



ARCHDIOCESE OF ARMAGH

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Via email

To Primary and Post Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Armagh

Dear Principal and Chairs and members of the Board,

A Happy and Blessed Christmas and New Year to you and your school community. While we look forward in joy and hope to many blessings, I urge you to continue to pray and work for peace and justice everywhere in our dark and broken times. We join Pope Leo in his prayer for that peace to fill the hearts of people.

Catholic Schools Week is approaching in January and our theme for this year is **Catholic Schools – Normal Lives, Called to Holiness**.

National Resources for use in schools can be accessed on www.catholiceducation.ie and our own blog www.resource-ni.com. Catholic Schools Week will take place from **Sunday 18th to Saturday 24th January 2026**.

We hope to hold our own Armagh Diocesan Launch Service on **Tuesday, 13 January 2026** led by myself together with local Clergy. The launch celebration will be in **St John the Baptist Church, Drumcree, Portadown, at 11.00 am**. Please note that the time is early as schools may wish to get back to base for lunchtime. Having the launch a week in advance gives schools time to reflect and plan their own local celebrations.

This will be followed by **Seinn, Songs of Praise, in the Church of the Holy Redeemer, Dundalk, on Thursday, 22 January at 11.30 am**. Again, I hope to be present along with local clergy.

You are encouraged to attend either liturgy (or both if you wish!) with some students and members of staff. Representatives from your Board of Governors/ Management and parents are also most welcome. A video of the Portadown celebration will be made available afterwards to download for class assemblies at www.resource-ni.com.

Summary of Venues and dates are as follows:

Tuesday, 13 January 2026 at 11.00 am - St John the Baptist Church, Drumcree, Portadown;

Thursday, 22 January 2026 at 11.30 am - Seinn, Songs of Praise, Holy Redeemer Church, Ard Easmuinn, Dundalk.

For those attending the Seinn service, the hymns are available on youtube at https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnir72zWkEJSCyYjfEM-arjF8QmZ0FKh6&si=XD_ILcObd0rHqHeC and some advance preparation would enhance your students' participation on the day.

We all hope for a joyful celebration on both occasions - the perfect overture for Catholic Schools Week. As is our custom Northern Schools may wish on the day to make a small donation of £20 to support a practical charitable project. If using a cheque please make it payable to 'Archdiocese of Armagh'.

Wishing you and your school community a very happy Christmas,

Yours sincerely,

+ Eamon Martin

Eamon Martin
Archbishop of Armagh