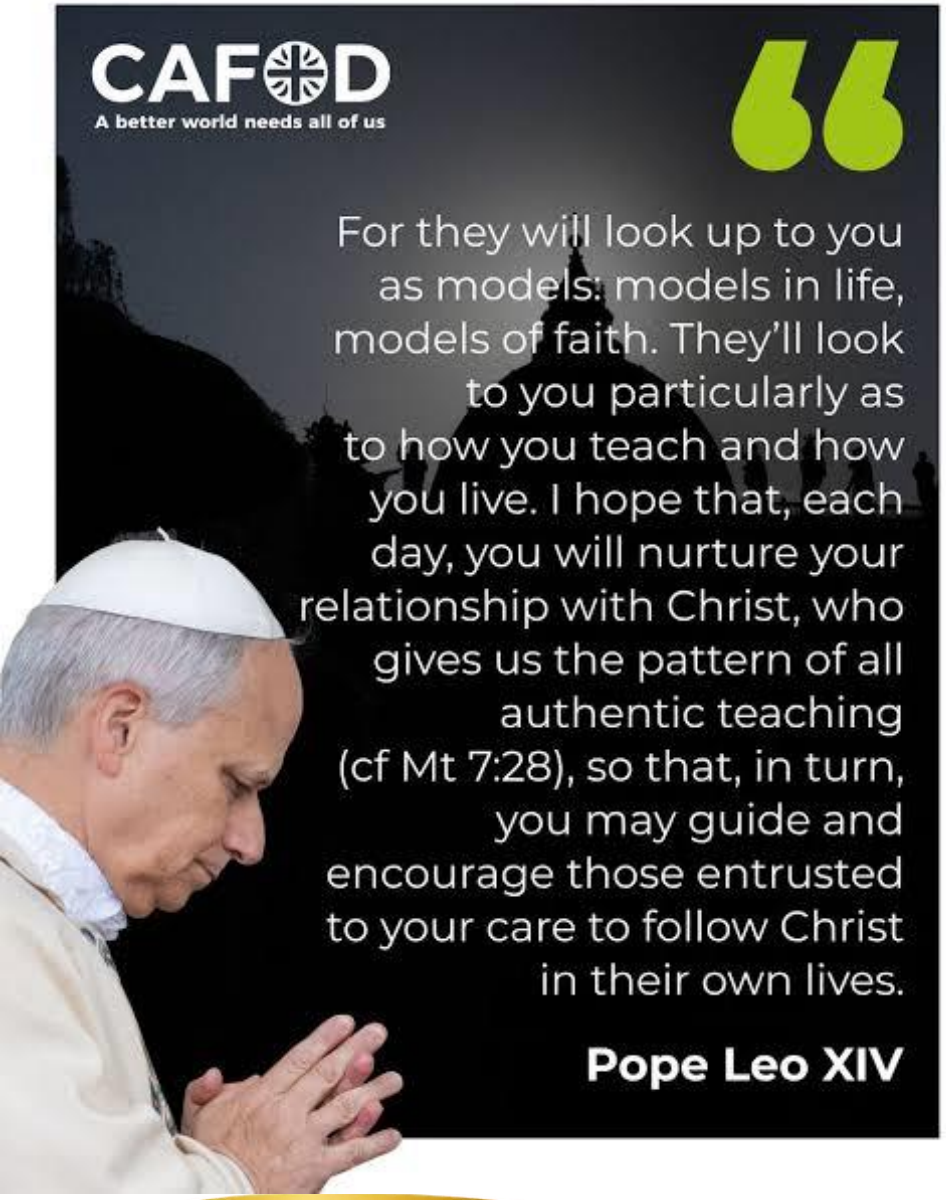


Considering Senior Leadership in the Diocese of Salford

DIOCESE OF SALFORD
Department for Education

24th November & 2nd December 2026

Cathedral Centre

Martin Johnson | Lynne Tommony

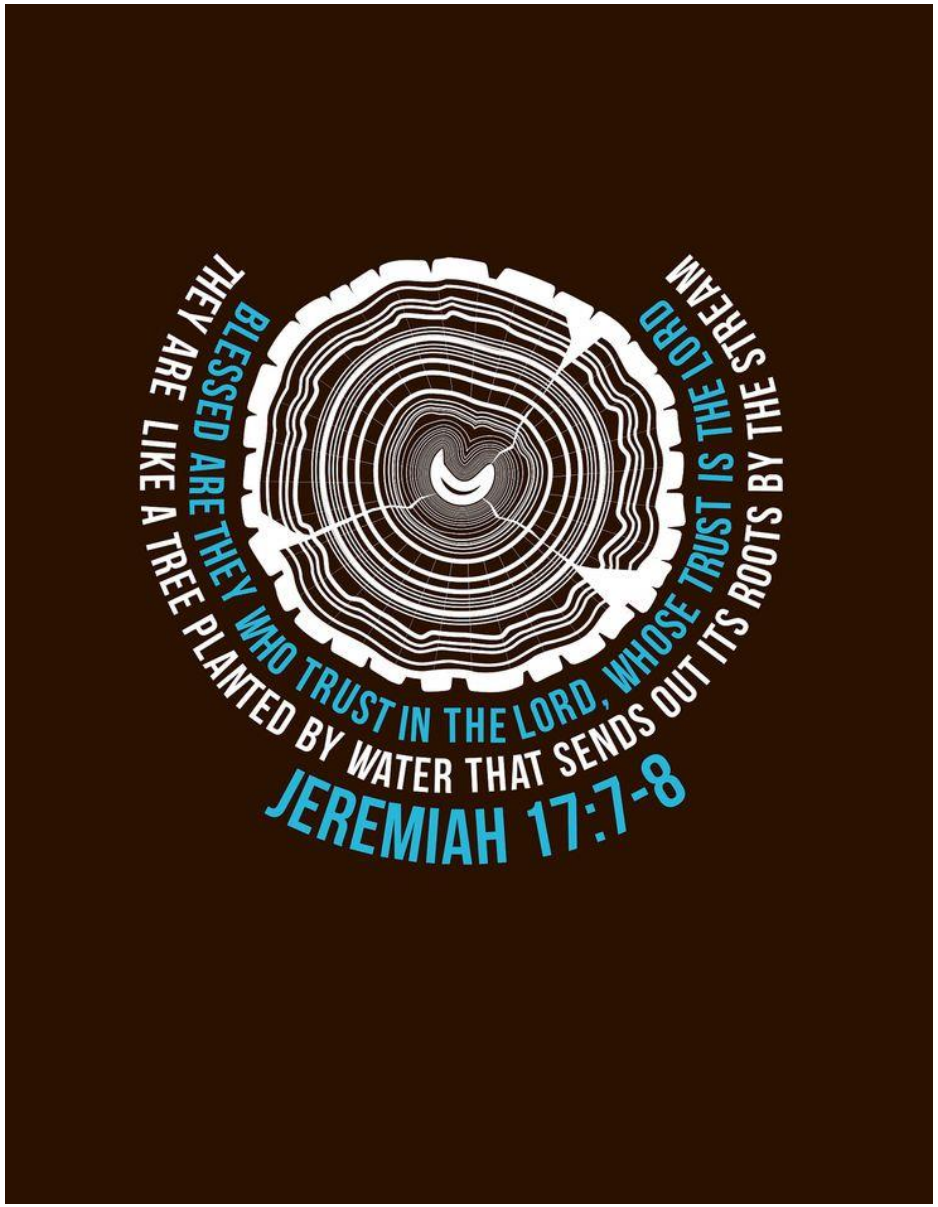
Wifi: SummerTime19&



Opening prayer

A blessing on the man who puts his trust in the Lord, with the Lord for his hope. He is like a tree by the waterside that thrusts its roots to the stream: when the heat comes it feels no alarm, its foliage stays green; it has no worries in a year of drought, and never ceases to bear fruit. *Jeremiah 17:7-8*

Where might Christ be calling me to serve?



What has been my impact on the world?

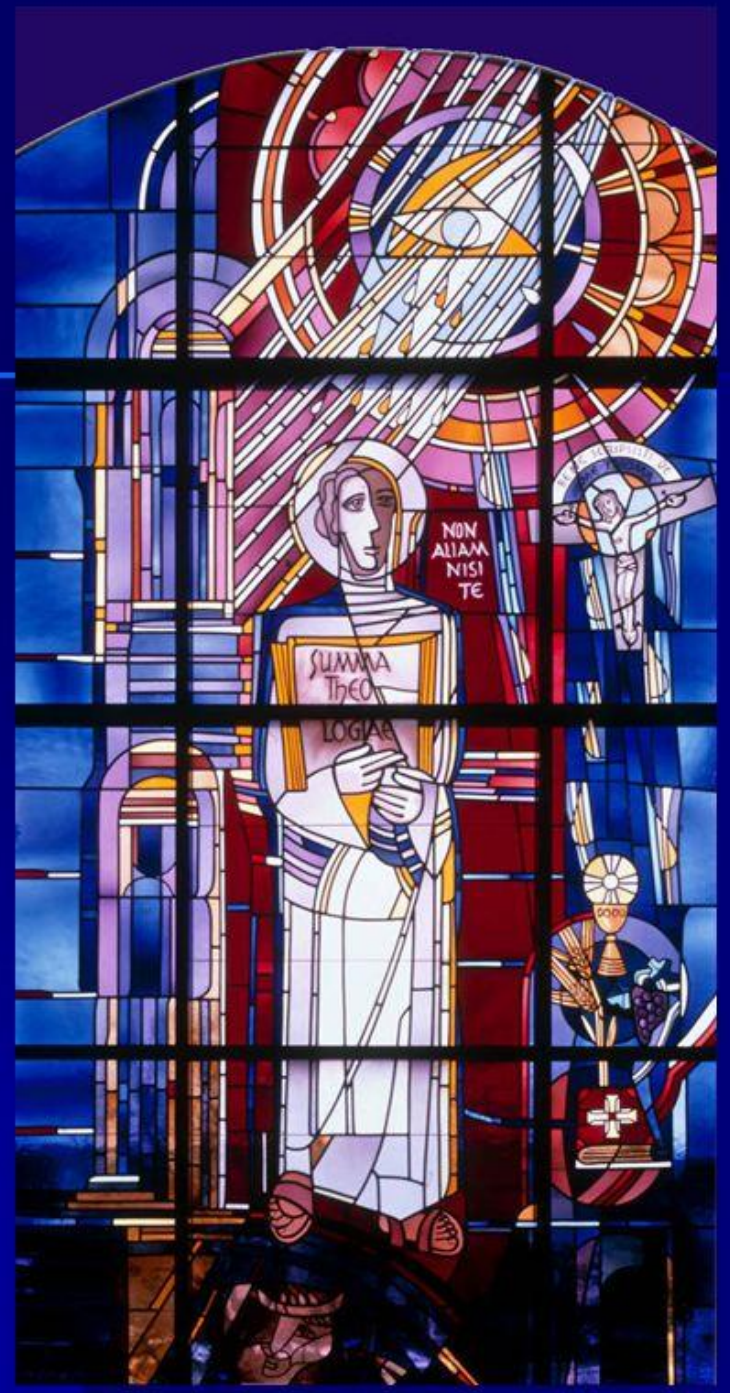
How has my faith shaped my leadership?

Where might Christ be calling me to serve?

Servant Leadership

- God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away...

  - St John Henry Newman





The Word of God | Servant leadership

Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant.

Mark 10:43

What does it mean to lead a Catholic school in the manner of Christ?

Whose needs must come first in my decisions?

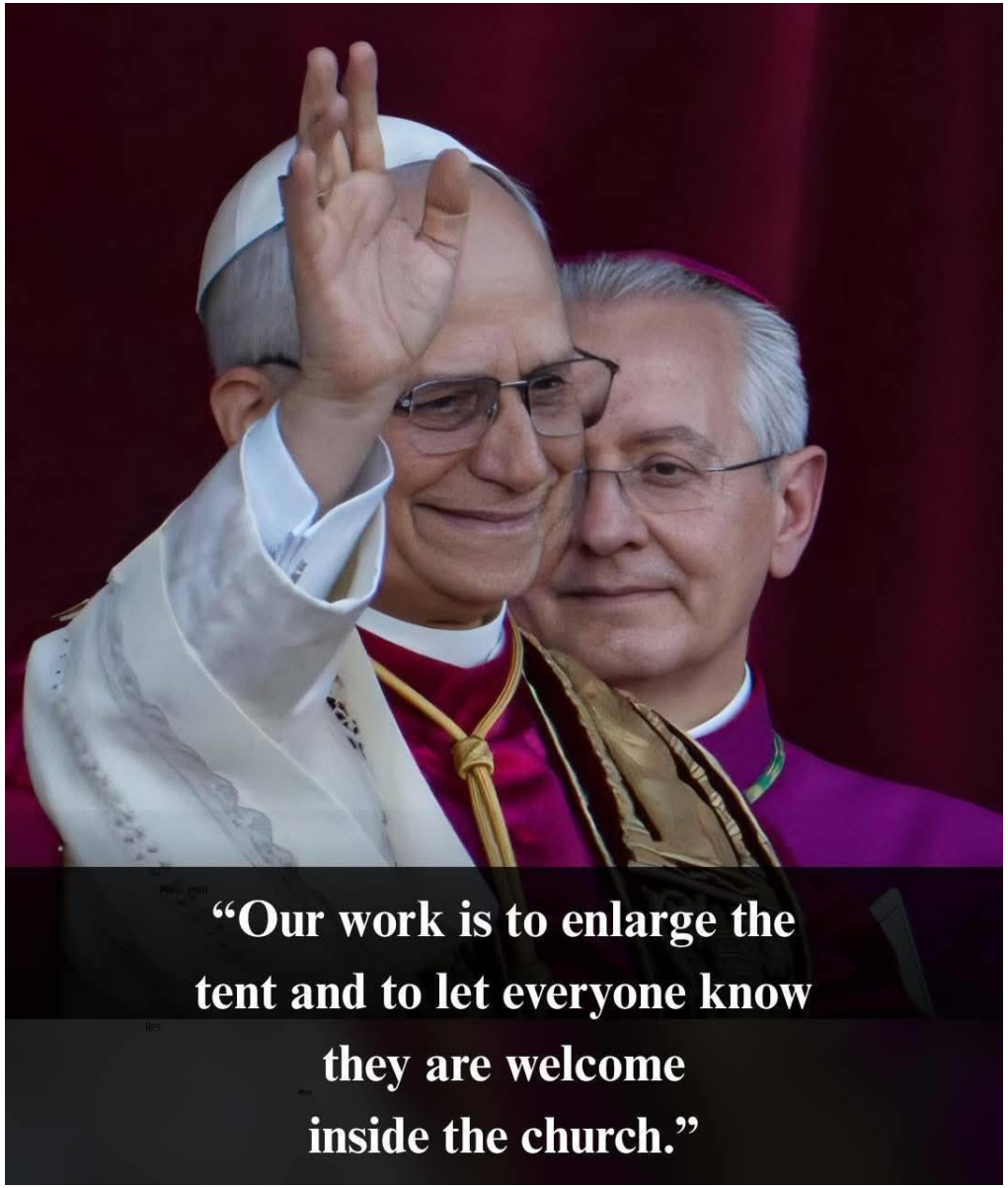
Prayer of the Church | Discernment

You must wake up now: the night is almost over, it will be daylight soon. Let us give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark; let us arm ourselves and appear in the light. Let us live decently as people do in the daytime.
Romans 13:11,12-13



Where might Christ be calling me to serve?

Lord, guide our discernment, deepen our faith and give us courage to respond. Amen.



How will I lead?



In our dialogue, I would like us to keep in mind three essential words that represent the pillars of the Church’s missionary activity and the aim of the Holy See’s diplomacy.

The first word is *peace*.

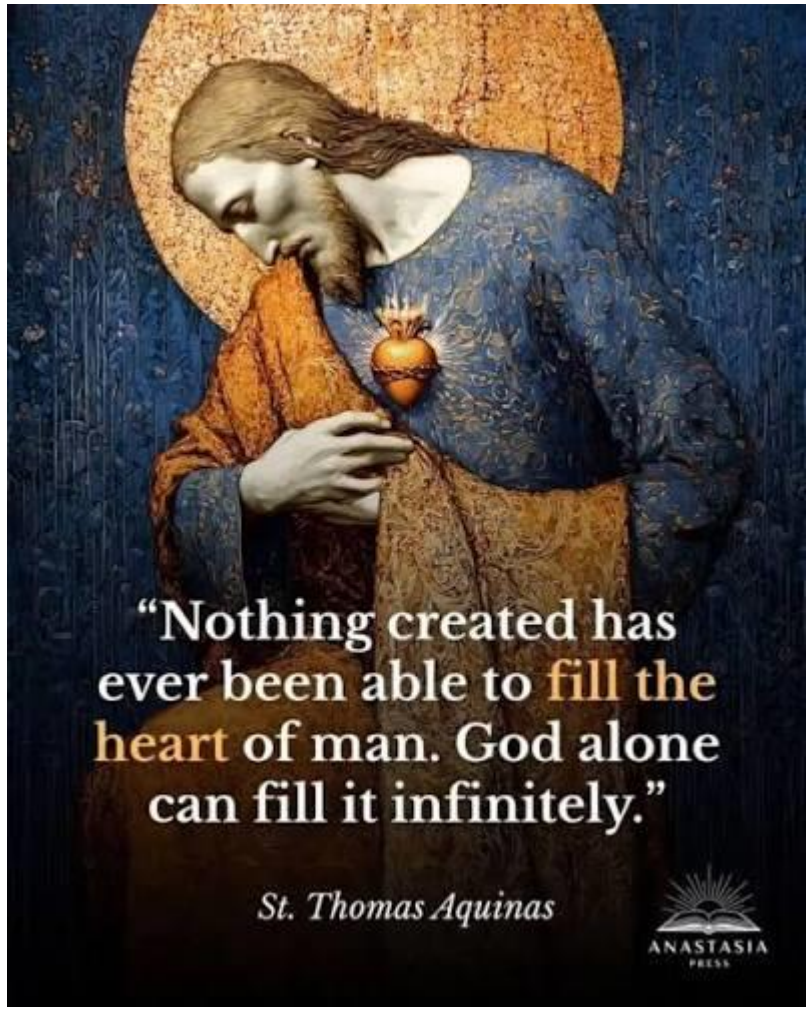
The second word is *justice*. Working for peace requires acting justly.

The third word is *truth*. For her part, the Church can never be exempted from speaking the truth about humanity and the world, resorting whenever necessary to blunt language that may initially create misunderstanding. Yet truth can never be separated from charity, which always has at its root a concern for the life and well-being of every man and woman. Furthermore, from the Christian perspective, truth is not the affirmation of abstract and disembodied principles, but an encounter with the person of Christ himself, alive in the midst of the community of believers.

AUDIENCE TO MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE

AUDIENCE OF THE HOLY FATHER LEO XIV

Clementine Hall
Friday, 16 May 2025



Look with favour on our morning prayer, Lord,

and in your saving love, let your light penetrate the hidden places of our hearts.

May no sordid desires darken our minds,

renewed and enlightened as we are by your heavenly grace.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

The invitation to lead

- Catholic senior leadership is a vocation of service, exercised through professional responsibility.

- **What draws you towards senior leadership? What might hold you back?**





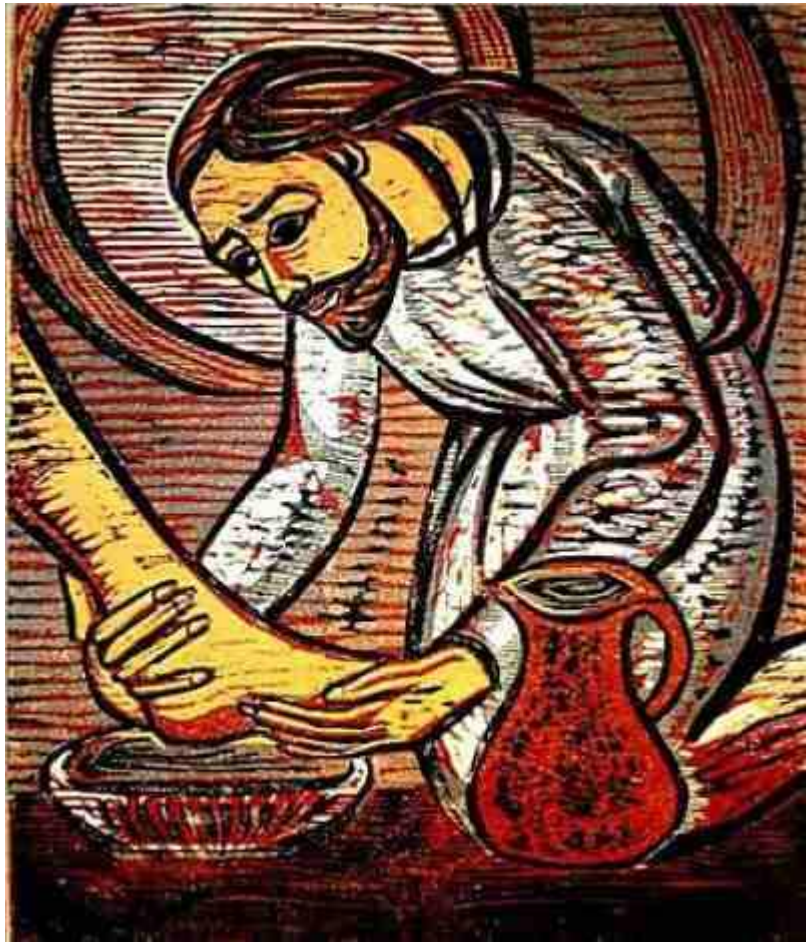
Called and chosen — Discerning senior leadership

- "You did not choose me, but I chose you." — John 15:16

- Discernment asks more than whether I can secure a leadership post. It asks why I seek it, whom I am called to serve and whether I am ready for its demands.

- **Reflection: What draws me towards Catholic senior leadership, and what still needs prayerful consideration?**

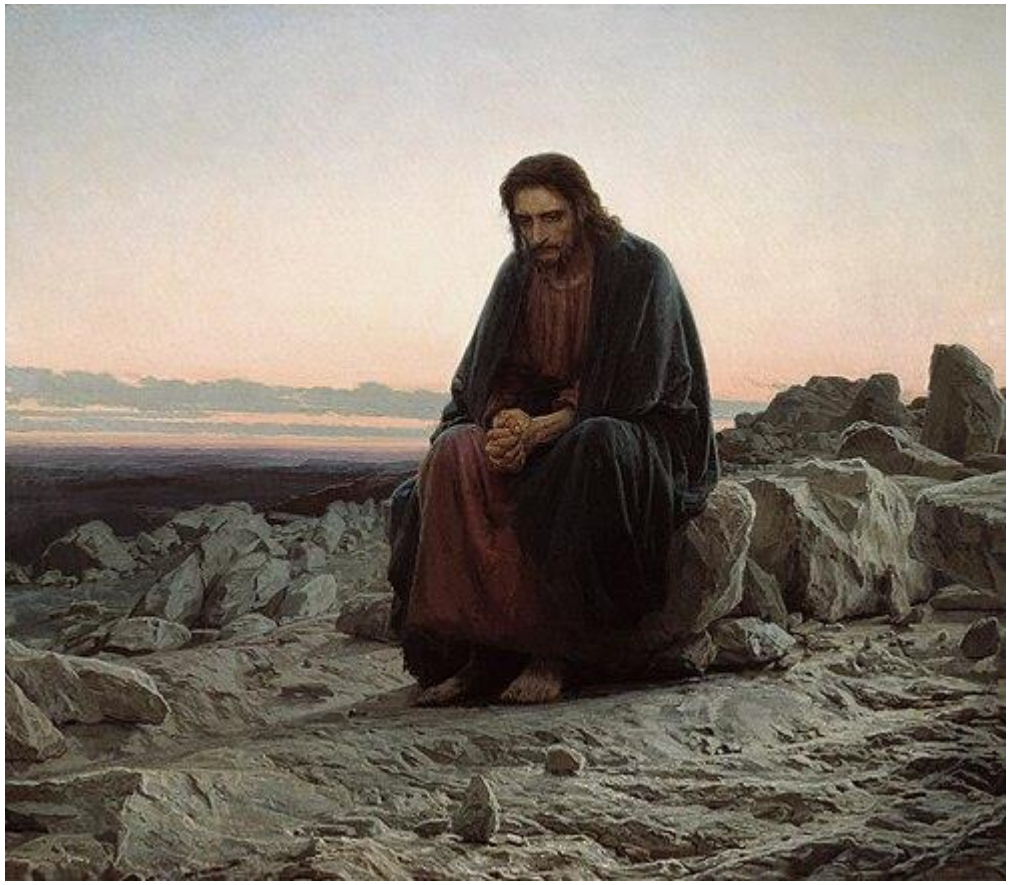
The Gospel — Leadership as service



- "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant." — Mark 10:43

- **How does servant leadership change the way a senior leader exercises authority, makes decisions and treats colleagues?**

Our purpose across two days



- Discern readiness and motivation
- Understand Catholic mission and accountability
- Apply the five-stage leadership journey
- Practise presentations, interviews and selection tasks
- Success is not simply deciding to apply: it is discerning the right next step.



Introductions | My journey towards senior leadership

- How has my leadership experience equipped me with the skills and experience needed for senior leadership in a Catholic school?
  - What strategic thinking & doing have you done in the last day | week| term?
  - How are you prepared to be a senior leader? How have you gained experience?
- Why is this my goal?

Three pathways — one Catholic mission

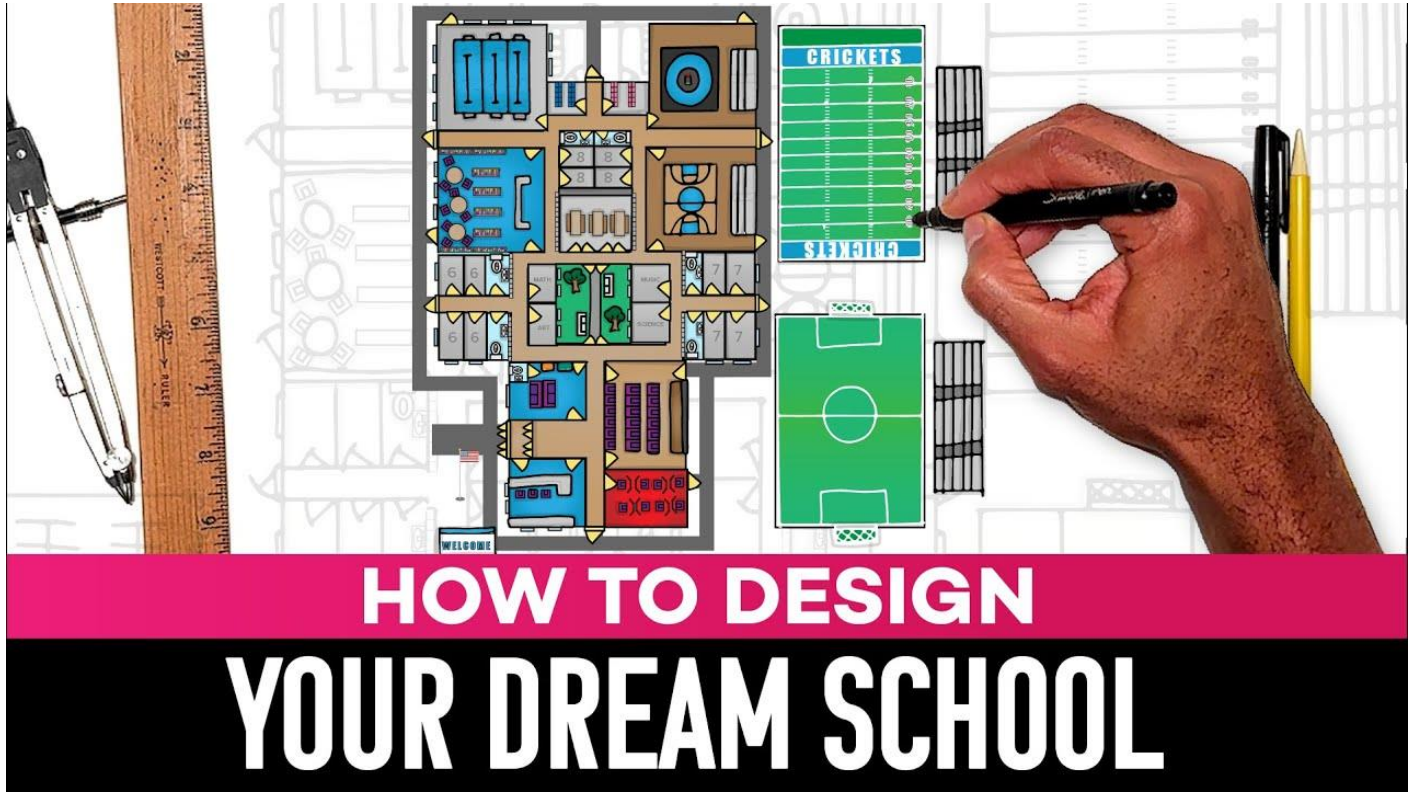
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER (AHT) • Leads delegated priorities; influences teaching, inclusion, curriculum and staff development.

DEPUTY HEADTEACHER (DHT) • Works across the school; deputises for the headteacher; contributes to whole-school strategy and accountability.

HEADTEACHER (HT) • Holds overall responsibility for the school's direction, culture, standards, safeguarding and Catholic mission.

Reflection: Which scope of responsibility am I ready to undertake?

Design your school from scratch…



- What are the priorities?
- Where do you begin?

How do you take over a school that is already ‘designed’?



- What are the priorities?
- Where do you begin?

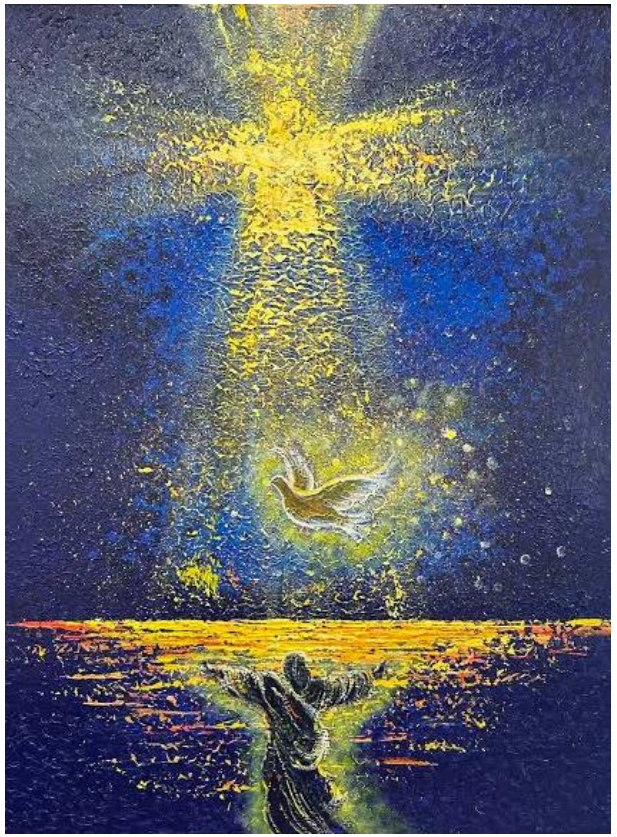
Passing the torch of who?







The torch always was the light of Christ…



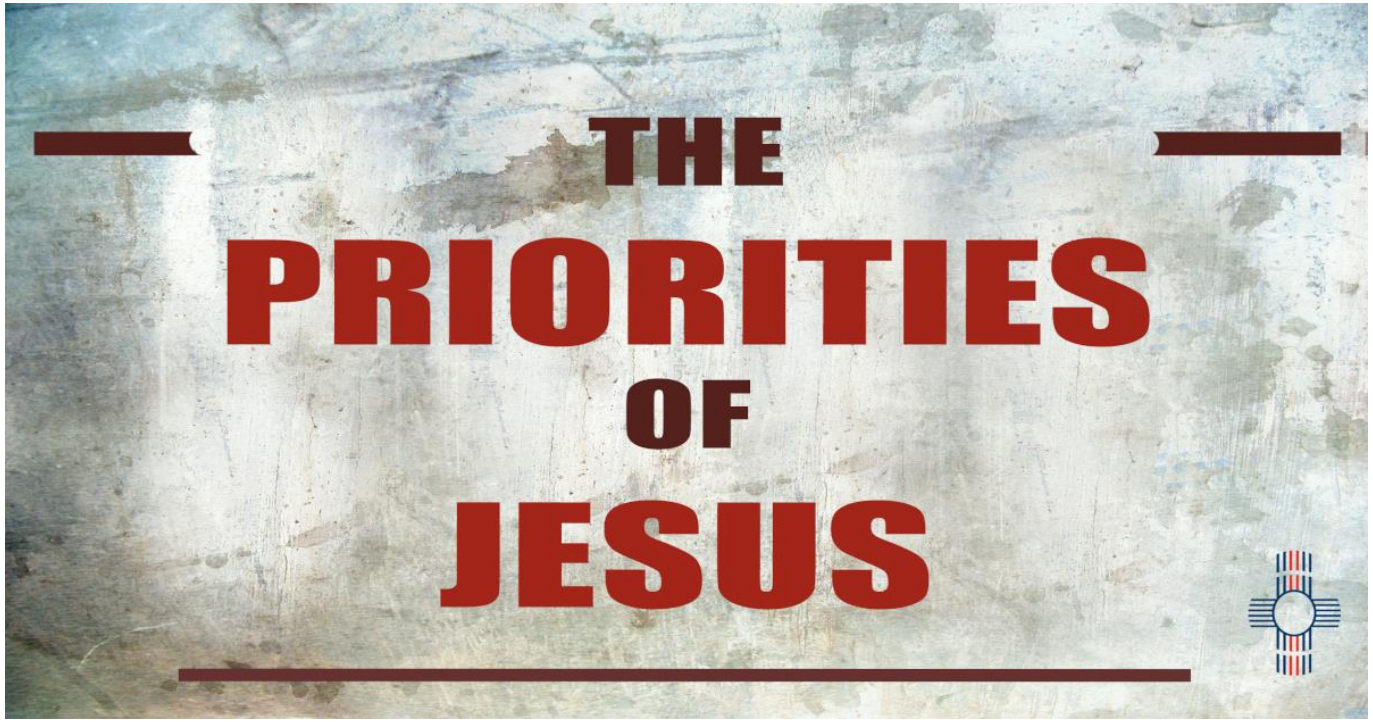
How are you the living Christ within your community?

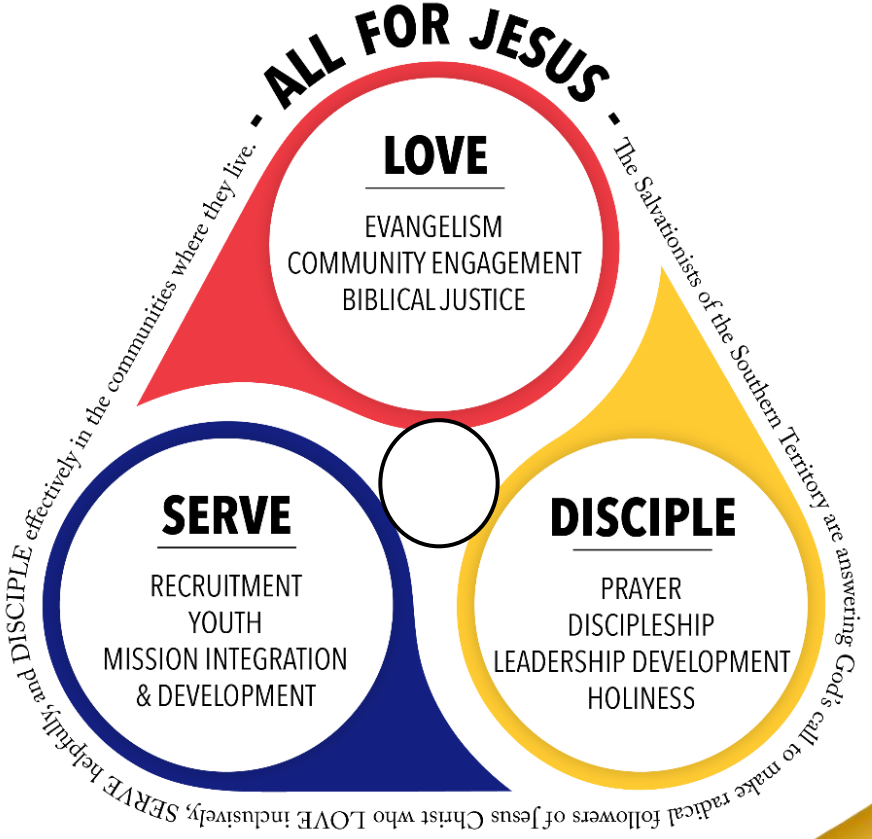
Do you see the living Christ in everyone else?



What came first in your list of priorities? Why?

- What would JC put first? Why?





Getting the answers 'right'…

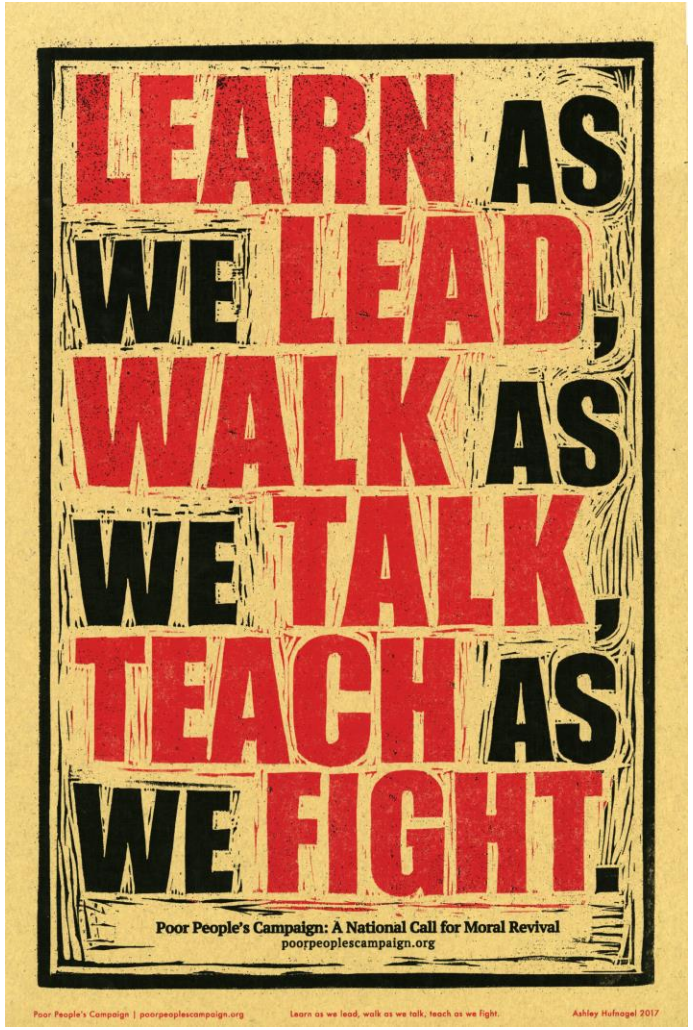
- https://www.magisterium.com/
- Magisterium refers to the teaching authority of the Church, formed of the Bishops.
- It is one of the three sources of authority alongside scripture and tradition.
- **Search: Why do we have schools? What is charism?**



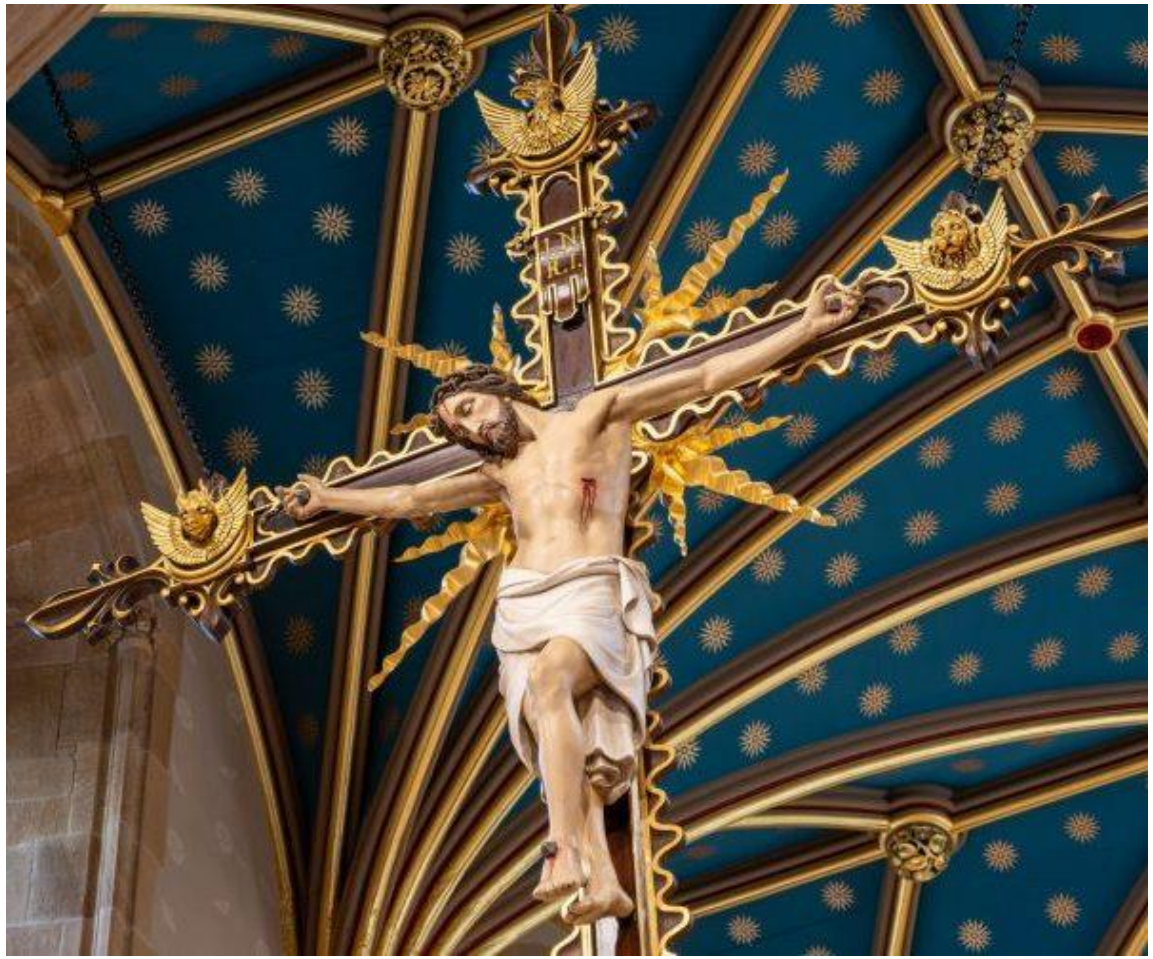
A distinctive calling

- A senior leader helps lead a school as a Catholic community, not simply a school with religious activities.

- **How would a visitor recognise Catholic identity in relationships, curriculum, worship and decisions?**



Bishop John Arnold — Discernment



- "What is God asking of us, as the community of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Salford?" — Pastoral Letter, October 2023

- **What might God be asking of you through the possibility of Catholic headship?**

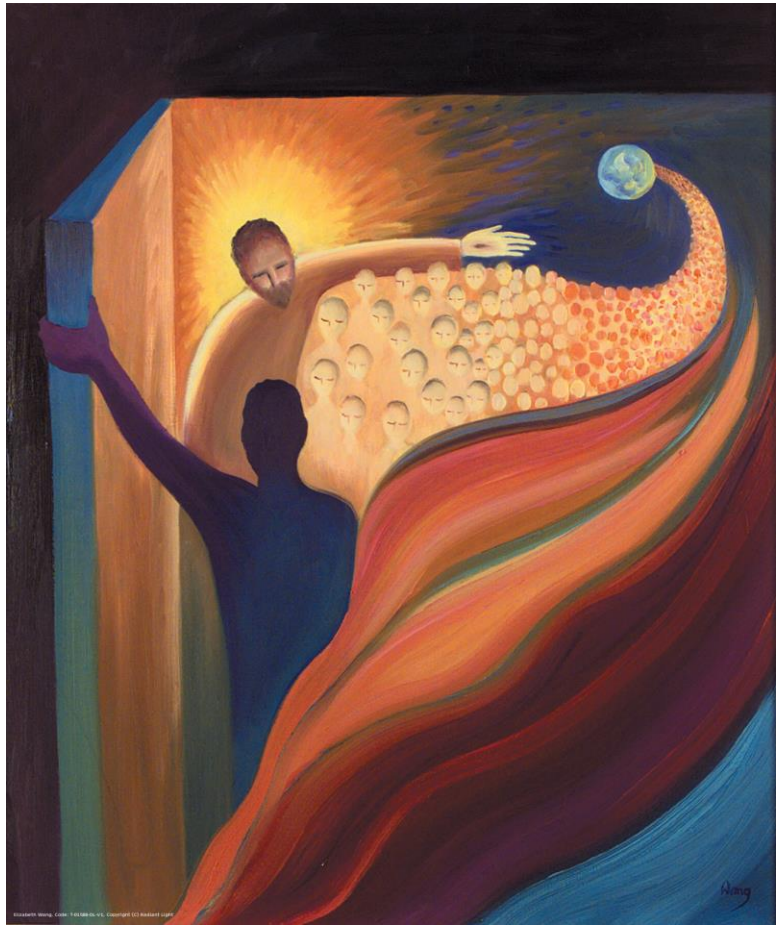
- **Catholic Teaching into Leadership Practice -** Catholic headship involves translating Gospel values and Church teaching into everyday leadership decisions.

The mission of the Church



- Education serves the dignity of every person, the common good and the formation of the whole child.
- Based on Vatican II, Gravissimum Educationis (1965), §1; Pope Leo XIV, Drawing New Maps of Hope (2025), §4.2.
- **Consider the implications for admissions, inclusion, staff wellbeing and school improvement.**

The Salford context



- Senior leadership is exercised within the Diocese of Salford and the school's governing and, where applicable, Catholic academy trust structures.
- Understand the school's precise legal status and current diocesan protocols before applying.
- **What is the mission, vision and purpose of our CATs?**

Protocols: http://bit.ly/48rpwIy

The Bishops' Memorandum — essential expectations

The Bishops' Memorandum guides appointments and safeguards the Catholic character of schools.

Headteacher/principal, deputy headteacher/deputy principal and head or co-ordinator of RE: the Bishops expect practising Catholics as a minimum requirement.

Equivalent senior roles: the requirement applies to the person responsible for day-to-day management and the second most senior leader, whatever their job titles.

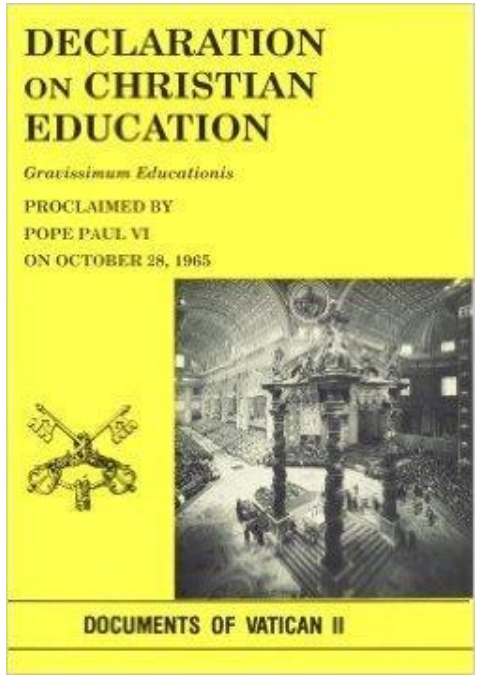
Other leadership roles directly affecting Catholic mission should, wherever possible, be held by skilled, committed Catholics.

Source: Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Memorandum on Appointment of Teachers in Catholic Schools (2014).



Vatican II — The vocation of education

- "Beautiful indeed and of great importance is the vocation of all those who aid parents..." — Gravissimum Educationis, §5 (extract)



- **How do we honour parents as first educators and understand leadership as a vocation rather than a promotion?**

AHT, DHT and HT — what does the Memorandum mean?

AHT: the title alone does not automatically carry the same minimum requirement; examine the actual remit and seniority.

DHT: the Bishops' minimum expectation is that the postholder is a practising Catholic.

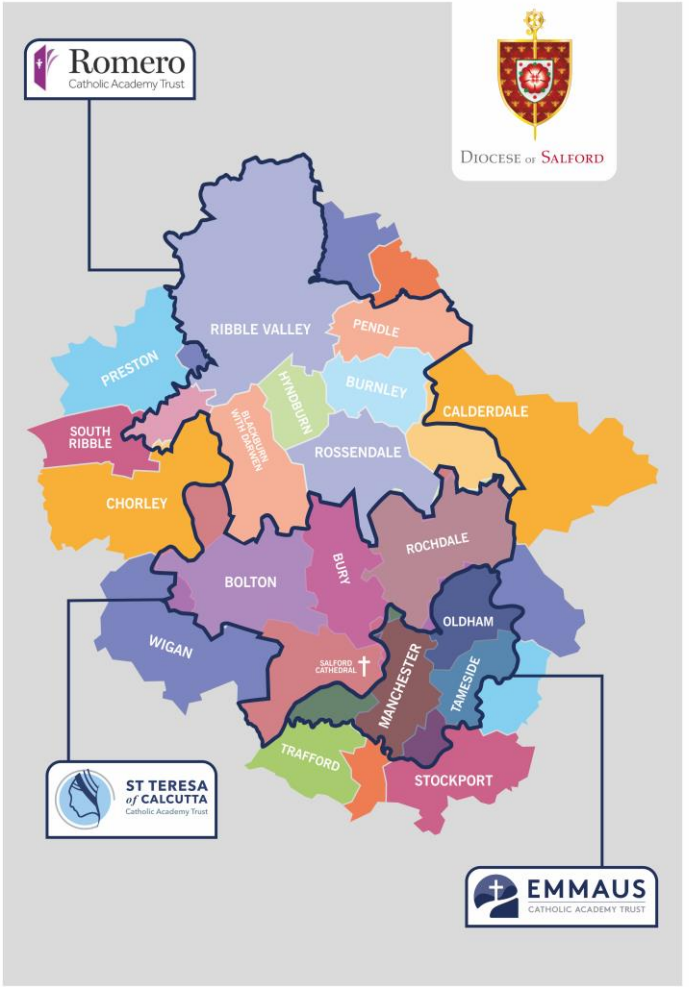
HT: the Bishops' minimum expectation is that the postholder is a practising Catholic.

All staff must respect and support the aims and objectives of the Catholic school.

Discussion: How would I evidence active commitment to Catholic life, mission and leadership?

Who holds which responsibilities?

- Bishop and diocesan education department
- Governing body or academy trust
- Headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers
- Parish and families
- **Accountability, employer powers and reserved matters differ between maintained schools and academies. How?**



Appointment processes — diocesan involvement

The diocesan bishop is entitled to representation in proceedings for senior leaders and RE teachers.

The governing body / relevant employing authority must plan recruitment with the diocese, including appropriate advance notice for posts requiring a practising Catholic.

Shortlisting and interviews must be clear, objective and transparent; follow the relevant diocesan protocols and CES documentation.

Check the precise post, school governance arrangements and current Salford guidance before applying.

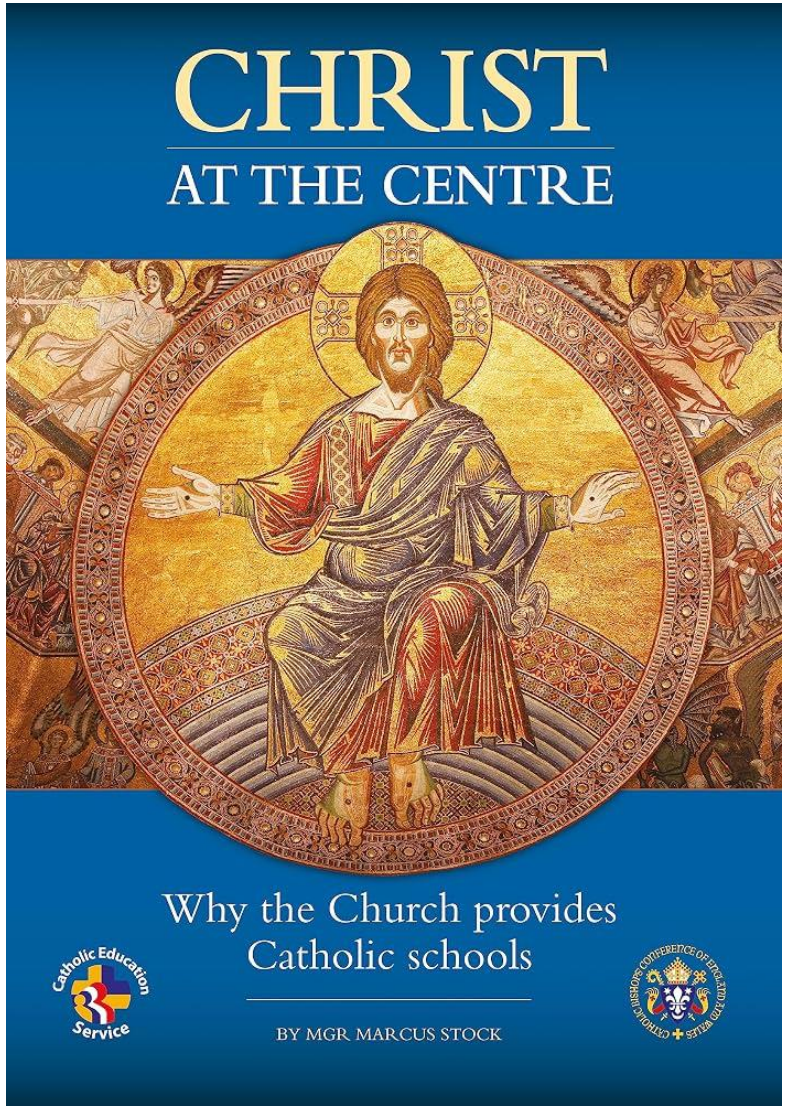
Source: Bishops' Memorandum, "Representation at Short Listing and Interview".



Catholic character in practice

- Religious education
- Prayer and liturgy
- Catholic life and mission
- Catholic social teaching
- Service and witness

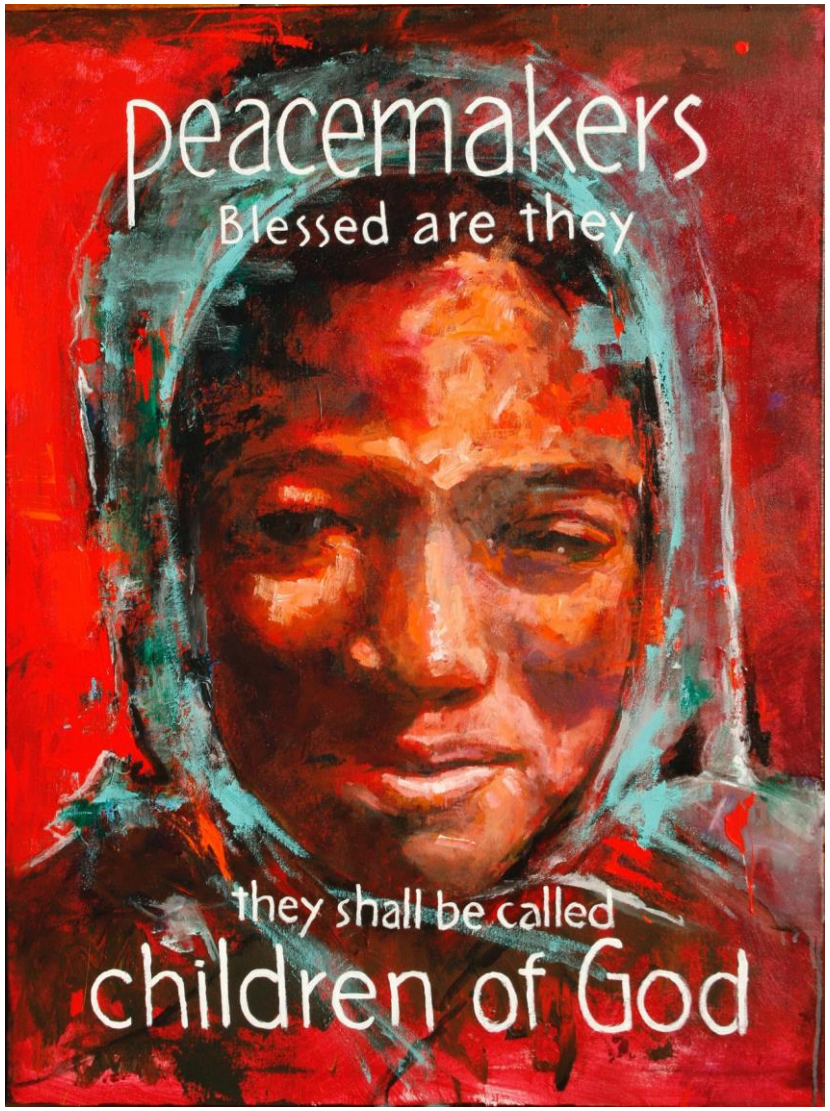
These are whole-school leadership responsibilities, not delegated extras. How?



Catholic bishops — Christ at the Centre

- "Christ, then, is indeed at the centre of our educational endeavour." — Cardinal Vincent Nichols, foreword to Christ at the Centre

- **Where is Christ visibly at the centre of your decisions, curriculum, relationships and culture?**



The Beatitudes — Character of a Catholic leader

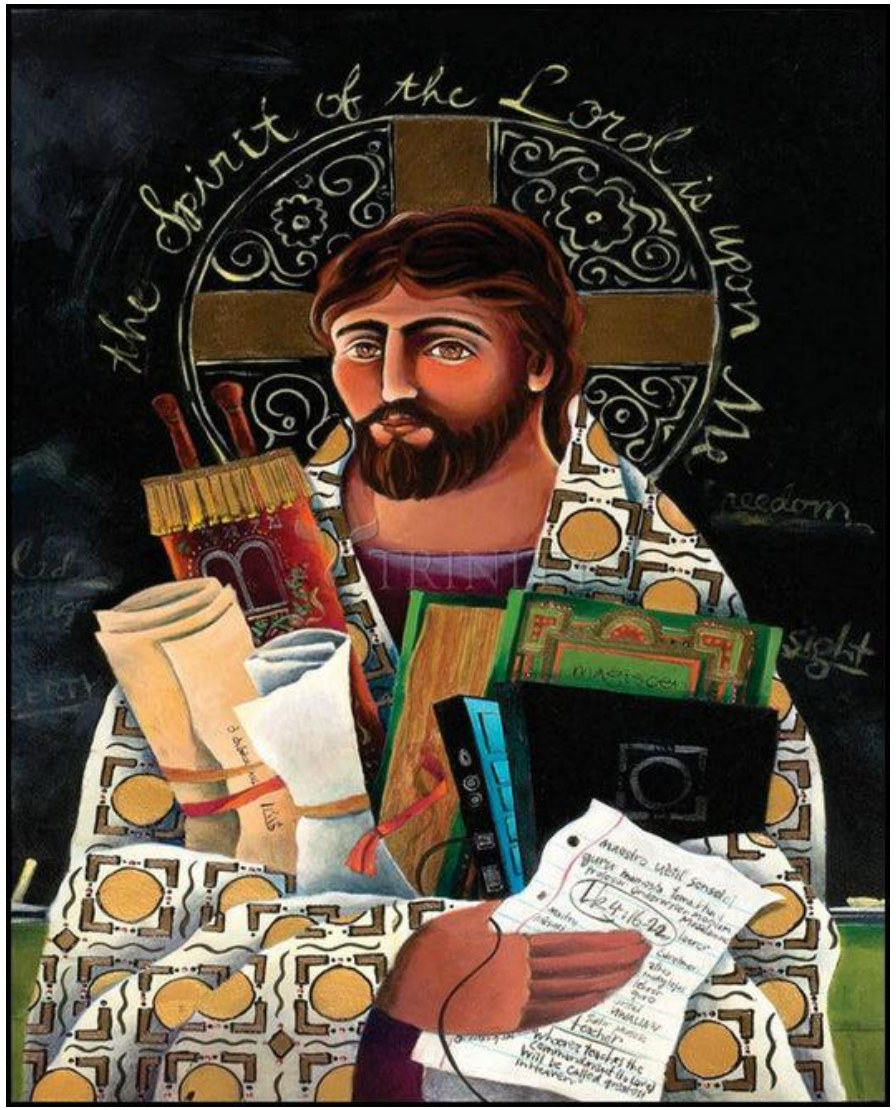
- "Blessed are the merciful..." — Matthew 5:7
- "Blessed are the peacemakers..." — Matthew 5:9
- Humility, mercy, justice, integrity and reconciliation are not optional extras: they shape the culture of a school with Christ at its centre.
- **Reflection: Where would pupils, staff and families encounter the Beatitudes in my leadership?** (Matthew 5:1–12).

Catholic Schools Inspectorate

- Know the three inspection areas: Catholic life and mission; religious education; collective worship.

- **What evidence shows the lived impact of Catholic mission on pupils and adults?**





The senior leader as witness

- Model integrity, humility, hope, justice and fidelity to the school's Catholic mission.
- **How do you lead authentically when decisions are unpopular?**

Servant leadership — Authority exercised as service



- "Let us never forget that authentic power is service." Pope Francis, Homily for the Inauguration of his Pontificate, 19 March 2013
- A headteacher listens to pupils, staff and families before making consequential decisions.
- Difficult performance conversations are honest, fair and focused on professional growth.
- The most vulnerable pupils are not displaced by easier, more visible priorities.
- Leaders accept responsibility when decisions go wrong, rather than shifting blame.
- **When might serving others require an unpopular decision?**

Pope Leo XIV — The whole person



- "The Catholic school is an environment in which faith, culture and life intertwine." — Drawing New Maps of Hope, §5.2 (2025)
- **What does this mean for teaching, inclusion, formation of staff and the everyday experience of pupils?**

Servant leadership — Competence and compassion

"They need humanity. They need heartfelt concern." Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, §31

- Safeguarding and SEND provision are rigorous, timely and relational—not just compliant.



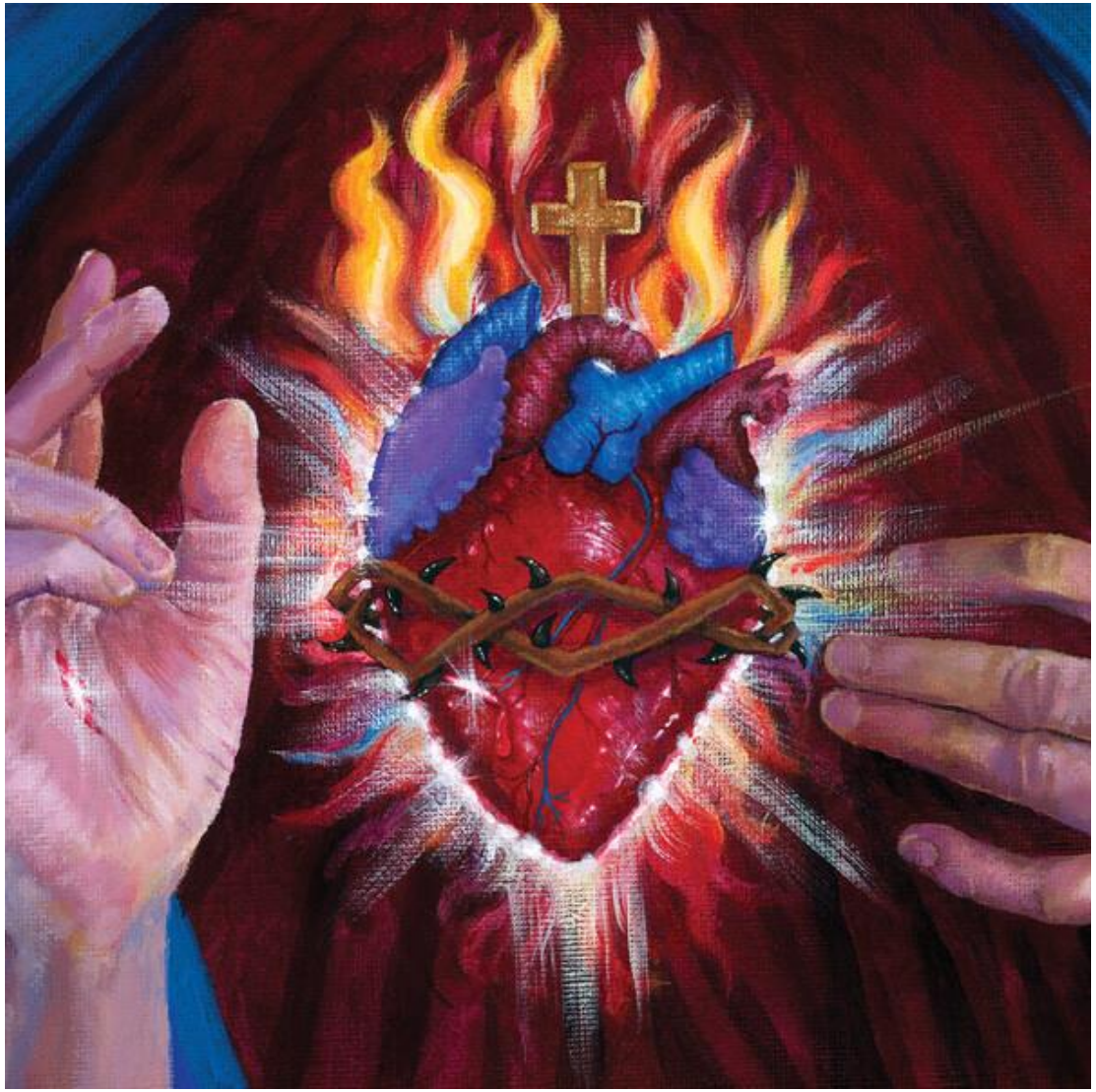
- A distressed parent receives careful listening, a clear plan and an agreed follow-up.
- Staff workload is considered when improvement priorities are set.
- Leaders visit classrooms to understand and improve learning, not merely to inspect.
- **Where might a technically correct decision still lack compassion?**



Five stages of the leadership journey

1. Discernment
2. Preparation
3. Application
4. Selection
5. Transition and transition into role

- **Use this journey to identify evidence, development needs and support.**



Stage 1 — Discernment

- Examine motivation, vocation, family circumstances, resilience and readiness.
- **Reflection: What would make senior leadership worthwhile for you?**



Bishop John Arnold — Missionary disciples

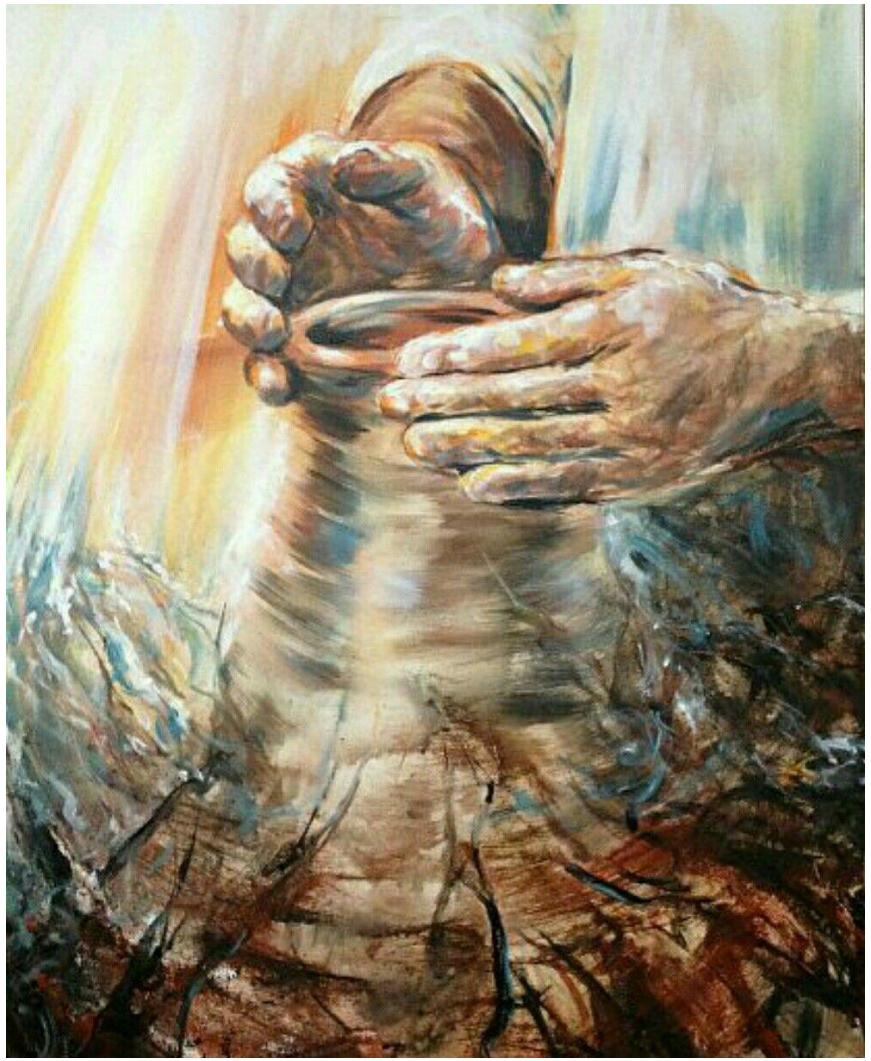
- "We need to be living our Faith in all our actions and decisions" — Pastoral Letter, October 2023

- **How would you respond when fidelity to the Gospel demands a difficult or unpopular decision?**



The Good Shepherd — Pastoral responsibility

- "I am the good shepherd." — John 10:11
- The image of the Good Shepherd challenges a senior leader to know, protect and care for the community, especially its most vulnerable members. Pastoral responsibility also requires difficult decisions.
- **Reflection: How do my decisions show that every person is known and valued?**



Stage 2 — Preparation

- Build evidence of sustained impact in teaching, safeguarding, inclusion, staff development and Catholic mission.
- **Identify one experience you still need before applying.**

Headteacher Standards — Professional leadership

- School culture
- Teaching
- Curriculum and assessment
- Behaviour
- Additional and special educational needs
- Professional development



- **Map examples from your own leadership to the standards; avoid generic claims.**



Headteacher Standards — Organisational leadership

- Organisational management
- Continuous school improvement
- Working in partnership
- Governance and accountability
- **Catholic leaders must also demonstrate the school's ecclesial mission and character. How?**

Working with the CES framework

- **Consider the CES Catholic leadership expectations alongside the DfE Headteachers' Standards.**

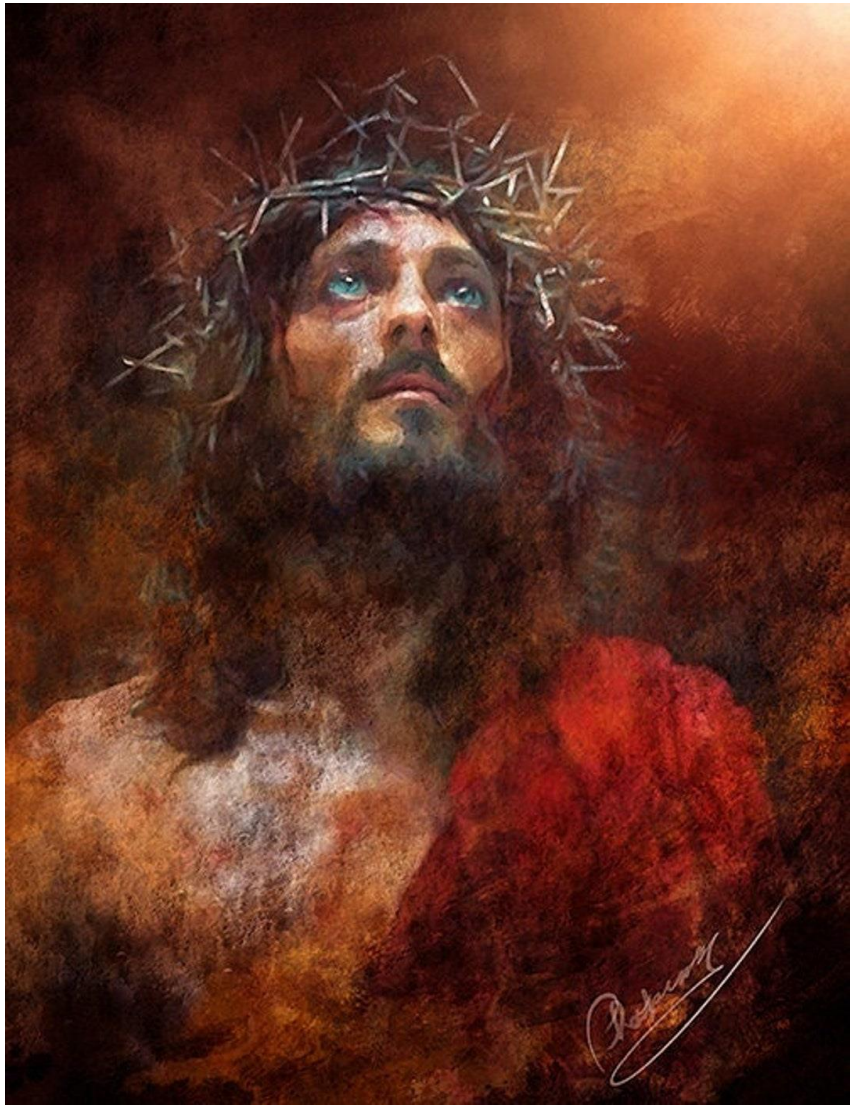
- Check the current CES framework and the specific person specification for each vacancy.



Catholic Education Service
Since 1847

Lynne Tommony

- CES Application Forms, Letters of Application and Shortlisting



The Nazareth Manifesto — Mission and inclusion

- "He has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor." — Luke 4:18
- At Nazareth, Jesus announces good news, freedom and restoration (Luke 4:16–21). The mission of a Catholic school must be visible in its commitment to those facing disadvantage, exclusion or additional barriers.
- **Reflection: Who is most at risk of being overlooked, and how would I respond as headteacher?**

Scenario — Inclusion and mission

- A family challenges the school's provision for a pupil with significant additional needs. Resources are stretched, and staff are anxious.

- **How will you uphold the dignity of this child, listen to the family and secure ambitious, inclusive education?**

Jesus Christ: mission in action Nazareth Manifesto



When He stood up to read, the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. Unrolling it, He found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on Me,
because He has anointed Me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to release the oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Then He rolled up the scroll, returned it to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him, and He began by saying,

"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Luke 4:17-21

Aspire not to have more, but **to be more**

- **What would the Nazareth Manifesto require of your priorities, resources and decisions?**

What is the significance of the Nazareth Manifesto on our leadership decisions?



Lynne Tommony

11:45 am–12:30 pm | 45 minutes

Understanding and completing CES application forms
Writing a persuasive, tailored letter of application
Addressing the person specification for AHT, DHT and HT
Evidencing leadership impact and Catholic school commitment
Practical guidance on avoiding common application weaknesses

Lynne Tommony

1:10–1:40 pm | 30 minutes

How governing boards and panels shortlist applicants
Essential and desirable criteria: identifying convincing evidence
Reviewing applications against a shortlisting matrix
Common reasons candidates are not shortlisted
Final questions and practical application advice

Where are senior leadership posts advertised?

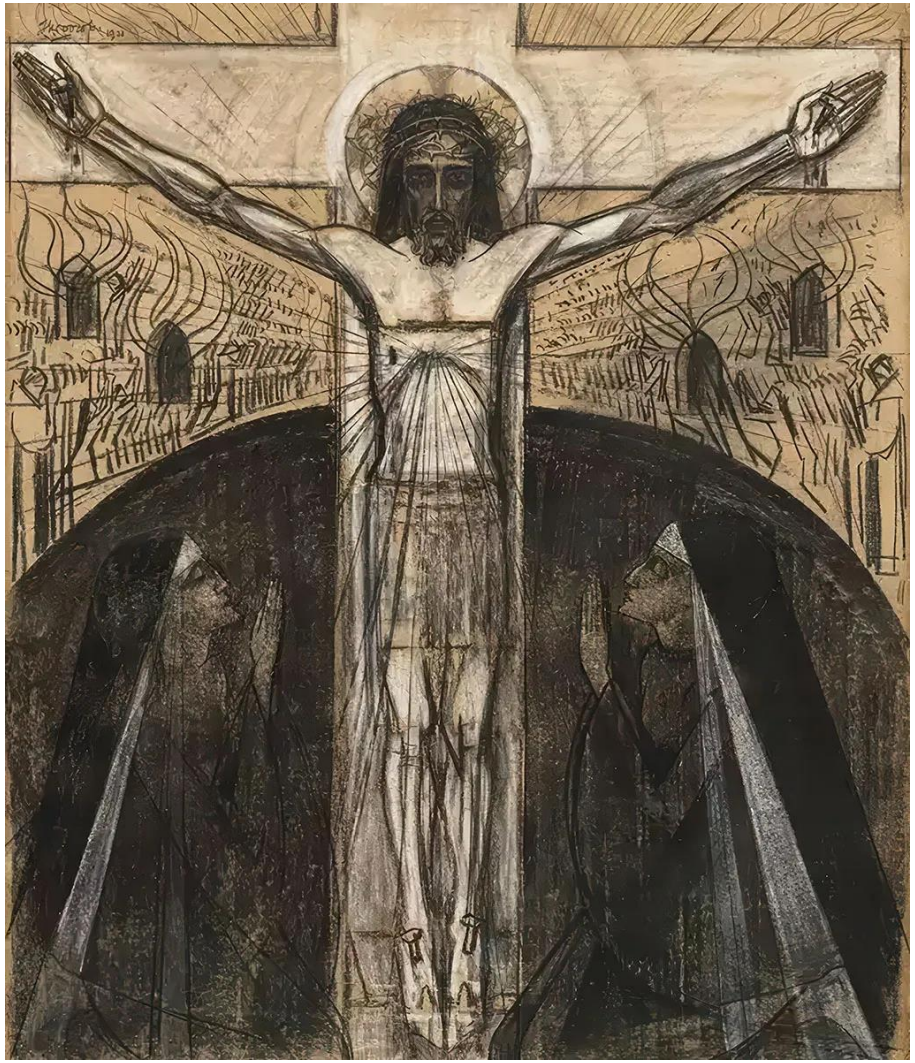
Diocese of Salford — Education Vacancies
https://dioceseofsalford.org.uk/education/vacancies/
Select "Senior Leadership Vacancies" for AHT, DHT and HT opportunities.
Read the vacancy advert, then follow its link to the school or Catholic Academy Trust website for the application pack, job description, person specification and CES forms.
Check closing dates, visit arrangements and submission instructions carefully.
Keep checking the diocesan vacancies page as new posts are advertised.

A Church for the poor — Resource decisions

- "This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor." Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, §198
- Budget decisions protect support for pupils facing disadvantage and additional barriers.
- Uniform, visits, meals and enrichment are planned so poverty does not prevent participation.

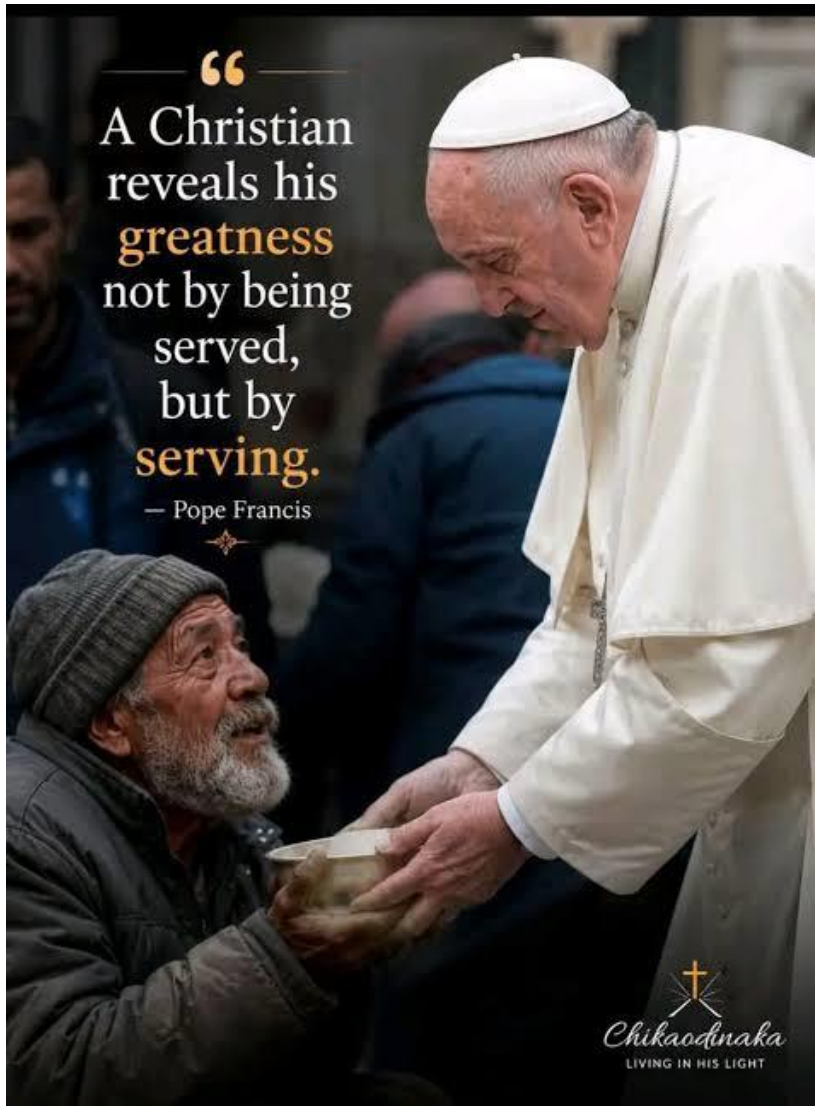


- Attendance responses begin by understanding barriers and supporting families, alongside clear expectations.
- Governors examine the impact of pupil premium and SEND provision, not only spending totals.
- **REFLECT: Whose opportunities would be most affected by your next budget decision?**



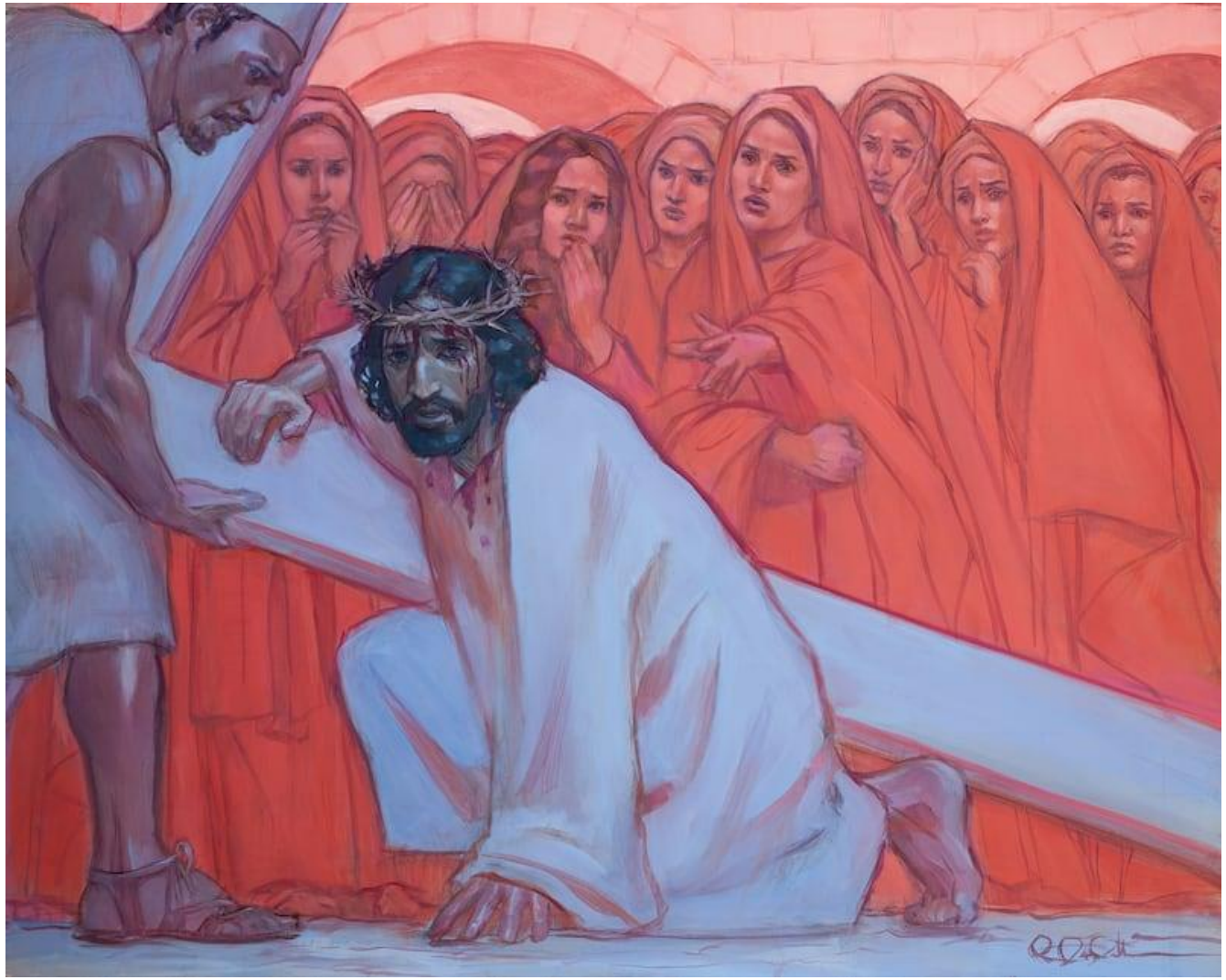
Scenario — Accountability and courage

- Governors seek rapid improvement, but staff morale and workload are fragile.
- **How will you balance urgency, professional trust, evidence and wellbeing?**



Servant leadership — Humility and shared responsibility

- "The one who serves does not consider himself superior to the one served." Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, §35
- Delegate genuine responsibility to colleagues and develop future leaders.
- Ask teaching assistants, office staff, site teams and families what leaders may be missing.
- Admit uncertainty; seek advice from governors, the trust and diocesan education service.
- Give credit publicly and offer corrective feedback privately and constructively.
- **REFLECT: How will others experience your authority when they disagree with you?**



Stewardship — Much is entrusted

- "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded." — Luke 12:48 (cf.)
- Catholic senior leadership brings responsibility for safeguarding, standards, people, resources and the school's mission. Accountability is an expression of service, not its opposite.
- **Reflection: How will I exercise authority with both courage and humility?**



Case study — Servant leadership under pressure

A pupil with significant SEND is regularly missing parts of the curriculum. Staff say that resources are stretched; parents feel unheard; governors expect rapid improvement.

Discuss:

1. What would you do in the first 48 hours to hear the pupil, family and staff?

2. What must change in classroom practice, provision and monitoring?

3. How would you deploy limited resources fairly and transparently?

4. How would you report impact to governors without breaching confidentiality?

TEST: Does your response show both professional accountability and Gospel-centred service?

The Catholic senior leadership application

- Study the school's mission, context, inspection reports, priorities, governing arrangements and recruitment pack.

- Match every claim to the published person specification and give clear evidence.



Writing your supporting statement

- Why this school?
- Why Catholic senior leadership?
- What have you improved?
- How do you know?
- What will you prioritise?
- **Use concise situation–action–impact examples, not a chronology of posts.**

Personal action plan



- Name three strengths
- Identify two gaps
- Agree one practical development step

Stage 3 — application: evidence by role

AHT: Show demonstrable impact in a delegated whole-school priority and capacity to lead colleagues.

DHT: Show strategic influence across priorities, effective partnership with the headteacher and readiness to deputise.

HT: Show credible school-wide vision, sustained impact, governance awareness and capacity for ultimate accountability.

For every role: connect professional evidence to Catholic mission, safeguarding, inclusion and the needs of pupils.



“Jesus looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”

Luke 21:1-4

(Image from **Andrea Tornielli** of **Vatican News, February 2023**: Outside the Cathedral in Juba, South Sudan, a boy gives Pope Francis a banknote as a gift.)

Day 2 — selection practice

Presentations: communicate a compelling Catholic vision within a defined time.

Interviews: connect values, evidence and sound professional judgement.

Scenarios: safeguarding, SEND, staff culture, improvement and governance.

Feedback: refine clarity, credibility and suitability for AHT, DHT or HT.

End with an individual action plan and the next step in discernment.

Relevant Leadership



Don’t panic…



- The apostles learnt the job too! (& we have AI)

From the beginning, Jesus told the disciples that He would make them into something different: “Come, follow me,…and I will ***make*** you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).

Their occupation of catching fish changed into a mission of fishing for people. Each step along the way, Jesus taught them to share with others, connect people to God, and minister to those who were in need.

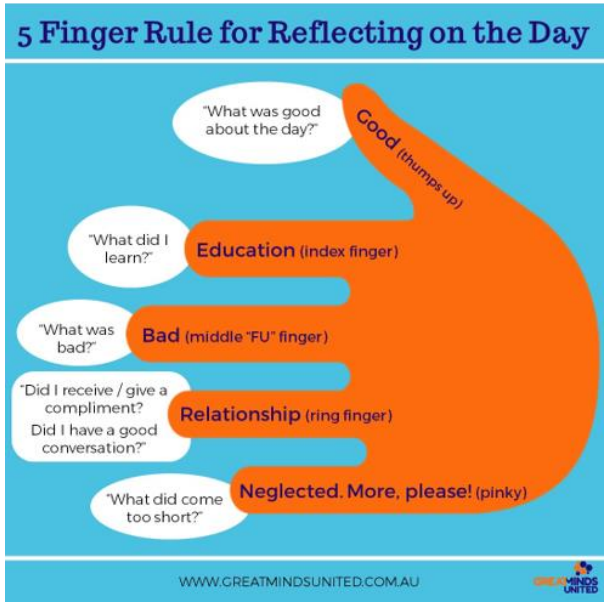


Closing Prayer

"Before I **shaped** you in the womb,
I knew all about you.
Before you saw the light of day,
I had holy plans for you:
A prophet to the nations—
that's what I had in mind for you."

Jeremiah 1:5 (The Message)





Day 1 | Closing prayer

- **Recall one insight, one challenge and one invitation from today.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you call us not to status but to service. Give us wisdom to discern your will, courage to lead with integrity, and compassion for every child and family entrusted to our care. May our schools reveal your love through welcome, justice, learning and prayer. Guide those considering headship, and bless the work still to come. Amen.