

# Emmaus Catholic MAC Connects

## March 2025



Dear Colleagues, Families and Friends

I hope that you are all well and looking forward to this Lenten period.

Lots of really impactful work continues to take place across our Emmaus schools since I last wrote to you at the end of the Autumn term 2024. The Principals within each of our schools will continue to update their communities about specific school events as part of their newsletter, but moving forward, I aim to write a short article on a monthly basis about something that is happening Emmaus-wide. Principals will be asked to include this 'Emmaus Catholic MAC Connects' article as part of their newsletter.

Back in September and again in November, I communicated the updated Emmaus mission, vision and values. Please find below a quick reminder of what they are:

### Our Mission:

**As a family of schools, united in Christ and working together as one, we exist to deliver excellent Catholic education and faith formation to every young person, in every school, every day.**

### Our Vision:

**Transforming Lives: inspiring ambition and empowering young people to change the world.**

### Our Values:



Serving Together



High Expectations



Inclusion



Nurturing Faith



Excellence

I am sure that you are all aware that Pope Francis declared 2025 as a Year of Jubilee with the theme 'Pilgrims of Hope'. On 24<sup>th</sup> January, the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service (DES) launched the DES Pilgrims of Hope initiative. On 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025, Emmaus had a MAC-wide Inset day where colleagues from all 14 schools and our central team came together for the launch of our Emmaus approach to the Jubilee 2025 with the theme 'Building Hope'.

Emmaus staff were asked to accept the Diocesan invitation to journey together as one family in faith, love and hope to SHINE the light of Christ brightly in the world.

Our Emmaus colleagues were also asked, during this Year of Hope, to accept the Diocesan challenge of focussing on **Prayer, Social Action and Fundraising**.

Emmaus colleagues made a wonderful gesture of social action on the 14<sup>th</sup> February. Each staff member was asked to bring at least one non-perishable item to the Inset Day to donate to Fr. Hudson's Caritas (FHC) which is the designated charity for the Archdiocese of Birmingham during this Year of Jubilee. Kevin Hateley, Head of Fundraising and Marketing at FHC, kindly attended the event and gave a presentation about the work of FHC. The following image of Kevin, taken with the large donation, shows the generosity

of Emmaus MAC staff and our commitment to playing our part in transforming lives and providing hope to those in need. The donation was delivered directly to the FHC Brushstrokes project in Smethwick.



Our Committee of Principals has identified a number of initiatives that we will be focussing on and adding to over the course of the year, linked to the three Diocesan challenges:

**Prayer:**

One of our Emmaus key priorities for the year is to pray more together as a family and we will do this as Pilgrims of Hope.

On the Inset day, our colleagues worked together in subject and year groups exploring Catholic Social Teaching across the curriculum and greatly enjoyed the camaraderie and opportunities to share good practice across our wider trust network.

We made a commitment to create an **Emmaus Pilgrims of Hope Prayer and Scripture Book** to share with our Emmaus community: schools, families and parishes. Each of the subject networking groups created a Prayer of Hope during the Inset Day and these are currently being collated into a digital prayer book that we will share and add to over the year.

Thanks to the **Music** networking group who created the beautiful prayer of hope below:

**God our loving Father, in this year of Jubilee we give thanks and praise for your gifts of music.  
Guide us to use our voices to share hope and spread joy and harmony within our communities.  
May the notes of hope touch our hearts and souls.  
May the notes hope touch our conscience.  
Joined as one voice, joined as one world.  
One hope, one family in Christ.**

Each of our schools will be asked to create a school prayer of hope to add to the prayer book and any of our families are welcome to send in a prayer of hope to include. If you wish to do this, then please send the prayer to the Principal of your school including the name of your family, for example 'Jones Family Prayer of Hope', St George's Primary, Worcester'. Your school Principal will then forward the prayer to ensure it is included in the prayer book.

Starting in Lent, we will identify a suitable piece of **Scripture** to share with our communities weekly in the hope that you will wish to share the Scripture as a family. We also welcome any suggestions to be sent via the Principal at each of our schools.

Every school will also have a **Tree of Hope** to be planted in an area of the school where we can come together for reflection and thanksgiving to offer our prayers and petitions of hope.

### **Social Action:**

Social action is the umbrella term for ensuring fairness and justice in our society, our everyday living and describes a collective response to social problems. In our Catholic context this forms part of Catholic Social Teaching which to quote Raymond Friel 'in a sense is no more than trying to view what's going on in society in our place and time through the lens of the Gospel and see what we might do to make the situation more like God's loving plan for creation.'

Catholic Social Teaching is rooted in Scripture, formed by the wisdom of Church leaders and influenced by grassroots movements. It is our moral compass, guiding us on how to live out our faith in the world focussing on: dignity, solidarity, the common good, the option for the poor, peace, creation and environment, the dignity of work and participation.

To help us understand this treasure of the church, to inspire us more in our work to building a better world each of our 14 schools shared with us on the Inset day a presentation of a CST initiative that they have worked on together with the positive impact on the pupils and wider community. This enabled us to get to know more about each of our schools but also gave us different ideas of projects and initiatives that we can launch in our own communities moving forward.

Emmaus schools and central team will continue our already significant commitment to social action through Catholic Social Teaching and will share initiatives with our communities over the course of the Year of Jubilee. One of the most recent MAC-wide initiatives was the Reverse Advent Calendar for Fr Hudson's Caritas. Thank you to all members of our community who supported this initiative – we donated over 4700 separate items to FHC.

### **Fundraising:**

As already mentioned, we will raise funds for Fr Hudson's Caritas: pledging at least £1 per person in Lent so your contributions will be very gratefully received and a further initiative to be identified in the summer term.

We will also continue to raise funds locally in our communities and will also continue to support CAFOD as our international charity.

Our final celebration of our Inset day was our first ever SHINE awards. Our schools and central team were invited to nominate colleagues for a Serving Together and Nurturing Faith Award. Each recipient had a beautiful paragraph written about why they had been nominated, and it was an absolute privilege to acknowledge the following colleagues for their contributions to our school and MAC communities:

### **SHINE Awards: Serving Together**

Our Lady of Fatima:	<b>C Hayden</b>
Our Lady Queen of Peace:	<b>S Clarke</b>
Our Lady & St Hubert's:	<b>C Slater</b>
St Ambrose:	<b>L Morgan</b>
St Francis Xavier:	<b>M Marshall</b>
St George's:	<b>G Comer</b>
St Gregory's:	<b>A Evans</b>
St Joseph's, Droitwich:	<b>J Brett</b>
St Joseph's, Stourbridge:	<b>H Chater</b>
St Joseph's, Worcester:	<b>S Thomas</b>
St Mary's:	<b>A Buckley</b>
St Philip's:	<b>L Reeve</b>
St Wulstan's:	<b>N Brown</b>
Hagley:	<b>R Winters and S Palmer</b>
Central team:	<b>D Standley</b>
CEO Award:	<b>L Brewer, St Ambrose and K Vanstone, St Gregory's</b>

### **SHINE Awards: Nurturing Faith**

Our Lady of Fatima:	<b>S McCartan</b>
Our Lady Queen of Peace:	<b>M Pow</b>
Our Lady & St Hubert's:	<b>S McGuinness</b>
St Ambrose:	<b>L Haskew</b>
St Francis Xavier:	<b>J Moore</b>
St George's:	<b>J Cooper</b>
St Gregory's:	<b>N Levack</b>
St Joseph's, Droitwich:	<b>M Zarro</b>
St Joseph's, Stourbridge:	<b>A Cangiano</b>
St Joseph's, Worcester:	<b>L Nickless</b>
St Mary's:	<b>K Darby</b>
St Philip's:	<b>E Horobin</b>
St Wulstan's:	<b>F Freitas</b>
Hagley:	<b>L Thomas</b>

I look forward to updating you on a MAC-wide initiative next month and until then thank you for your support of our wonderful Emmaus schools as we move forward together on our Journey with Christ as Pilgrims of Hope.

God bless

*Suzanne Horan*

**Chief Executive Officer**

