



# School Chaplains Association of Ireland

## Cumann na Séiplíneach Scoile

I would like to welcome each one of you back to a new academic year. For those of you entering into chaplaincy for the first time I extend a warm welcome and wish you every blessing on your ministry.

As the doom and gloom of the recession hits hard in all our schools it is important that we as chaplains try to nourish the hungry and feed the flocks so to speak. We must draw strength in a time when many are loosing there's. We too must be nourished and sustained hence I encourage each one of you to 'take time' and feed the soul.

Our Annual Conference will take place in The Galway Bay Hotel, from Wednesday 25th November to Friday 27th. I encourage you to advise your school management about the conference. This conference is school chaplain's annual in-service, professional development and retreat. Therefore we

on the executive strongly encourage all chaplains to attend for the duration of the conference.

The executive are busy working on your behalf and continue to raise the profile of school chaplains and the association. If we can be of any assistance to you please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the association. Can I encourage chaplains to engage with their cluster groups and to make contact with new chaplains in your area. The journey of a chaplain can be very isolating and lonely when one is on their own.

September is a busy month for all so I wish you a fruitful and blessed new beginning.

Hope to see you all at the conference.

Le gach dea-ghuí.

Cora

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## CONSTITUTION

### ARTICLE 1 PURPOSE

- 1.a The Official name of the Association is Cumann na Séiplíneach Scoile / School Chaplains Association (hereafter referred to as S.C.A.)
- 1.b The purpose is to assist Post-Primary School Chaplains in their ministry.

### ARTICLE 2 MEMBERSHIP

- 2.a The School Chaplains Association is open to all full-time and Part-time chaplains in second level schools and colleges.
- 2.b A chaplain becomes a member of S.C.A. through the payment of an annual membership fee. It entitles the member to vote and to be proposed for Executive Office.
- 2.c Reduced membership fee for student chaplains with no voting rights but full entitlements to attend all activities provided by the association.
- 2.d Associate Membership is available for relevant persons/ Institutes who have a connection with school chaplaincy at the discretion of the Executive. Associate membership is at a rate set by the Executive and gives full entitlements to attend all activities provided by the association but with no voting rights.

### ARTICLE 3 A.G.M.

- 3.a An Annual General Meeting will be held between 1st September and 31st December of each year.
- 3.b Notice of the A.G.M. will be furnished to all members at least fourteen days before the date of the A.G.M.

### ARTICLE 4 EXECUTIVE

- 4.a The Executive of the Association will consist of nine members and will be duly elected at the Annual General Meeting. Candidates must first be nominated and seconded before their election takes place. The election

will be conducted by secret ballot of members eligible to vote who are present at the A.G.M.

- 4.b Members of the Executive will be elected for a term of three years.
- 4.c At its first meeting after each A.G.M. the Executive will elect its officers; namely, Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, P.R.O.
- 4.d An officer may not hold one office for more than three consecutive years.
- 4.e A quorum for a meeting of the Executive will consist of a majority of those serving on the Executive, and must include either the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson.
- 4.f The Chairperson will furnish the A.G.M. with a report of the Executive's work during the preceding year.
- 4.g. The Treasurer will furnish the A.G.M. with a detailed financial report.

### ARTICLE 5 COMMUNICATION

- 5.a The S.C.A. will make provision for regional meetings to further the aims of the association.
- 5.b A network of communication among the members of relevant bodies in the furtherance of its aims.

### ARTICLE 6 CONSTITUTION

- 6.a An amendment to the constitution of the School Chaplains Association will require a majority of two-thirds plus one of members attending an A.G.M. for adoption.
- 6.b Notice of a proposed Amendment must be furnished in writing to the Secretary (or named substitute) not less than twenty eight days before the date of the A.G.M. It will be then circulated to all the membership, with the notice of the A.G.M.

Amended, approved and adopted at A.G.M. 20/11/2008

# A note from the Editor



A very warm welcome to all Chaplains to the New School Year 09-10! To all new Chaplains who may have just started this year welcome. This Newsletter in conjunction with the website [www.sca.ie](http://www.sca.ie) is designed to provide some words of encouragement, act as a resource and also to provide a medium where we can exchange important information and details to all chaplains out there.

This is my sixth year as Chaplain and guarantee that no two years in Chaplaincy is ever quite the same. True, we have various services and duties which we perform each year routinely but already into the 4th week of my school year and I'm being presented with new challenges already. I'm hoping that you, our fellow chaplains out there will use the material and resources found in the Newsletter and spread it around the R.E. Departments also.

I'm aware that not everyone received the last issue of our Newsletter due to reasons beyond our control. We are currently trying to update the membership list from the last conference and would like to thank you for your patience as we endeavour to include everyone on the database. If you haven't received one and would like to get a copy of the Newsletter, please send me an email and I'll forward one on to you. Also you can email Olive who looks after membership. Her email is listed in the Newsletter or can be found on the website [www.sca.ie](http://www.sca.ie). Alternatively, we will have copies available for you at the Conference in November.

This Year holds many challenges for us as Chaplains and each differs depending on the school. As Chaplains

we see the difficulties and challenges of the students, staff and parents that we deal with on a daily basis. The Youth of today are experiencing a sense of global loss that never existed before and traditional sources of meaning and identity are difficult to find post Celtic Tiger. My various encounters with different Chaplains has identified some concerns; namely to bring some sense of meaning and purpose to the complexity of issues in their lives in a troubled and morally ambiguous culture.

Emile Durkheim's Theory of **Social Anomie** say's in layman's terms, that when a culture is changing like ours is, often society will experience a 'Vacuum' as we transcend one form of society to another. Where people experience 'Normlessness' in their lives. It's true that where once money and as the kids say "Stuff" filled a certain void in our lives now we're faced with the same voids but with little to fill it in with. Durkheim said that in this situation Substance misuse, suicide, depression was noticed to increase.

So where does one start? I don't have many answers but one question that I keep in the back of mind all the time is, how do I maintain and sustain myself in my Role as Chaplain? It's important that if we are going to walk alongside our schools it's just as important that we learn to take care of ourselves before anyone else, or we're no good to anyone.

After this, we all have various talents and skills as Chaplains. Now, more than ever is a time for us to **take advantage of our cluster groups, regional coordinators, newsletter, website and the staff in the schools.** I've been very lucky in the past with many of my colleagues in the Dublin West Cluster and have leaned on their support over the years as I have done with them in return.

So even though we live in complicated times where there may be uncertainty, lets greet this change in society and look to our spiritual and creative sides to act as beacons and like the Conference theme this year promotes..Fan the flames of Hope!

Le gach dea ghúí,

Allen.

# School Chaplains' Association Annual Conference 2009

Wednesday, 25th – Friday 27th November

In the Galway Bay Hotel,  
The Promenade, Salthill Galway

**Keynote Speaker:** Fr. Peter McVerry SJ

**Conference Theme:** Fanning the flames of Hope

## Workshops

Legal Matters & Implications for School Chaplains.

Scripture for Young People.

Focusing.

Loss, Separation & Bereavement in the current climate.

Sexually Transmitted Infections.

**N.B. All accommodation must be booked by the delegates themselves before 26th October 2009 after that full rates apply**

## Conference Rates are as follows:

Single Room €95.00 per night B&B

Double Room/Twin Room €65.00 per person sharing B&B

Or

2 Nights B&B and 1 Evening Meal – Single €199.00

2 Nights B&B and 1 Evening Meal – Double €119.00 per person sharing

Phone Niamh Stack 091 520 520

[www.galwaybayhotel.com](http://www.galwaybayhotel.com)

[info@galwaybayhotel.com](mailto:info@galwaybayhotel.com)



## SCA Conference Timetable 2009

### Wednesday

3-4pm	Executive Meeting
6pm	Meal for Executive
8-9pm	New Chaplains Meeting
8-9.20pm	Registration
9.30pm	Evening prayer
10.00pm	Wine & Cheese Reception

### Thursday

7.30-8.45	BREAKFAST
8.00-8.45	Registration – in Main Hall
9.00-9.20	Morning Prayer
9.30-10.15	Guest Speaker – Please see Website details
10.15-10.45	Regional groups
10.45-11.15	MORNING BREAK (& overflow of Registration)
11.20-12.20pm	Workshop 1
12.30-1.30pm	Workshop 2
1.30-3.00pm	LUNCH
2.30-2.45pm	Executive Meeting
3.00-5.00pm	Accreditation Presentation (James Norman)
	A.G.M. & Open Forum
6.30pm	Celebration of the Eucharist
8.00pm	Conference Dinner & Entertainment

### Friday

7.30-9.15	BREAKFAST
9.30-9.50	Morning Prayer
10.00-11.00	Keynote Address: Fr Peter McVerry SJ
11.00-11.30	Questions & Evaluations
11.30-12.00	MORNING BREAK
12.00-12.30	Close & Farewell
1.00-2.00pm	Executive Lunch
2.15-3.00	Meeting & Greeting of New Executive

## Workshops SCA Conference 2009

### Legal Matters & Implications for School Chaplains

This Workshop will address the area of contracts, note-taking/record keeping and other legal matters relating to School Chaplains.

### Scripture for Young People

This Workshop will look at integrating scripture into a programme for young people in the school setting.

### Focusing

Focusing is a gentle way of becoming aware of our inner selves and gives us the skills to be with all that is going on inside leading to a quieter mind and helping us feel more peaceful and harmonious. This Workshop offers a brief introduction to the focusing process.

### Loss, Separation & Bereavement in the current climate

This Workshop will look at how school Chaplains can address the issues in the school in the backdrop of the recession.

### Sexually Transmitted Infections

This Workshop will address the increase in S.T.I.'s in Ireland at present. It will present current facts and figures and aid the Chaplain in addressing and educating such a topic with their students.

### Note from the Editor

This year we hope to see as many delegates as possible at the conference. It's a great opportunity to share ideas, meet new/old members of the SCA and provides us an executive a chance to meet with you the Chaplains to discuss any matters or problem that we and the Regional Coordinators are there to help you with.

This year due to feedback from last year's conference we will be adhering closely to the set schedule so that events run over into each other. Your cooperation in presenting on time will help this greatly.

This year Fr. Arnold Rosney and John Tighe will be stepping down from the Executive. We would like to thank them for their commitment and hard work for Chaplains and the Executive over the last few years.

Those who wish to submit motions for the AGM are asked to do so no later than Tues 27th October 2009.



## The Executive comprises of the following

### Chairperson

#### Ms. Cora Guinnane

School Chaplain, St. Caimin's Community School,  
Shannon, Co. Clare  
coraguinnane@gmail.com  
087-240 0135

### Vice Chairperson/Assistant Reg Co'd

#### Fr. Arnold Rosney, c.c.

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### Secretary

#### R. Seán Mallon

School Chaplain, Mount Anville Secondary School,  
Mount Anville Road,  
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### Treasurer

#### Ms. Aoife Daly

School Chaplain, Boyne Community School,  
Trim, Co. Meath  
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### P.R.O./Newsletter/Website

#### Mr. Allen Gilhooly

School Chaplain, Coláiste Cois Life,  
Lucan, Co. Dublin  
allengilhooly@needhelp.ie  
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### Diary & Exec Co'd of Regional Coordinators

#### Sr. Mercedes Coen

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Keady, Co. Armagh BT60 3RW  
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### Diary & Membership

#### Ms. Olive Delahunty

School Chaplain, St. Catherine's College,  
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### Website

#### Mr. John Tighe

School Chaplain, St. Peter's College,  
Dunboyne, Co. Meath  
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# Resource Page

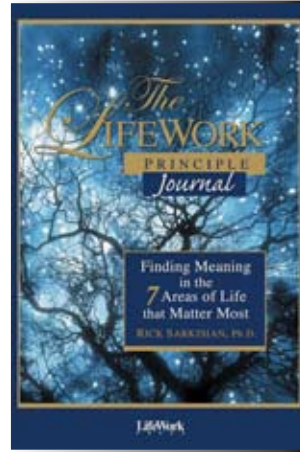


A man found a cocoon for a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared, he sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and could go no farther. Then the man decided to help the butterfly.

He took a pair of scissors and snipped the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. Something was strange. The butterfly had a swollen body and shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened. In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and deformed wings. It was never able to fly.

What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand, was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the small opening of the cocoon are God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life.

If God allowed us to go through all our life without any obstacles, that would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. Not only that, we could never fly.



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**1 FAITH** Believing that God is active in every aspect of the story of your life.

**2 RELATIONSHIPS** Appreciating your own story as well as creatively collaborating with God and the “cast of characters” you encounter in your story.

**3 WORK** Understanding how the Father has equipped you for your story and sent you out in a specific role to accomplish your work. And then doing it.

**4 KNOWLEDGE** Learning how you and your role fits into the grand story of life.

**5 SOCIETY** Helping others, the “cast of characters,” as your story unfolds.

**6 FITNESS** Keeping yourself strong and healthy in body, mind and spirit.

**7 LEISURE** Regularly slowing down the pace of your story to give yourself rest and relaxation

*Sent in by Martin Millerick  
martinmillerick@hotmail.com*



“In April we cannot see sunflowers in France, so we say the sunflowers do not exist. But the local farmers have already planted thousands of seeds and when they look at the bare hills they may be able to see the sunflowers already. The sunflowers are there. They lack only the conditions of sun, heat, rain, and July.

Just because we cannot see them does not mean they do not exist.”

*Thich Nhat Hanh, b. 1926  
Vietnamese Buddhist Monk and Peace Activist*

And so it goes with life... whatever it is we desire, the seeds have already been planted. The love, goodness and peace we want are already there! All we need to do is ensure they have the proper growing conditions.

And so it is with school and teaching, the seeds have already been planted, all these young people need is the right growing conditions – the encouragement, the guidance, the care and the belief in them that we as teachers can give, so as we start out on another new school year may we give of our best.

# At a Loss for Words

By Katinka Hesselink

## Anthony De Mello SJ



Anthony de Mello, a Jesuit priest from India, influenced the world through his powerful understanding of the human condition. Through the use of parables and teaching stories, de Mello pointed the way to authentic living. The influence of spiritual traditions outside mainstream Christianity is clear in his

work. The depth and spiritual insight in his teachings, stories and articles made him well known throughout the world. He is well appreciated by many inside and outside the Roman Catholic Church.

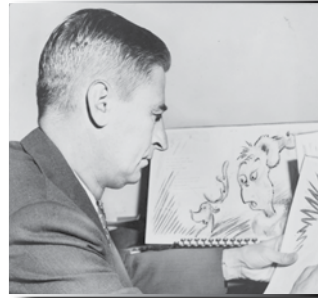
Dag Hammarskjöld, the former UN Secretary-General, put it so beautifully: “God does not die on the day we cease to believe in a personal deity. But we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance of wonder renewed daily, the source of which is beyond all reason.” We don’t have to quarrel about a word, because “God” is only a word, a concept. One never quarrels about reality; we only quarrel about opinions, about concepts, about judgments. Drop your concepts, drop your opinions, drop your prejudices, drop your judgments, and you will see that.

“Quia de deo scire non possumus quid sit, sed quid non sit, non possumus considerare de deo, quomodo sit sed quomodo non sit.” This is St. Thomas Aquinas’ introduction to his whole *Summa Theologica*: “Since we cannot know what God is, but only what God is not, we cannot consider how God is but only how He is not.” I have already mentioned Thomas’ commentary on Boethius’ *De Sancta Trinitate*, where he says that the loftiest degree of the knowledge of God is to know God as the unknown, *tamquam ignotum*. And in his *Questio Disputata de Potentia Dei*, Thomas says, “This is what is ultimate in the human knowledge of God -- to know that we do not know God.” This gentleman was considered the prince of theologians. He was a mystic, and is a canonized saint today. We’re standing on pretty good ground.

In India, we have a Sanskrit saying for this kind of thing: “*neti, neti*.” It means: “not that, not that.” Thomas’ own method was referred to as the *via negativa*, the negative way. C. S. Lewis wrote a diary while his wife was dying. It’s called *A Grief Observed*. He had married an American woman whom he loved dearly. He told his friends, “God gave me in my sixties what He denied me in my twenties.” He hardly had married her when she died a painful death of cancer. Lewis said that his whole faith crumbled, like a house of cards. Here he was the great Christian apologist, but when disaster struck home, he asked himself, “Is God a loving Father or is God the great vivisectionist?” There’s pretty good evidence for both! I remember that when my own mother got cancer, my sister said to me, “Tony, why did God allow this to happen to Mother?” I said to her, “My dear, last year a million people died of starvation in China because of the drought, and you never raised a question.” Sometimes

the best thing that can happen to us is to be awakened to reality, for calamity to strike, for then we come to faith, as C. S. Lewis did. He said that he never had any doubts before about people surviving death, but when his wife died, he was no longer certain. Why? Because it was so important to him that she be living.

## C. S. Lewis



CLIVE STAPLES LEWIS (1898–1963) was one of the intellectual giants of the 20th century and arguably the most influential Christian writer of his day. His major contributions in literary criticism, children’s literature, fantasy literature, and popular

theology brought him international renown and acclaim. He wrote more than thirty books, allowing him to reach a vast audience, and his works continue to attract thousands of new readers every year. His most distinguished and popular accomplishments include *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Out of the Silent Planet*, *The Four Loves*, *The Screwtape Letters*, and *Mere Christianity*.

Lewis, as you know, is the master of comparisons and analogies. He says, “It’s like a rope. Someone says to you, ‘Would this bear the weight of a hundred twenty pounds?’ You answer, ‘Yes.’ ‘Well, we’re going to let down your best friend on this rope.’ Then you say, ‘Wait a minute, let me test that rope again.’ You’re not so sure now.” Lewis also said in his diary that we cannot know anything about God and even our questions about God are absurd. Why?

It’s as though a person born blind asks you, “The color green, is it hot or cold?” *Neti, neti*, not that. “Is it long or is it short?” Not that. “Is it sweet or is it sour?” Not that. “Is it round or oval or square?” Not that, not that. The blind person has no words, no concepts, for a color of which he has no idea, no intuition, no experience. You can only speak to him in analogies. No matter what he asks, you can only say, “Not that.” C.S. Lewis says somewhere that it’s like asking how many minutes are in the color yellow. Everybody could be taking the question very seriously, discussing it, fighting about it. One person suggests there are twenty-five carrots in the color yellow, the other person says, “No, seventeen potatoes,” and they’re suddenly fighting. Not that, not that!

This is what is ultimate in our human knowledge of God, to know that we do not know. Our great tragedy is that we know too much. We think we know, that is our tragedy; so we never discover. In fact, Thomas Aquinas (he’s not only a theologian but also a great philosopher) says repeatedly, “All the efforts of the human mind cannot exhaust the essence of a single fly.”

Taken from [www.katinkahesselink.net/christianity](http://www.katinkahesselink.net/christianity)

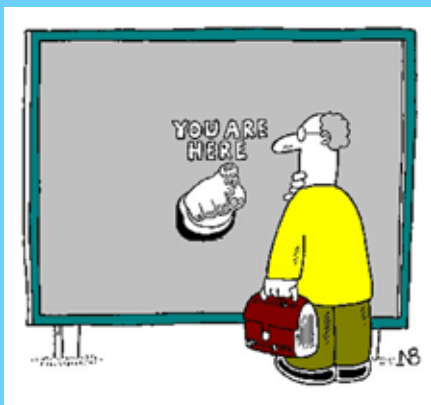
[www.cslewis.drzeus.net](http://www.cslewis.drzeus.net)

[www.cslewis.com](http://www.cslewis.com)

# Ten Rules for Being Human

by Cherie Carter-Scott

1. You will receive a body. You may like it or hate it, but it's yours to keep for the entire period.
2. You will learn lessons. You are enrolled in a full-time informal school called, "life."
3. There are no mistakes, only lessons. Growth is a process of trial, error, and experimentation. The "failed" experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiments that ultimately "work."
4. Lessons are repeated until they are learned. A lesson will be presented to you in various forms until you have learned it. When you have learned it, you can go on to the next lesson.
5. Learning lessons does not end. There's no part of life that doesn't contain its lessons. If you're alive, that means there are still lessons to be learned.
6. "There" is no better a place than "here." When your "there" has become a "here", you will simply obtain another "there" that will again look better than "here."
7. Other people are merely mirrors of you. You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects to you something you love or hate about yourself.
8. What you make of your life is up to you. You have all the tools and resources you need. What you do with them is up to you. The choice is yours.
9. Your answers lie within you. The answers to life's questions lie within you. All you need to do is look, listen, and trust.
10. You will forget all this.



## Mission Alive

By Ronan Barry

Presently I am working with the Irish Missionary Union, helping to develop resources for schools and parishes around Ireland. This year we have developed our annual Secondary School Resource Book. Please click on the link here <http://www.imu.ie/index.php/offices-of-the-imu-/mission-alive/ma-resource-book>

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## Website Update

[www.sca.ie](http://www.sca.ie)

It was envisaged to have individual access to the SCA website following the last conference (Nov 08). Enclosed with this Newsletter are details where members can now successfully log on. We appreciate your patience whilst waiting for this service to come online and should you have any difficulties, please feel free to drop me an email.

Allen