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## The Diocesan Board of Education

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

This week I was discussing spirituality with a colleague. We were exploring the different ways in which schools might define spirituality and how we might help staff and pupils connect with the opportunities we provide in schools. I was introduced to the work of John O Donohue who writes about spiritual wisdom from the Celtic world. His book, *Anam Cara* (which translates as 'Soul Friend') has really resonated with me. This is taken from the prologue.

*'It is strange to be here. The mystery never leaves you alone. Behind your image, below your words, above your thoughts, the silence of another world waits. A world lives within you.*

*No one else can bring you news of this inner world. Through the opening of the mouth we bring out sounds from the mountain beneath the soul. These sounds are words. The world is full of words. There are so many talking all the time, loudly, quietly, in rooms, on streets, on television, on radio, in the paper, in books. The noise of words keeps what we call the world there for us. We take each other's sounds and make patterns, predictions, benedictions and blasphemies. Each day our tribe of language holds what we call the world together. Yet the uttering of the word reveals how each of us relentlessly creates. Everyone is an artist. Each person brings sound out of silence and coaxes the invisible to become visible.'*

In the first chapter of *Aram Cara* John O Donohue speaks about the moment we are born into the world. He goes on to explain that the birth of the human heart is a much longer, ongoing process which continues long after our initial arrival. He explains that our hearts are shaped by every experience in life; that our experiences deepen us and that they open up new territories in our hearts. It strikes me that when we plan opportunities to enable adults and pupils to flourish spiritually in our schools, this is what we are aiming for.

It was much later the same day when my phone prompted me to 'view memories on this day'. I started absent-mindedly scrolling through old photos on my phone. I'm sure many of you will have a similar collection.

As I scrolled, it struck me that many of my photos capture significant and meaningful moments - moments that when I review them awaken parts of my heart. My collection includes special people, special places, special events. They capture times of happiness, sadness and times of contemplation and rest. I find I take many close up photos of flowers and plants – capturing the intricate beauty of creation. Then there are photos which capture joy; things I find beautiful and things I am proud of. My images reflect 'moments in time' which I choose to treasure.



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Often these are times of special connection with family and friends some of these photos having developed greater meaning overtime. I also have a habit of taking screen-shots of quotations and reflective comments. These are usually things I find meaningful, thought provoking or which I value. Some of these amuse me and some make me pause and reflect deeply. All the images are moments which I value and hold dear.

John O Donohue was inspired by the spirituality of the Celts and inspired by the landscape of his home in Ireland. He speaks about the ‘inner human landscape’ or ‘invisible world’. He speaks about this intertwining with what we know and we can see. Gathering the ‘photo story’ of our lives is a creative act capturing moments which are meaningful to us personally and which resonates with our own invisible world - perhaps revealing something about our hearts.

I wonder what you have captured on your phone? Why was it special to you? How do those moments make you feel? Why did you capture them? How do they sustain and encourage you? What deeper meanings do your collections hold?

You might like to reflect with your staff team as to how photos creatively capture a glimpse of our inner worlds – of what is meaningful and important to each of us. As John O Donohue said,

*‘Everyone is an artist. Each person brings sound out of silence and coaxes the invisible to become visible.’*

from June Richardson, School Effectiveness Adviser

### Upcoming LDBE Courses—

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