

Christmas in the Classroom



A Christmas Display from Ms. Brosnahan's First Class, in St. Michael's Infant School, Sexton Street.

St. Thomas Aquinas Feast Day January 28th

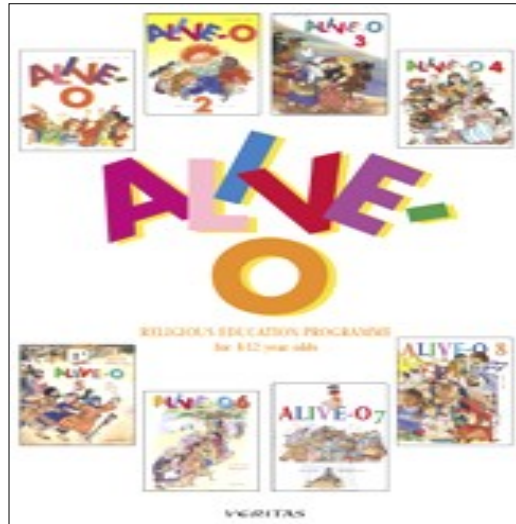
On January 28th we celebrate the feast day of St. Thomas Aquinas. He is the patron saint of students. Thomas Aquinas was born c. 1225 at the castle of his father, Count Landulph, in Aquino, Naples, Italy. As the son of a wealthy noble family, Thomas lived a wonderfully privileged life and received an excellent education. While he was studying at university, Thomas became influenced by the newer Dominican movement and wanted to follow the Dominican rule. His traditional family strongly objected, but eventually Thomas followed his chosen path.

He became a Doctor of Theology, lecturing in theology in major cities including Rome and Paris, and his fame as a scholar led to his distinction of being the patron saint of students and universities. He left the great monument of his learning the *Summa Theologica*, unfinished, for on his way to the Second Council of Lyons, on the orders of Gregory X, he fell sick and died at the Cistercian monastery of Fossa Nuova, Italy in 1274. Saint Thomas was one of the greatest and most influential theologians of all time. He was canonised in 1323 and declared Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius V.



Contact Details:

Fr. Liam Enright Email: liam@ldo.ie
 Fiona Dineen Email: fionad@ldo.ie
 Nora Collins Email: nora@ldo.ie
 Limerick Diocesan Office,
 Social Service Centre,
 Henry Street, Phone: 061 - 317742
 Limerick Fax: 061 - 310186



♦ The glory of God is people fully alive ♦
 St. Irenaeus

Saints & Feasts January

- Jan 1st Mary, Mother Of God
- Jan 2nd St. Basil the Great
- Jan 3rd St Munchin
- Jan 6th Epiphany
- Jan 8th Baptism of our Lord
- Jan 15th St. Ita
- Jan 16th St. Fursa
- Jan 18th-25th Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Jan 21st St. Agnes
- Jan 24th St Francis de Sales
- Jan 27th St. Angela Merici
- Jan 28th St. Thomas Aquinas
- Jan 30th St. Aidan
- Jan 31st St John Bosco
- Jan 29th- 4th
- Feb Catholic Schools Week 2012
- Feb 1st St. Brigid
- Feb 2nd Presentation of the Lord
- Feb 3rd St. Blaise

Limerick Diocesan Advisory Service

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Returning- A New Beginning

When the time was right the wise men went home, but they didn't just 'go back'. They 're-turned', transformed by the insights gained from walking in darkness. A return journey is never quite the same as an outward journey. It lacks the apprehension, the anticipation, the expectation. 'Going back' can also be different because we can be changed and shaped by significant journeys. They can have a formative effect on our life and on its direction. T.S. Eliot puts it very aptly when he writes: *We shall not cease from exploration, And the end of all our exploring, Will be to arrive where we started, And to know the place for the first time.*

Having 'seen the great light' the wise men turned towards the future with renewed meaning and hope. Nothing would ever be quite the same again. The old and the familiar would be viewed 'in a different light.' Their journey was not ended, but merely beginning from a new and different perspective.

As we move out from the season of Christmas into a new year, there is a sense in which we too are 'arriving where we started.' The challenge for us is to turn anew, to return into the new year with something of the light and hope of the birth of Jesus in our hearts. It calls us forth to continue to search for new ways of being with ourselves, with others, with our world and with God. It affirms the Christian aspiration that our world can indeed be redeemed from darkness. Our lives are called to reflect that spirit of wonder and awe, that message of joy and peace, which characterises the Christmas story. Our Christian belief that 'God is with us' is to be lived out each day of our lives as the months of the year move along. (*Alive-O 4*)



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Catholic Schools Week 2012

Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2012

Catholic Schools Week 2012 January 29 – February 4, 2012

Theme: 'Catholic Schools: Christ's living body active in our world.'

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2012 is 'Catholic Schools: Christ's living body active in our world.' The theme is taken from the anthem of the 50th International Eucharistic Congress, *Though We Are Many* – (Bernard Sexton), and reflects the overall theme of the Eucharistic Congress – 'The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with one another.'

Though we are many – Verse 3:
*And through this shared Eucharist
 we are the living Church.
 We witness to Christ's love
 His living body active in our world.*

Resources for Catholic Schools Week can be downloaded from our website
www.limerickdiocese.org

Beatitudes for Teachers

Blessed are you who are called to teach, for you walk in the footsteps of the Master.

Blessed are you who sow peace and harmony in the staffroom, yours will be the joy of the Lord.

Blessed are you who plant seeds of hope in youthful hearts, for you will inherit the dawn.

Blessed are you who are sensitive to the cries of youth today, for they yearn for the coming of my Kingdom.

Blessed are you when you share your faith with others, for your name is written in my heart.

Blessed are you who anguish now because your students are difficult, one day they will thank you for your loving concern.

Blessed are you when efficiency is moderated by compassion and empathy, for the deeper secret of education is yours.

Blessed are you when you reach out to me in your students, for you will surely find me and rejoice.

Blessed are you who lead your young people in paths of justice and peace, for you will shine like stars for all eternity.

Author unknown



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

A Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is held every year from the 18th to the 25th January - the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul. This year's theme is 'We will all be changed'. Change is at the heart of our Christian faith. Saint Paul said that anyone who is in Christ is a new creation, and we are called to live as children in the light.

The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2012 comes to us from the churches in Poland, who have reflected upon their own experience as a nation, and in particular how, as a nation, they have been changed and transformed by the many upheavals of their history, and sustained by their faith.

Change is also at the heart of the ecumenical movement. When we pray for the unity of the church we are praying that the churches that we know and which are so familiar to us will change as they conform more closely to Christ. This is an exciting vision, but also a challenging one. Furthermore, when we pray for this transforming unity we are also praying for change in the world. For further details and resources see: www.ctbi.org.uk/



Catholic Schools Week 2012



Resources for Catholic Schools Week 2012 have been sent to all schools and parishes. They can also be downloaded from our website www.limerickdiocese.org. We would appreciate if you could email photographs from the celebration of Catholic Schools Week 2012 in your school. We would be delighted to highlight these events in this newsletter or on the diocesan website.

Patron Saints of the Diocese of Limerick

St. Munchin Feast Day: January 3rd

St. Munchin is the patron of the Diocese of Limerick and his feast day is celebrated on January 3rd. He founded a church called Cill Mainchín on Inis Sibhton. Details about the life of St Munchin are shrouded in legends but it is believed that he lived in the second half of the 7th century.

The legends about St Munchin give two versions of his background. One of the legends states that Munchin was a nephew of Bloid, who was also the King of Thomond. Bloid was a disciple of St Patrick. The other legend concerning Munchin's background states that he was one of three sons of Setna who came from the present day area of County Clare around Lahinch and Ennistymon. It is also believed that Munchin's brother Ainlid ruled during the late 7th century.

There is also a legend about the building of Munchin's first church in Limerick. While he was building the church, the locals refused to help Munchin. As a result, Munchin placed a curse on the city that the stranger would flourish and the native would perish.

St. Ita of Killeedy Feast Day: 15th January

St. Ita or Íde was born of noble Christian parents in 480 A.D. in Co. Waterford. She was first known as Deirdre, before adopting the name "Ita" as a punning reference to her "hunger for Divine Love".

She had no brothers, that we are aware of, but history tells us the names of two of her sisters- Fiona and Nessa. Ita refused her father's wish that she should marry a local chieftain, as she believed she had a calling from God and wanted to become a nun. An angel appeared to her father in a dream and persuaded him to allow her do as she wished. She set off from her home and established her monastery in what is now called Killeedy (Ita's Church) in Co. Limerick. Her sister Fiona accompanied her on the journey. Many women flocked to her community and put themselves under her guidance. Soon she had a religious community. She was offered some land by a local chieftain; however, she accepted only four acres, which she converted into a vegetable garden.

Ita and her community spent their time praying, teaching the young and caring for the sick, the poor and the elderly. She was endowed with miraculous powers of healing, as when she restored the power of speech to a local wise man. She also cured a blind man. She is sometimes called the "Brigid of Munster". She was also known as the "Foster Mother of the Saints of Ireland." St. Brendan spent 5 years in Killeedy under the care of St. Ita. There is a shrine within the ruins of Killeedy church, which is believed to mark the site of Ita's grave. For further details see: www.limerickdiocese.org/heritage

