life. Afterwards in the wake of the liturgy everything is packed away in what I can't help but stress in very relaxed and placid manner.

During the video I was able to listen to some of the comments the children had about the liturgy these include "it feels like I've had a candle lit in my heart, it's a world of paradise" "I feel like Jesus is giving me a big hug" "it's time to get to know Jesus and come closer to him"

As the video concludes Maureen gives her own personal view of the liturgy. She says that for most of the children the gospel they experience during the liturgy might possibly be the only time they hear it in their life and with those words I realise that this evangelism is such a sacred part of the children's lives not only because of their enthusiasm for it but because it may be the only time they may come so close

### **“RE teachers lack Training and Support”**

This is the conclusion of a recent Parliamentary inquiry. The All party report 'RE: the truth unmasked' highlights lack of support for and provision of qualified RE teachers. A report by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Religious Education (RE) has found that RE lessons are frequently taught by teachers with no qualifications in the subject. Furthermore the responsibility to educate young people on the different beliefs and values held in society is often given to teaching assistants, who receive little support, training or guidance.

The three month long inquiry by the APPG into the supply of and support for RE teachers in schools, including a review of evidence from over 400 sources, found:

Over fifty per cent of those teaching RE in secondary schools have no qualification or relevant expertise in the subject

In more than half of the 300 primary schools participating in the inquiry, some or all of the pupils were taught RE by someone other than their class teacher

A quarter of all primary schools that responded said the lesson was given by a teaching assistant

Primary and primary trainee teachers lack confidence and expertise in teaching RE, especially in diverse and multi-cultural classrooms

Support for RE teachers at a local level has been dramatically reduced by local authority funding cuts and the academies programme

Bursaries for RE trainees have been removed and there has been a radical reduction in applicant numbers for 2013/14

Because of this lack of training and support many of those teaching RE are unable to meet the Department for Education's Teaching Standards, selling young people short in their schools. Commenting on the findings, chair of the APPG on RE, Stephen Lloyd MP said, "There are a large number of excellent RE teachers across the country who are doing a first class job preparing children for the challenges life throws at them, and helping them make sense of the wide range of beliefs and cultures around us. But a range of policies, most notably those relating to the EBacc, academies and GCSE short courses, have served to lower RE's status on the curriculum. **“As many children as possible should be encouraged to study GCSE Religious Studies – and it is essential that they are taught by experienced and trained professionals at primary and secondary level. “It is illogical to think that we can dilute the professionalism and expertise needed to teach RE well and still have a generation of young people that understand and are sensitive to the growing levels of religious and non-religious diversity in our soci-**



## **The Teacher as Researcher: CATSC Research Grants 2013 - 2015**

### **Aims**

To encourage teachers and head teachers to engage in small-scale research within their own schools and communities.

To give support to such researchers by providing funding to assist their projects.

To publicise the outcomes of such research.

### **Funding**

For the period 2013-2015, CATSC will provide three research grants of £1000.

This funding is to assist with the costs incurred in undertaking the research such as the purchase of recording equipment, the transcription of interviews, relevant travel costs, supply cover, costs of producing research reports, etc.

### **Eligibility**

Applications may be made by any staff member currently working in a Catholic school in England or Wales.

### **Research Focus and Themes**

Research proposals, which can be for empirical research or a philosophical treatment of the topic, should relate to investigations that focus upon distinctive features of Catholic schooling e.g. Catholicity, Catholic ethos, Religious Education, service to the common good, preferential option for the poor, school-parish links, liturgical life.

Possible research and writing themes are:-

What do teachers understand by the Catholicity of a school/college and how do they assess it?

Why do parents choose Catholic schools?

In what ways does the school serve the common good?

How do pupils in Primary schools respond to the religious education that they experience?

How do students in Secondary schools/Sixth Form colleges respond to the religious education that they experience?

In what ways is the religious charism in your school either being weakened or renewed?

### **Methodology and Writing Style**

Only basic research approaches are looked for e.g. use of short surveys, use of interviews (recorded or field noted) and focus groups.

A main theme is to 'hear the voice' of teachers, parents, children, adolescents in Catholic schooling

The writing style should be reflective and analytical.

### **Research Reports**

Reports of 5,000 – 7,000 words will be expected arising from a funded project

A report should be presented at the end of the second year of the grant.

### **Applications**

Two A4 pages should outline:-

The issue or question to be investigated and rationale.

The proposed sample of participants

The research approaches to be used

Possible policy and practice implications which may arise for a school

Some referencing of background reading related to the issue

### **Timetable**

Applications should be sent to Mary Mihovilovic, Chair of CATSC Research and Development Committee, by 30th June 2013 at [marymihovilovic@gmail.com](mailto:marymihovilovic@gmail.com).

The Committee will inform successful applicants by 23rd July 2013.

### **Dissemination**

Grant holders will be asked to present a final report of their work at the CATSC Annual Conference, 2015.

## **The Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges**

is to be held on

**Saturday 16th June at 10.00a.m.**

at

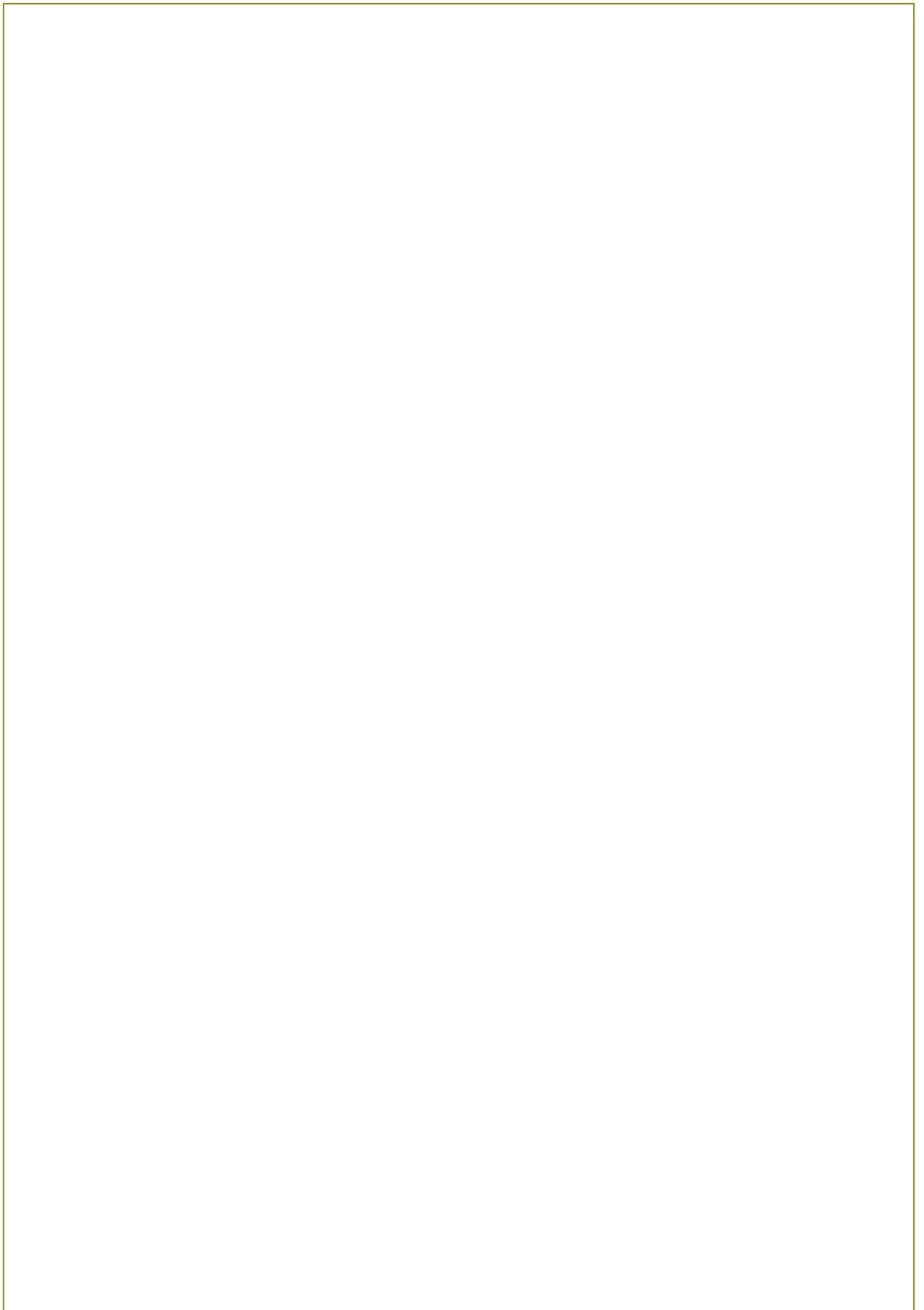
**St Paul' s High School for Girls  
Vernon Rd Edgbaston Birmingham**

1. **Agenda**
2. **Opening Prayer**
3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**
4. **Officers' Reports**
5. **Election of Officers**
6. **Installation of New President**
7. **Other Urgent Business**

**The AGM is followed by a Council Meeting. It is the custom and practice of CATSC to invite all those present to remain for the Council Meeting if desired. Election of Officers In line with constitutional requirements, there is a requirement to elect a new president to replace Dawn Casserley who resigned last September. Nominations are also required for the posts of secretary, treasurer and vice president as Past President Andrew Sowerby comes to the end of his term of office.**







reports will be considered for publication in *Networking: Catholic Education Today* or in the *Professional Focus Series* Published by the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education (CRDCE), London University, Institute of Education. Grant holders will be asked to present a final report of their work at the CATSC Annual Conference, 2015.

Final reports will be considered for publication in *Networking: Catholic Education Today* or in the *Professional Focus Series* Published by the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education (CRDCE), London University, Institute of Education.

**This is the official calling notice to all members and interested groups.**