
The Diocesan Board of Education

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

At the end of last week, I was lucky enough to visit my favourite place in the whole world – Northumberland. Unlike my usual visits during October half term, I was there for work. I was reminded strongly of the connections between this region and our own, not least in the challenges faced by school leaders, teachers and pupils, and their resilience and hopefulness in facing them.



Northumberland is the crucible of English Celtic Christianity; it is the home of Saints Aidan and Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, St Bede of Jarrow (who wrote the first history of the English people) and St Oswald, whose bones rested for a time at Bardney Abbey. Their Christianity is rooted in a recognition that the ordinary is sacred. As such, their spirituality of ordinariness was accessible to all. They prized hospitality; indeed, St Oswald (King Oswald at the time) was well-known for his generosity to the most vulnerable in the region. But perhaps most importantly, Celtic Christianity was deeply connected to the natural world. Stories of the saints' quiet care of animals and strong sense of place include some of the most vivid and beautiful images of humans woven into God's creative tapestry.

None of this would have been possible without St Columba, whose feast day was celebrated in the Church of England yesterday (9th June). Columba was born in 521 CE in Ireland; as a young man, he entered a monastic school run by St Finnian, who had been trained in the Welsh Christian tradition of St David. In 565 CE, St Columba travelled with some companions to Scotland, settling on the island of Iona. Here, he established a monastic community and it is from this community that the great traditions of English Celtic Christianity grew. St Aidan, who established the monastery on Lindisfarne (Holy Island), was one of his pupils.

What I love about this is that it pulls together the four home nations of the UK in a shared circle of Christian identity. The Celtic imagination loved circles. It sought out the rhythms of life, of nature and of God. As we move towards the end of our circle of the school year, I hope that you can find some time to be still, to connect with the natural world and to reflect on what has passed and what lies ahead.



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*Awaken to the mystery of being here and enter the quiet immensity of your own presence.
Have joy and peace in the temple of your senses.
Receive encouragement when new frontiers beckon.
Respond to the call of your gift and the courage to follow its path.
Let the flame of anger free you of all falsity.
May warmth of heart keep your presence aflame.
May anxiety never linger about you.
May your outer dignity mirror an inner dignity of soul.
Take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention.
Be consoled in the secret symmetry of your soul.
May you experience each day as a sacred gift woven around the heart of wonder.*

John O'Donohue, priest and teacher of Celtic Christian spirituality

from Gillian Georgiou, RE & SIAMS Adviser

LDBE Courses Calendar—

Date	Time	Course	
<u>19/06/2024</u>	<u>17:30-19:00</u>	<u>Governor Briefing</u>	<u>online</u>
<u>25/06/2024</u>	<u>10:00-15:30</u>	<u>RE Conference</u>	<u>In person</u>
<u>02/07/2024</u>	<u>10:00-12:00</u>	<u>Preparing for SIAMS inspection - Empowering All</u>	<u>online</u>
<u>05/07/2024</u>	<u>9:30-12:30</u>	<u>SEF writing Workshop</u>	<u>In person</u>

RELIGION AND WORLDVIEWS

INSPIRING CURIOSITY



25th June 2024 10:00-15:30
The Showroom Lincoln LN6 7QY
£185 per delegate

This conference welcomes RE teachers and leaders from across greater Lincolnshire to join in the conversation about religion and worldviews. A wide range of speakers and workshop leaders offer their own take on the latest thinking, research and practice in RE. Providing practical inspiration and engaging examples of classroom experience, we invite you to explore what it means to take a 'worldviews approach' to RE.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- ✓ Keynote speaker Gillian Georgiou
- ✓ Keynote speaker Shammi Rahman
- ✓ A range of national speakers and teachers
- ✓ Networking opportunities
- ✓ Panel discussions and opportunities to ask questions



Lunch, refreshments and parking included

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK

 <https://www.lincolndiocesaneducation.com/religious-education>