

# SCHOOL CHAPLAINS' ASSOCIATION

February 2007

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



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## A Note From The Editor

Hi all, I hope that you are all keeping well and the 2007 has got off to a good start.

No doubt this term will be a busy one for you and that you are all looking forward to the Easter break. Although it seems like such a long time ago, the conference last November seemed to be a success and as usual it was great to catch up with you all and also to meet new people. Some special words of encouragement to any new chaplains who are starting out—know that we are thinking of you all as we journey together in our ministry. The first year in chaplaincy can be a daunting time so don't hesitate to call other chaplains for help this year and do find out where your nearest cluster is and attend the meetings. Looking forward to hearing from you all during the course of the year.

I want to finish by saying that the newsletter is an important medium of communication among chaplains and as always I am looking for articles, reflections, prayer services and a bit of good news to publish. In this newsletter I have included some useful articles for us as chaplains to reflect upon and also for use in your staff rooms because I feel that for some of us, ministry to staff is our biggest challenge so I hope you find them useful. Wishing you continued happiness, peace and success in your ministry, Catherine.

## A Chaplains Our Father

*Our Father who art in heaven  
where it is quieter than it is  
at school.*

*Thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
but meanwhile chaplains  
need help.*

*Give us this day our daily  
ration of wisdom, and  
patience for our own  
weaknesses, as we forgive  
those of our students.  
Lead us not into vexation,  
and deliver us from  
despair. For thine are the  
students and the teenagers  
now and forever.*

*Amen.*



## A Word from Br. Padraig McDonald.....

As we stand on the threshold of another year and ask ourselves what is it that wants to make us want to begin again? As I write this piece, a new year has begun, a year that I hope will bring you a lot of joys and meaning to you.

At this point may I extend a warm welcome to those who have joined the executive i.e. Eddie, Bernadette, Catherine for the first time and hope they will enjoy the experience. To those who have left the executive, Diane, Noreen, Ann may I extend a sincere thanks to you all for your dedication and commitment to the work of the executive over your terms of office. Wishing you all the best in your future endeavours in chaplaincy. May I also extend a warm welcome to those that have entered into chaplaincy recently and hope you have a fruitful ministry.

As Chairperson I will continue to represent the association at all levels and work with executive for the betterment of chaplaincy. Our ability to construct a vision, in our role as chaplains, depends on the quality and vitality of our imagination.

With a general election looming in May 2007 could I encourage you to keep chaplaincy to the forefront of your agenda as the canvassing begins. Now you have an opportunity to let your voice be heard and encourage the imagination.

The executive and I would appreciate all communication, both negative and positive, from any member of the association, so do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the executive at any stage.

God bless you all in the year ahead.

Yours in Chaplaincy,

Brother Padraig McDonald

### *A Note to all Chaplains*

*In light of a recent letter received by the Chairperson of the Executive it is advised that all Chaplains apply to their Board of Management for contracts of indefinite duration immediately in order to advance the issue of permanency.*

*Please inform me of your responses.*

*Padraig.*

## Mayonnaise and Coffee

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar...and the coffee....

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly, he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "yes." The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things-your God, family, your children, your health, your friends, and your favorite passions-things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, and your car. The sand is everything else-the small stuff. If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house and fix the disposal." Take care of the golf balls first, the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented.

The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend!"



# Lent — 10 Ways to Have a Better Day

*Try one of these each day during Lent*

## 1. Wake up 30 Minutes Early



Get up 30 minutes before the alarm goes off and take the first half hour for yourself. Once you get busy and into the day there never seems to be the time for yourself. Take this time to plan getting the most from the day.

## 2. Read, Listen, or Watch Something Uplifting

Make this a daily habit. Get out of starting the day with no mental food. A great day does not begin with the news or the paper, it begins with ideas or energy that will propel you through the day. What you first hear will stay with you throughout the day.



## 3. Eat a Good Breakfast to Start You Off Right



Get something good into your body to wake it up and get it going. Think about the energy you will need to perform. Everyday we run a marathon. What would you need to eat and drink to win it.

## 4. Choose Your Winning Attitude

There is enough to go wrong without sabotaging yourself. Your attitude is a choice you make. Don't let it come between you and your success. Be careful to keep it positive all day long.



## 5. Be Aware of What They are Telling You



The people around us have a profound effect on how we get through life. Our closest friends and family are our greatest environmental influences. Make sure you have the best advisors you can find.

## 6. Make the Most of What You Do

When you get to your work, make it the best place to be. Most people go to work and never think about work while they are there. Focus on your contribution. What would it be like if you were not around. Strive to give a 100% each and every day.



## 7. Always Remember that People are Listening



Make a point of talking well of others. Wish others the best in life. What goes around does come around. Don't talk negative about anyone. Try to understand their circumstances Practice being a support system to your friends and family. They need you.

## 8. Be Honest and Fair to Others

It does make a difference. What you give to others is usually what you get from others. Practice integrity that people can see and feel. Be aware of what you say. Learn to walk your talk at all times. The more people trust you, the more of their time they will trust with you.



## 9. Pace Your Energy to Last All Day



Be careful of bursts of energy. Pace your energy throughout the day. If you get to crazy early in the day, you will reach a point of exhaustion before the day is over. By planning your entire day before you begin, you will have what you need. You've heard the old saying "look alive."

## 10. Get in Bed Early and Study for the Future

I have a friend who keeps a journal at his bedside. Every night he writes what he learned new on that day. The only way to keep one step above the masses is to learn new ways to do things. Develop the habit of reading a work or personal development book before you go to sleep. Reading for 30 minutes a day is like a year of college. You can't succeed if you don't read.



# Conference Report

Our annual school chaplains conference took place on from the 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> November 2006 in the Hodson Bay hotel Athlone. The theme of the conference was Service, Commitment and Action, and as always the strength and importance of school chaplaincy was reflected by the many delegates that attended. The Hodson Bay hotel itself proved to be an ideal location, especially this year with the new health spa and pool and many delegates expressed a satisfaction with the choice of location and hotel.

The chaplain's conference itself is always a great social occasion whereby you get to meet other chaplains and share ideas and resources and as a result the atmosphere of this year's conference was positive and upbeat. At both the AGM and chaplains 'Our Voice' many 'hot topics' such as the issue of permanency for chaplains and supervision were discussed and challenged and as always there were a few unresolved issues for the executive to explore in the coming year. The opportunity for prayer was welcomed at each of the sessions and in particular the highpoint of worship was experienced with our Mass which we celebrated on the second day. No doubt each of us took something special away from this celebration and in particular the chaplain's survival kit that was offered us to us at the homily.

The workshops as always were very informative-there were four in total and these were:

***Creative spirituality: Sacred Clowning and the Scriptures***, a very prayerful and relaxing workshop offered by Monica Browne and Hillary Musgrave.

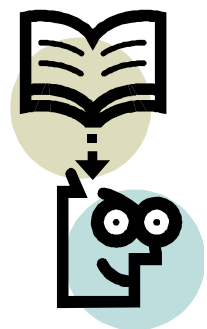
**Whole-School Evaluation, What Chaplains need to know?** A useful and informative workshop offered by Joe Tynan who is a chaplain in Athboy Community School. Anyone who took this workshop said that they found it helpful in relation to preparing for whole school evaluation-something that we will all face at some point in each of our schools.

**Bereavement & Crisis:** The immediate and long-term response by the school chaplain. This was given by Marie Nolan, a school counsellor in St. Peters Community School, in Dunboyne and Ann McMahon a primary school principal who has had extensive experience working with the Spectrum programme.

**Acknowledging and Celebrating the Major World Religions in Post-Primary School:** This was presented by Patricia Kirnan, Lecturer in Mary Immaculate College, Patricia looked at how we acknowledge, respect and celebrate the major world religions within the school context. This was an interesting workshop because of the resources that she had brought and the ideas that she shared about the religions of the world.

All in all the conference was very enjoyable and the delegates left feeling relaxed, refreshed and supported in their work- the new executive will now begin their work for the year 2007. It consists of Br Padraig McDonald, Anne Cuffe, Fr Arnold Rosney, Cora Guinnane and John Tighe who will continue their hard work and four new members namely Eddie O Carroll, Susan Jones, Bernie Egan and Catherine Clarke. We wish them and the entire executive every success in their work for the coming year. A special thanks to Noreen Donegan, Diane Browne and Ann Rogers, who finished up on the executive, for all their hard work and we wish them well for the future.

Continued prayers and success for the coming year-and don't hesitate in contacting us with any ideas about chaplaincy. The executive are now in the process of looking to dates and themes for next years conference so drop us a line and let us know what you think!



## Faith Day for Chaplains

On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February, Benilda's Pastoral Centre hosted a Faith Day for Chaplains. To accommodate the weary Chaplains, on arrival we were treated to tea and scones in the coffee dock. Once all had gathered, we adjourned to the Oratory where we were lead through a meditation based on the theme 'A New Day'. Combining PowerPoint with scripture, sacred space with ritual the Pastoral Team ensured that all of us gathered laid aside our everyday stresses so that we could 'take time out to reflect on our busy lives.'

Firstly the Pastoral Team lit a central candle, this not only began the day and the meditation but also would be lighting throughout the day for anyone who wished to return to the Oratory for personal prayer or reflection on the inscription based on Corinthians 12:4. *'Now there are varieties of gifts, but always the same Spirit.'*



The sacred space was centered around the theme of journey - with the symbols of sea and shore. As chaplains we were encouraged to 'rest on the shore'. This was symbolically done by lighting a candle, each chaplain was invited to step forward and light their single candle and laid it in unison on the shoreline. In contrast to the individual role we play in our schools on a day to day basis it was heart warming to see so many candles lying together on that shoreline.

After the meditation, group workshops were offered- they included Meditative Movement, Clay Meditations and Pictures at an Exhibition. Each of these provided us with the experience of participating, while also allowing us to gather new ideas for our own schools.

For those who choose time out there were also many options. Once again the coffee dock could be utilized; a walk in the picturesque gardens or



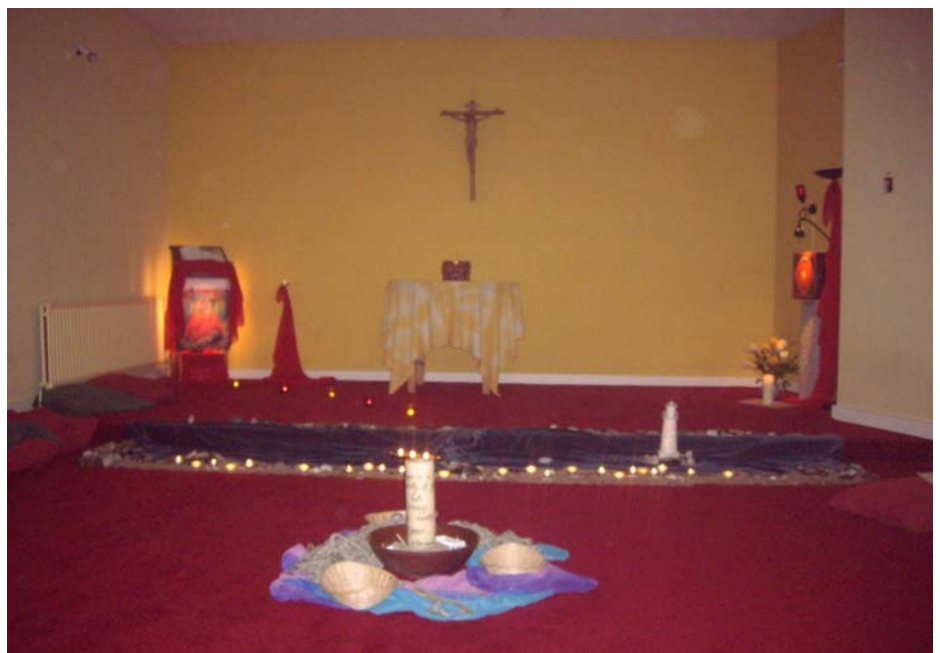
reflective music on CD was also on hand.

As lunch facilities are not offered in the centre, we all ventured to the Stillorgan Park Hotel where a wonderful dinner was enjoyed by all. On returning we all gathered for a discursive session between the Chaplains and Diocesan Advisors. Many areas were discussed with all being recorded by Eileen Cuddy Higgins and Marianne O'Reilly.

Following this we returned to the Oratory for a concluding prayer and ritual. The Pastoral Team concluded our day by inviting us to leave the shoreline by quenching our candles now that we were refreshed and re-energized. They prayed that each chaplain would receive the Lord's blessings of care, courage, love, hope and compassion. In keeping with the spirit of the day the coffee dock was left open for those who needed substance for their journey home.

On speaking to Michelle Sinnott, the Centre's Pastoral Director, she told us that their wish for this day was that 'the Chaplains who have to be there for their students would have the opportunity to have a space to come to for themselves.' And this certainly was felt by those who were in attendance for that Faith Day. Many thanks go to the Diocesan Advisors for their planning and for the Pastoral Team who were so welcoming on the day.

Cornelia Walsh  
Loreto, Crumlin  
Ailish Harkin  
Pres. College, Terenure



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Please feel free to contact any member of the Executive Committee.

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# 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13

## A Teacher's Paraphrase

If I could explain everything perfectly to my students, but did not love each one of them, I might as well be talking to an empty room. If I could find all the answers to educational problems and did not love, my efforts would be futile. If I could buy every kind of educational aid and sacrificed to do so, but did not have love for my students, it would be a complete waste.

Love is patient when it is necessary to repeat a concept over and over to a student who is having difficulty. Love is kind when an irate parent accuses and berates other teachers or me. Love is not jealous when the other teacher has an entire class of well-behaved and extremely intelligent children while mine are not so great.

Love is not proud or boastful when my students improve greatly and really want to come to my class. Love is willing to yield my schedule and plans to fit in with the needs of others. Love does not scream at my class when they misbehave, but seeks to help them understand the importance of self-discipline.

Love does not broadcast all of my students' problems and misdeeds to those in the lounge. Love keeps trying even when it seems a student will never understand long division or the difference between an adverb and an adjective.

Teaching methods, bulletin boards, textbooks, yes, even computers, will eventually be discarded, but love is everlasting. These three things I have learned through teaching: endurance, patience and love. And the greatest of these is love.



### A Reflection for Students WILL POWER

**I Will attend all my classes daily**  
**I Will complete all classwork and homework**  
**I Will study**  
**I Will get good results**  
**I Will graduate**  
**I Will plan for my future.**

# A Taize Prayer

Remembering Brother Roger who founded the Taize Movement during the time of world war two and the 5,000 people who visit Taize every day.

**Opening chant:** *Laudate omnes gentes-laudate Dominum (x2)*  
*Sing praises all you peoples-sing praises to the lord.*



## Reading: A Reading from the Gospel of Luke

Jesus said, blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are the hungry for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall one day laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you and exclude you-and speak badly against you on my account, rejoice and be glad for your reward shall be great in heaven. This is the word of the Lord.

**Chant:** *Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas dues ibi etst (x2)*  
*Where there is charity and love God can be found.*

(Students are invited to come forward and place their head on the cross and ask God for help)

Three minutes silence

## Reading: A Reading from Matthews Gospel

Ask and it will be given to you-search and you will find-knock and the door will be opened for you for everyone who asks receives, everyone who searches finds and for everyone who knocks the door will be opened-is there anyone among you who if your child asks for bread will give a stone, or if your child asks for fish will give a snake-if you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children then how much more will my father in Heaven give good things to those who ask him. This is the word of the Lord.

**Chant:** *The Lord is my light-my light and salvation, in him I trust, in him I trust (repeat)*

(Students are invited to come forward and light candles, as a sign that Jesus offers us light in our lives through the good things that He gives)

Three Minutes Silence

Prayers of the faithful.

*Chant: Oh Lord hear my prayer-when I call answer me-oh Lord hear my prayer, oh Lord hear my prayer come and listen to me.*

Heavenly Father we pray for all people who are sick, may they experience Gods healing in their lives we pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father we pray for the church that they may continue to fulfill for mission here on earth and bring the light of the Gospel to all people in all nations we pray to the Lord.

Father in Heaven we thank you for the gift of new life and for springtime. We pray for our loved ones who have died, we remember especially Brother Roger the founder of the Taize Community. May they find new life in your heavenly home we pray to the Lord.

(Students are invited to offer a prayer out loud if they wish)

Our Father is said together.

Final prayer said together: Holy spirit you live in every human being and you come to place in us those essential realities of the Gospel: kindheartedness and forgiveness, to love and to express it in our lives - it is through love that we create wellsprings of joy and peace for others-we ask that you continue to help us in carrying out your mission here on earth we make this prayer through Christ our Lord Amen.

*Chant: Jesus remember me when you come into your Kingdom (repeat)*

**\* \* \* Finish \* \* \***

## Useful Websites

*Some useful websites for resources for chaplaincy.*

[www.appleseeds.org](http://www.appleseeds.org) (this website provides prayers and reflections for chaplains suitable for all occasions)

[www.prayingeachday.org/prayerlinks.html](http://www.prayingeachday.org/prayerlinks.html) (this website offers links and resources for using prayer in worship for assemblies-it also has a useful document with 100 prayers for all occasions)

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) (an online bible useful if you need a particular passage of scripture in a hurry)

[www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) (Vatican website useful for documents)

[www.pray-as-you-go.org](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org) (a great website that offers prayers/reflections/ scripture readings that can be downloaded onto your mp3 player)

[www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie) (take ten minutes out of your day to pray and reflect on the readings for that day)

[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk) (a good website with resources for working with justice and peace issues)

[www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org) (a great website with plenty of resources for work on justice and peace issues-particularly useful in terms of the Lenten campaign and resources)

[www.buddhanet.net/elearning/buddhism/meditate/guide.htm](http://www.buddhanet.net/elearning/buddhism/meditate/guide.htm) (a great book available online providing very simple meditations for students-tailored for primary school students but works well with first years)

