

Post Primary Diocesan Blog – Easter Edition 2026

Welcome & Happy Easter.

A Chairde,

I am delighted to attach the Easter blog, where you will find a reflection on Easter, an update on our new Ember teams as well as Ember updates, the John Paul II awards, resources from An Tobar Nua and news from the Dublin Archdiocese.

Easter brings a message of renewal, hope, and resilience, offering educators a chance to pause, recharge, and embrace new beginnings. Like the Resurrection, it is a moment to find light after the ‘long winter’ of a challenging term, bringing hope and fresh energy to our classrooms and personal lives. This Easter season I want to take the opportunity to thank you for your warm welcome as I started the role of Diocesan Adviser and to wish you, your school communities, and your families every blessing for a peaceful and hope-filled Easter and final school term.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Tony Barry (anthony.barry@dublindiocese.ie)

We are called to be "Easter people"— Witnesses to Hope and Light.



Opening Reflection: Holy Week: A Time to Pause and Reflect

Walking Through Holy Week Towards Easter

In the busy life of a school, Holy Week invites us to slow down and take notice.

Each day offers a simple moment to reflect:

Palm Sunday – A time of welcome and **encouragement**

We are reminded how important it is to support and affirm one another.

Prayer: Help us to notice the good in others and to encourage those around us.

Holy Thursday – A call to **serve**

Jesus shows that leadership is found in kindness and care.

Prayer: Help us to be patient, helpful, and kind in our daily interactions.

Good Friday – A time for **compassion**

We remember that people carry struggles we may not always see.

Prayer: Help us to be understanding and gentle with one another.

Holy Saturday – A time to **pause**

A quiet day that reminds us of the value of rest and reflection.

Prayer: Help us to find stillness and trust in the waiting moments.

Easter Sunday – A message of **hope**

A reminder that new beginnings are always possible.

Prayer: Help us to bring hope and positivity into our school community.

Pope Leo reminds us that:

“God's grace illumines the world” ... may we, during this **Easter Season, be guided to the fullness of life and be renewed by God's grace to walk in the light of love, reflecting His boundless charity. **Amen****

The Teacher's Easter

Renewed Purpose

Just as spring brings new life, Easter invites us to begin again. It is an opportunity to gently set aside the tiredness, the frustrations, and the moments that did not go as planned. In their place, we are offered renewal, both personally and professionally, and a quiet reminder that what we do each day truly matters.

A Curriculum of Hope

In a world that can often feel uncertain, we are called to be Easter people: witnesses to hope and light. This is lived out not in grand gestures, but in the daily rhythm of school life: in patience, in encouragement, and in our belief in the potential of every student. In this way, we teach a deeper curriculum one rooted in hope.

A Time for Rest

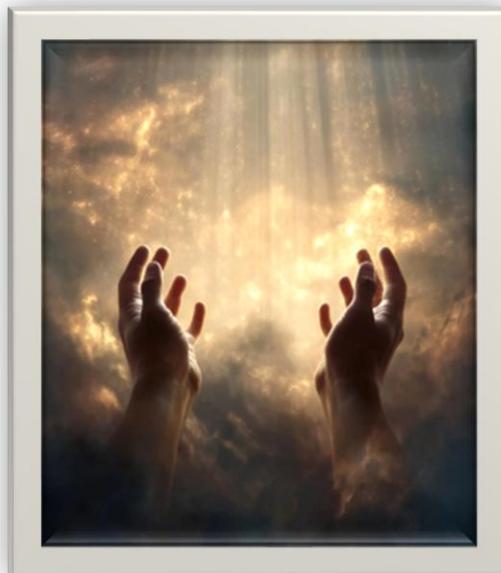
Like the disciples, we too can feel weary. The demands of school life are real, and Easter offers us permission to pause. To rest is not a luxury, but a necessity. In taking time to restore our energy and find stillness, we return renewed for the work we are called to do.

The Teacher as Gardener

Schools are places of growth. Each day, seeds of knowledge, kindness, and care are sown often in ways that are not immediately visible. This Easter, take a moment to recognise the growth you have nurtured. Trust that the work done with patience and love continues to bear fruit, even when it cannot yet be seen.

Prayer:

As we journey through this week, even a small pause each day can help us to bring more kindness, awareness, and hope into our shared spaces. Amen.



Ember News Updates:

This term we welcomed three new Ember teams, **Presentation College, Terenure, St. David's, Holy Faith Greystones, and Holy Faith, Killester.**



Students from Presentation College, Terenure, commissioned as Ember leaders in December 2025.



Students from St. David's, Holy Faith Greystones, commissioned as Ember leaders in December 2025.



Students from Holy Faith, Killester, commissioned as Ember leaders in December 2025.

Each team showed outstanding commitment to faith leadership and service in their school communities. We look forward to supporting them in their work and welcoming them to our graduation of all our school Ember teams in May.

Ember Renewal Day. St. Patrick's Campus, DCU – January 2026

Over three hundred students from twenty-five schools across the Archdiocese of Dublin gathered for their annual Ember Renewal Day, held at St Patrick's Campus, DCU on January 15th. The day celebrated the vibrant and meaningful work of Ember teams in their schools, while also providing a valuable opportunity for students to reconnect, build friendships, share faith experiences, and gather ideas to support faith-based activities in their own school communities.



The gathering began with a warm welcome, followed by prayer led by members of the Ember Core Team. Students were reminded of the Ember prayer, inspired by the words of St Paul:

“Help me to Fan into flame the gift of God, that is within me...” (2 Tim, 1: 6)

This theme of renewal and encouragement set the tone for the day. Students then shared symbols and examples representing the work of their Ember teams. These presentations highlighted the creativity, commitment, and leadership of young people in nurturing faith and community within their schools. Time was also given for group work, allowing students to collaborate, exchange ideas, and continue developing their initiatives.

A key moment of the day was a thought-provoking input on wellbeing, from Heidi Kingston, representing SAOL Media by An Tobar Nua ‘An Tobar Nua’ She presented the *Peace, Man* episode from [SAOL Sonas](#) and led a discussion with the students on the topic of developing and maintaining inner peace in their daily lives. The talk also emphasised the significant role that spirituality and faith can play in supporting positive mental health. This input encouraged students to recognise the connection between faith, belonging, and personal wellbeing. The day concluded with the celebration of Mass, led by Bishop Paul Dempsey and concelebrated by Fr Ultan, Chaplain from DCU. In his homily, Bishop Paul spoke to the students about the importance of **S.O.S – Sleep, Outdoors, and Spirituality** in the lives of young people today. He thanked both students and staff for their commitment and for being witnesses to faith within their school communities.



Bishop Paul Dempsey in St. Patrick's DCU with Ember students and Tony Barry, Diocesan Adviser, with symbols presented at the closing Mass.

Looking ahead for Ember:

- **Ember Team Training 2026:** Planning has already started for next year's training in Ovoca Manor. **If you are interested in this training or joining Ember please contact me by email.** Anthony.barry@dublindiocese.ie
- **Ember Graduation:** This will take place in St. Pat's DCU, on **Thursday May 7th**. Many thanks to Fr. Ultan and DCU for facilitating the reunion day and for hosting the graduation celebration. His Grace, Archbishop Farrell, will celebrate the graduation Mass for students and staff.

Many thanks to the staff and chaplains who guide and mentor these young leaders. Your support makes this ministry possible.

Pope John Paul II Awards

The Pope John Paul II Award is a faith achievement award for young people. The Award is committed to helping young people enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, and social development through participation in school, parish, and community activities.



**POPE JOHN PAUL II
AWARD**

Who is this award for?

This award is for students who want to make a difference in their **schools and parishes**. The Pope John Paul II Award offers young people the chance to learn the way of service and to develop the skills of Christian leadership. Currently a number of schools throughout the Diocese are undertaking these awards at bronze, silver, and gold level. Students who have completed and received the Gold Award are offered the opportunity to participate in the 'Papal Cross Award.'



Students from **Coláiste Lorcáin**, received their awards in **Castledermot Parish Church** in December. Five students received the Bronze Award, nine students received silver and one student received Gold. One student received the highest award, the '**Papal Cross Award.**'



Sarah Doyle, Coláiste Lorcáin, receiving the highest award – the ‘Papal Cross Award, with P.P. Fr. Tom Kennedy & Tony Barry, Diocesan Adviser Archdiocese of Dublin.

PLEASE NOTE: I am currently visiting schools who have expressed an interest in participating in these awards as well as Schools wishing to set up Ember teams – if you would like to get involved or want further information, please contact me directly on 01-8087500.

An Tobar Nua

SAOL Media by An Tobar Nua support teachers in teaching Religious Education across Ireland and beyond. The resources they provide *“support the NCCA’s Learning Outcomes for the Irish Religious Education Curriculum. They can be used as both a complementary resource for teachers teaching the RE exam syllabus, or simply as content for non-exam RE classes – and promotes student wellbeing with the Christian faith perspective.”*



See: <https://antobarnuaretreats.ie/saol/> for further information.

This is the link with info about SAOL Media online resources: <https://antobarnuaretreats.ie/saol/>

This is the link for retreats: <https://antobarnuaretreats.ie/what-we-do/>

Archdiocese of Dublin

For Easter 2026, the Archdiocese features a full schedule of Holy Week services at St Mary's Holy Pro-Cathedral, including the Chrism Mass on April 2nd and Easter Sunday celebrations on April 5th. Archbishop Dermot Farrell is welcoming a record number of 130 adults into the Church, and parishes are continuing the 'Building Hope' initiative, focusing on parish renewal.

Building Hope



St. Mary's Cathedral Holy Week and Easter Schedule 2026 is available at:

<https://www.dublindiocese.ie/holy-week-and-easter-2026/>

Looking Ahead: Calling Religion Teachers & School Chaplains

Scripture Union **invite** you to an upcoming retreat for School Chaplains and R.E. Teachers at Ovoca Manor Retreat Centre, on **April 21st**. This retreat aims to provide:

- Personal spiritual development
- Engaging workshops
- Connect with like-minded others
- Support and encouragement

It is an opportunity to receive instead of giving, a time to 'recharge the batteries' and return to your school full of fresh ideas, energy and excitement. For more details and to register, please contact:

SARAH CAMPBELL

Camps & Schools Coordinator

Scripture Union Ireland

scriptureunion.ie



Christ is Risen! Alleluia! May the joy and peace of the Risen Lord fill your heart and home with hope this Easter season.

As we celebrate Jesus's victory over death, may you be blessed with new life, endless grace, and the promise of eternal love. Have a holy and blessed Easter.

