**The Cloyne Catechist**

Newsletter for Religious Education Teachers in the Diocese of Cloyne

No. 29 September 2014

Fr. Gerard Condon, Diocesan Adviser for RE, Shanballymore, Mallow, Co. Cork.

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*Please copy and share with RE teachers, the Chaplain and Principal*

***Annual One-Day Inservice for Religion Teachers***

***led by***

**Dr. Con Casey & Dr. Fáinche Ryan**

***What Catholics Believe***

**Date: Friday, October 10, 2014**

**Venue: *Nano Nagle Retreat Centre, Killavullen, Mallow***

**Fee: €15 (including lunch)**

**Programme: 10.00 am Registration. Tea / coffee and scones**

**Display of books and school resources (Veritas)**

**10.30 Morning Prayer (Oak Room)**

**10.40 *What Catholics Believe***

**12.30 pm Emmaus Walk**

**13.00 Lunch**

Since its launch at the Madrid World Youth Day in 2011, *YouCat*, has become a go–to summary of Catholicism in second level schools. The new *Irish Catholic Catechism for Adults* (2014) is also being well received.  Both books are based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994). Taking a lead from these works, our guest speakers will summarize four cornerstones of Catholic theology: the Creed, the Sacraments, Scripture and the Virtues. How can these topics be presented in a way that will interest students? The morning will model a collaborative approach to teaching and encourage critical enquiry into the essentials of the Christian faith.

Dr. Con Casey is a Redemptorist priest, originally from Mitchelstown, and director of the Loyola Institute, a new arts faculty at Trinity College Dublin. Dr. Fáinche Ryan lectures in systematic theology at the Loyola Institute. (See: www.tcd.ie/loyola-institute/)

The Nano Nagle Centre is located just off the N72, between Fermoy and Mallow. For directions and the facilities offered at the Centre see: <http://www.nanonaglebirthplace.ie/>. Religious Education teachers, principals and full-time chaplains are welcome to the inservice. To reserve places return the booking form below or leave a message at 022-25197 or email [dgcondon@hotmail.com](mailto:dgcondon@hotmail.com) before October 8. Please specify any special dietary requirements in your booking.

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***What Catholic Believe*  - October 10 – Nano Nagle Retreat Centre**

**School: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Fee enclosed: € \_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

*Cheques payable to: Cloyne Diocesan Advisers*

**Return to: Gerard Condon, Tigh an tSagairt, Shanballymore, Mallow, Co. Cork**

Long atextbooks have been dumped – it is our own notes - This is also the premise of the 2007 movie .. Freedom Writers .. fter the



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| **Movie Review: *Freedom Writers*** |

The MTV movie *Freedom Writers* (2007) is set in Wilson High School, Los Angeles, following the divisive race riots of 1992. Hilary Swank plays Erin Gruwell, an idealistic young teacher who chooses to work in Room 203 with the most “unteachable” class in the school. She eventually wins their trust and, following an introduction to *The Diary of Anne Frank*, invites students to express the truth of their own lives in a personal journal. “Everyone has their own story,” the lead tells her class, “and it’s important for you to tell your story, if only to yourself.” Over time the exercise has a profound effect. Not only do the students’ literacy skills improve, they became better able to manage themselves and they grow in respect for each other.

The movie is based on the real life Erin Gruwell, who together with 150 graduates from Room 203, published *The Freedom Writers Diary* (1999)based on quotes from her own and students’ diaries. Its contents were prompted by significant personal events, the kind that every teenager goes through, as well as their response to Ms. Gruwell’s teaching initiatives.

In *The* *Freedom Writers Diary: Teacher’s Guide* (2007), Gruwell notes that it helps when all the students “keep journals at the same time. They bond as a community of writers.” Initially students are given prompts for writing, such as, “What makes me Unique” and “My First Day at School.” Over time they find their own voice or way of self-expression through writing. The *Teacher’s Guide* has many useful tips and guidelines on the practice of keeping a personal journal in a classroom setting.

While the *Freedom Writers* originated in English class, I imagine that the methodology would work well in Senior Cycle Religious Education. There are good starting points for introducing the activity in Section A of the Curriculum Framework (“The Search for Meaning”). It would also be appropriate to Section H (“Story”), which understands the Bible as the narrative of the Israel’s evolving relationship with God. In our lives too, the discipline of keeping a journal can, over time, document our personal history of salvation.

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*In the next few weeks I will forward plans for a schools magazine for the Diocese, to be published after Easter 2015. It will feature writing selected from students’ Religious Education journals of the current academic year. Topics will be provided for each year group. The aim of the project is to encourage the students’ written response to the RE syllabus as well as their personal reflections on spirituality.*

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| ***PDST, etc.*** |

In 2012 the Professional Development Service for Teachers replaced the Religious Education Support Service (RESS) as the provider of DES support to schools that are teaching RE as a State exam subject. While the numbers sitting RE exams each year is relatively constant (28,000 Junior Cert students; 1,100 Leaving Certificate candidates), there are some schools and many RE teachers who have not previously availed of the inservice opportunities provided by the PDST. Gary Carly is the officer responsible for Religious Education at the PDST. He may contacted at [garycarley@pdst.ie](mailto:garycarley@pdst.ie) or 087-6276272.

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**Trending weblinks:** [**www.facebook.com/FrJamesmartin**](http://www.facebook.com/FrJamesmartin)

[**www.cruxnow.com**](http://www.cruxnow.com) **- w**orld wide Church news and debate as it happens.

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**Bon Mot: *Our thoughts create our attitude***

***Our attitude becomes our behaviour Our behaviour is how we treat others***

***How we treat others is what we think of ourselves.*** *(Kaylan Pickford)*