

CHARTER FOR THE GAUDETE TRUST

“God rejoices in you!”

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARTER

OUR NAME

Our name – Gaudete - was chosen after much reflection. This collaborative trust is a new venture for Religious Orders in England and Wales, so we wanted a name that makes people stop and think about its meaning. It is a name that tells us to rejoice! We rejoice in the Good News of the Gospel. We rejoice in the Holy Spirit who is enabling us to create something new and is teaching us what true collaboration means. We rejoice in the rich heritage of Religious Orders in education. But most of all we rejoice in our young people for whom this trust was built, and we want them, as we say in our vision of education, to be able to rejoice in the person they are and so achieve the fullness of life of which Jesus spoke.

ORIGIN

The Gaudete Trust was established in 2022 by five Religious Orders, following a three-year collaborative venture steered by a working group of the National Association of Religious Orders in Education (ROE). This venture was part of the latter’s mission to enable the rich heritage of Religious Orders to continue to enrich Catholic education and flowed from its desire to respond creatively to the needs of its members.

The mainspring of the Trust is the desire of Religious Orders to continue to put their charisms at the service of the Church. By adopting a collaborative approach to trusteeship, the Gaudete Trust offers those Religious Orders who have found the responsibilities of educational trusteeship increasingly difficult to carry, an alternative way of continuing to serve Catholic education.

LEGAL STATUS

The Gaudete Trust is a legal entity with the authority to take on those legal, financial, and inspirational responsibilities of educational trusteeship that were formerly exercised by individual Religious Orders. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) recognised by the Charities Commission and a Public Juridic Person recognised by the Church.

OUTLINE OF THE CHARTER

This Charter describes the inheritance entrusted to the Gaudete Trust by the founding Religious Orders and their intentions for the operation of the Trust. It is divided into three sections:

- Section 1: The vision, mission, aims and guiding principles of the Gaudete Trust
- Section 2: The Gaudete Educational Vision and Philosophy Statement
- Section 3: The Charism Statements of the Religious Orders who belong to Gaudete.

SECTION ONE

OUR VISION

Our family of schools and colleges are co-creators of God's kingdom where justice, truth and peace reign.

The words of Pope St. John Paul II to Religious Orders encourage us to make this vision a reality: "You have not only a glorious history to remember and to recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even greater things."¹ We are challenged, too, by the words of Pope Francis when he urged Religious Orders to remember their prophetic calling and 'wake up the world'² and create "alternate spaces where the Gospel approach of self-giving, fraternity, embracing differences, and love of one another can thrive."³ Our hope is that the Gaudete Trust will be one of those 'alternate spaces'

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Gaudete Trust is to support a family of schools and colleges which is animated by the distinctive charisms of the founding Religious Orders and shares a vision rooted in the values of the gospel.

Over many years Religious Orders have transmitted their distinctive charism to committed lay people and in so doing have inspired and sustained these people in their role as Catholic educators. The Trust will continue this work with the next generation of lay school leaders and teachers and help build up that "spiritual capital"⁴ which has such a positive effect on the Catholic life of our schools.

In continuing the work of Religious Orders in education, the Gaudete Trust is part of the Catholic Church's educational mission and it will continue to assist in the Church's mission of making Christ known to all people.

This means, for example, that:

- Each of our schools will "place Christ at the centre of all that it does" and "integrate Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church into every aspect of learning, teaching and the totality of school life"⁵
- We will affirm the dignity of the human person and make "an education in the fulness of humanity"⁶ the defining feature of our schools.
- We will have a particular regard to the statements on Catholic education issued from time to time by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education and the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

The Trust's philosophy of education is described in full in section 2.

¹ Message for World Day for Consecrated Life, January 1997.

² Meeting with UISG, November 2013.

³ Address to All Consecrated People, November 2014.

⁴ Gerald Grace defines this in many of his writings as "the resources of faith and values derived from a commitment to a religious tradition".

⁵ Mgr Marcus Stock *Christ at the Centre*. Revised 2012

⁶ Pope Francis' Address to the Association of Catholic School Parents, December 2015.

“The work of Catholic Education is essentially and always a work of partnerships”⁷ In the fulfilment of its mission, the Trust is looking to build bridges of collaboration through partnerships and networking with local dioceses and all those involved in Catholic education. This will enable us to play our part in strengthening and sustaining the Church’s mission in education in England and Wales.

The Trust continues to benefit from its relationship with ROE, a connection which gives it access to the wealth of resources and personnel that ROE has dedicated to the articulation, development, and transmission of the individual charisms of its members. The Trust benefits, too, from the support offered by the Bishops’ Conference, the Catholic Education Service, the Conference of Religious and members of the Le Cheile and CEIST collaborative trusts in Ireland.

MAIN AIMS

In order to realise its Vision and be faithful to its Mission, the Gaudete Trust aims to:

- Provide a service to Religious Orders within the Trust by exercising, fully or in part according to different needs, those legal, financial, and inspirational responsibilities of educational trusteeship that were formerly carried out by individual Orders.
- Oversee the implementation of the shared vision of education in its schools and colleges, and honour and support the individual charisms of their founders and the values associated with them.
- Provide a service that supports the schools and colleges in offering young people (and by extension their parents/carers and the local and national community) an outstanding and distinctive experience of Catholic education. The Trust is built for these young people.
- Be an advocate for the schools and colleges both in terms of the shared vision for which they all stand and for the individual good of each establishment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Gaudete Trust:

- Rejoices in the different perspectives on gospel values brought to the Trust by all the Religious Orders and works to make this rich heritage available to the whole community of schools.
- Supports individual establishments in continuing to develop an education that is in harmony with the distinctive spirit of their founding Religious Order.
- Adopts an inclusive and collaborative way of working.
- Is an organic and dynamic organisation and it will respond creatively to the differing needs of its members over time.
- Is an outward looking venture and it works with key Catholic, national, and international organisations for the common good in Catholic education.

⁷ The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, in his forward to “*New Thinking, New Scholarship and New Research in Catholic Education. Responses to the Work of Gerald Grace.*” Edited by Sean Whittle 2021.

- Places great importance on the formation of its trustees and all who work with the latter, and it allocates sufficient time and resources to their training and development.

SECTION TWO

THE TRUST'S VISION AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION STATEMENT

The education we offer is centred in God, rooted in Christ, and animated by the spirit of the founders of each of our Religious Orders.

Though our forms of education will change over time in response to developing needs, we will remain faithful to the eternal values of the gospel, to the Church that Christ founded and to the enduring spirit of our founders.

We celebrate the diversity of God's creation and welcome and value the contribution made by those members of our communities who come from different faith traditions or none.

We offer a transforming, inclusive and ecological Catholic education founded on the belief that God's signature can be seen in every corner of our world and in the hearts of every human being.

We hope to awaken each one of our young people to their dignity as a unique human being created by a God who loves them unconditionally. We believe that the liberating power of this truth will enable them to rejoice in their identity and achieve the fulness of life of which Jesus spoke.

We hope that they will grow in understanding of the inter-connectedness of our world and become responsible global citizens who care for the earth which is our common home.

We place a high value on both academic and human excellence, and we challenge and support each person to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable in both learning and in living.

We provide the highest standards of teaching and pastoral support to ensure that each young person flourishes.

Our curriculum is intellectually rigorous and aspirational and prepares our young people to play an active and fruitful role in society.

We appoint staff who are supportive of our vision and their professional development is a key priority.

We place great importance on the spiritual dimension of our education which helps our young people to search for meaning and integrate their beliefs with their day-to-day living. This is woven through every activity and every subject and can be discerned, for example, wherever there are conversations and reflection about the deeper meaning below the surface of ideas, events, or experiences, where there is silence and awe and wonder, where there is prayer and worship, where there is sacrament.

We encourage our young people to search for truth wherever it leads them, to develop critical minds that wrestle with the deeper questions of life and to grow hearts that are open to the needs of humanity.

Faithful to the person of Jesus who taught us what it means to be human, we invite our young people to be people of faith, of hope, of forgiveness and love, people who will work for justice and show compassion for the vulnerable and the marginalised, people who will have the courage and

independence of mind to challenge a materialistic culture, people who will have a care and respect for the earth, people who will be co-creators of a better world.

The Characteristics of the Gaudete Trust's Education

The characteristics of Catholic education in the Gaudete Trust will provide a framework for the school and college communities in the 21st Century to contextualise three critical faith and spiritual 'stories' which are fundamental to Catholic education in the traditions of the Religious Order members.

The **enduring** story – Jesus, his life and ministry and values of the Gospel.

The **expressive** story - the story and the values expressed in the vision and philosophy of the Gaudete Trust and in the prophetic responses of our founders.

The **evolving** story – the courageous work with the legacies of the founders in an interpretive manner that carries them forward to create a new contemporary expression of the Gaudete Trust spirit. The story *evolves* as the world and society change.

We intend, in consultation with trustees, governors, staff and students, to describe the characteristics that flow from the above vision and philosophy statement. These will illustrate the distinguishing features of leadership and management, governance, the curriculum, teaching and learning, religious education, pastoral care, professional development, and resources. This consultation will be part of the formative work undertaken with trustees, governors, and staff once the Trust has been established

SECTION THREE

CHARISM STATEMENTS FROM THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

A Charism Statement from each of the Religious Orders belonging to Gaudete is included below. The Religious Orders have set out here the charism that they are entrusting to the Trust. Part of the commitment of the Trust is to continually reflect on that gift and, in partnership with each Board of Governors, to promote it in the schools. Each school will be supported in reflecting on how Gaudete's Vision of Education can be lived out within the context of its founding Order's charism and the values associated with it. The Trust's Vision and Philosophy of Education statement illustrates the common ground that the Religious Orders share in their understanding of the Gospel values that translate into the Church's mission in education.

CHARISM OF THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

We are inspired by the living, breathing spirit of our founder Blessed Edmund Rice and by the contemporary mission of the Christian Brothers to reach out to, and advocate for, those made poor. Edmund's example of faith and generosity inspires us as we seek to live lives of love and service. We share his passion for transformative education for all and we seek to empower staff and students alike to become true servant leaders.

We are guided by the Congregational dedication to 'Presence, Compassion and Liberation'. 'Presence' is our call to accept, affirm and protect all people and all of creation. 'Compassion' demands that we hear the cry of the poor and the Earth and respond with loving action. 'Liberation' requires us to restore human dignity, protect human rights, and amplify the voice of those made poor.

We promote a Gospel-based spirituality which acknowledges the need for constant reflection and spiritual searching. Our direction is informed by Gospel values which inspire our exploration of how we can act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God and others.

We passionately believe in the power of students, staff, parents, Brothers and volunteers to be the change locally and globally, using a rights-based approach to education, advocacy, social justice and sustainability as tools for lasting development.

To make this a lived reality we ask our schools to remain true to the Essential Elements of an Edmund Rice education:

- - *Evangelising the Modern World* by participating in the contemporary mission of the Catholic Church, proclaiming the Gospel message and placing Jesus at the centre of the life of the school. We communicate the Good News through an explicit ministry of the Word and an implicit ministry of works. Whilst actively and critically seeking to realise Gospel values in the life and relationships of the school, we respect the religious freedom and autonomy of all pupils and staff.
- - *Promoting the Spiritual* by nurturing a living faith, fostering Christian spirituality, and educating in Gospel-based values. We recognise our fundamental identity as spiritual beings whilst nurturing a distinctive Christian spirituality, giving priority to religious and moral formation and allocating time, space, and resource to the spiritual dimension of school life. Through prayer, we empower young people to share, witness and lead.
- - *Building a Christian Community* by nurturing Christ-inspired relationships based on mutual respect, self-sacrifice, and fully human dignity. We strive to be a truly inclusive community of the Church strengthened by participation and capable of developing itself and other partners through communication, collaboration and cohesion.

- - Demonstrating *Compassion For Those In Need* by reaching out both within and beyond the school in compassion and practical action for the poor and marginalised. We identify and serve the needs of all members of the school community and respond to Jesus' priority for the most vulnerable.
- - Showing *Concern For the Whole Person* by centering the curriculum, opportunities, and challenges of the school on the integrated wellbeing of its students and staff across all the positive dimensions of personal growth. We promote the full and balanced development of the physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral, social aesthetic, and emotional faculties of its pupils within a Catholic framework.
- - *Striving for Excellence* by encouraging each individual to use his or her talents to the full, whether academic, cultural, or physical, and pursuing the highest standards in all aspects of learning, teaching, and extracurricular endeavour. We define excellence according to the Gospel standard and rejoice in and celebrates success.
- - Viewing *Education as a Christian Calling* by valuing and enabling the role and vocation of Christian teachers and support staff as a calling from God and a sharing in the Church's mission. We recognise and value the contribution of all staff and governors to the mission of the

school, encouraging education through witness and example and providing opportunities to nurture & develop personal spirituality.

- *Educating for Justice* by inspiring the minds and hearts of the young to care for all God's creation and build a more just society. We seek to develop a sense of critical responsibility and a desire for active citizenship, providing opportunities for young people to lead in community and voluntary work and in immersion projects both at home and in the Developing World. By educating for social and ecological responsibility we are creating compassionate transformative leaders of the future.

The Charism of The Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle

"The characteristic spirit of a Sister of Charity of St Paul inspired by the example of Genevieve is the spirit of Charity. This is expressed in a deep personal love of Christ and in a life dedicated to the service of others." (Constitutions par.6)



The Congregation of The Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle was founded in 1847 by Sr Genevieve Dupuis in Banbury, Oxfordshire. Genevieve was a Sister of St Paul of Chartres whose origins date back to 1696 in the small French village of Levesville near Chartres. She was sent to Banbury, Oxfordshire, with a companion Sr Marie Joseph Sapiens, in response to a request from the parish priest, Dr William Tandy; he asked for two sisters to assist him with the education of the poor, especially

girls, the care of the sick and the pastoral needs of his vastly expanding parish community fleeing from famine in Ireland. Genevieve embraced the challenges of a new culture, language, much poverty and religious indifference with a strong faith and determination. Her profound sense of “being sent on Mission” found expression in serving the needs of the poor and evangelizing through education. Genevieve inspired the women who joined her to be Christ centered, to have a strong work ethic and to live in a spirit of simplicity and joy. She wrote, “as long as we are founded and rooted in Charity nothing will be able to shake our community or stay the work God has given us to do.” At the time of her death in 1903 Genevieve had established 88 small communities in almost every diocese in England totally committed to educating the youth and to parish pastoral ministry.

Genevieve had a very simple philosophy of education: **“love is the first principle of success.”** Her advice to her sisters was to strive to **“do the very best for the children.”**

This is still the guiding principle which inspires the mission of **St Paul’s School for Girls** established in Birmingham in 1908. As we share in the Catholic Church’s mission to educate and nurture in the faith, our aim is to empower young women with faith and confidence to achieve the highest standards of personal and academic excellence to enable them to make an enriching contribution to society, to family life, their faith community and the world of work; this is achieved through

- educating and nurturing belief in a loving God as revealed in Jesus Christ so that each person, made in God’s image, may develop a profound sense of self-worth
- ensuring that Prayer, The Word, The Eucharist and other liturgical celebrations are integral to the life of the school community
- giving equality of access to a multifaceted curriculum and high level of pastoral support.

In the spirit of our Charism the school community participates in a vibrant Outreach Programme to provide for those in need.

Inspired by our patron, St Paul, the great evangelizer, our **School Motto** is

“All things to all people.” (1Cor 9:22)

Our Special Feast Day is the Conversion of St Paul celebrated annually on 25th January.



The Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle seek to respond purposefully and creatively to the developing and challenging needs of the Catholic Church’s Mission in Education by working in collaboration with other Religious Congregations within the Gaudete Trust.

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De La Mennais Brothers (Brothers of Christian Instruction)
Charism Statement



The De La Mennais Brothers, also known as the Brothers of Christian Instruction, is a teaching order founded by Father Jean-Marie De La Mennais and Father Gabriel Deshayes in 1819 **to educate the poor youth of rural Brittany and "make Jesus Christ better known and better loved"** by them. These children had neither the opportunity to go to school, nor to learn about their faith due to the social upheaval caused by the French Revolution (1789)



The new congregation was given the motto "**Dieu Seul (D.S.), 'For God Alone'**". Such was the early success of the congregation that they were soon in demand throughout France and in its colonies. The Brothers are now in 26 countries around the world, places like Chile, Japan, France, Uganda, Tahiti, Senegal, Italy, U.S.A., South Sudan and Argentina. Together with committed lay colleagues, we continue to live out the charism of our founders in the service of young people and the wider church.

We seek to **instruct, educate and evangelise** young people, enabling the growth of the whole person in all aspects of their being, across a wide variety of schools, educational projects, youth movements and camps in our worldwide network.

We encourage all members of our educational communities (students and their families, teaching and non-teaching staff, administration) to work towards a **culture of fraternity**, where each person is encouraged to live out an inclusive educational philosophy founded on Gospel values that promotes mutual love and respect, where everyone is attentive to the needs of others, so that we might bear witness to the presence of Christ and the reign of his kingdom among us.



We emphasise the importance of:

- encouraging the spiritual growth of each individual in the context of a Catholic faith community, whilst respecting individual freedom of belief
- each individual feeling loved and respected as they are
- the quality of our inter-personal relationships
- developing in our pupils a spirit of service within a culture of fraternity built on personal responsibility and the active expression of solidarity with those in most need.

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THE CHARISM OF THE

SISTERS, FAITHFUL COMPANIONS

The Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ Sisters) were founded in Amiens, France in 1820 by Venerable Marie Madeleine d'Houët. Inspired by the holy women of the Gospel, they hear God calling them to follow Jesus with love and fidelity as they accompany him in his mission today. In every time and situation, they hear the cry of Jesus from the cross: "I THIRST". Their hearts are pierced by the cry of the earth, our common home, and the cry of their suffering sisters and brothers, and they reach out to all in solidarity, compassion and companionship.

OF JESUS

Ignatian Spirituality is at the root of our FCJ way of life. Marie Madeleine wanted the members of the international Society she founded to live by the attitudes and values of Jesus.

Through discernment and reflection, FCJ Sisters seek to discover God's invitation to grow in faith, hope and love in all aspects of daily life.



Faithful Companions of Jesus rejoice that the Risen Jesus, source of our hope, joy and energy, is present and active in us and all around us. They desire to live as women of the Resurrection, messengers of the Good News, living out this desire in the divided and often suffering reality of our Church, World and God's entire creation. A strong spirit of companionship, which creates union of minds and hearts not only among the sisters themselves but also among those with whom they live and work, is and always has been evident in those whose calling is encapsulated in their title, Faithful Companions of Jesus.

Faithful Companions of Jesus long to share the gift of this spirituality, to preserve and develop the charism of companionship, which is so relevant in our world today.

Faithful Companions of Jesus, like Marie Madeleine, seek to make known and loved the name of Jesus, his Spirit, his Heart and his Mother.

Our one mission unites us, but our ministries are varied—contemporary expressions of Marie Madeleine's vision and inspiration. Some of our ministry outreach is exercised through our corporate works, especially [FCJ Schools and Spirituality Centres](#).

The Congregation of **La Sainte Union**

The Congregation of **La Sainte Union** (Holy Union) was founded by a French priest, Jean Baptiste Debrabant in Douai, northern France in 1826 in response to the suffering and deprivation of the area. During those troubled times his primary concern was the future of young people. He considered Christian education the most effective way to combat the ills of society.

With the help of a small group of Belgian and French women and inspired by the spirituality of the Incarnation Fr. Jean Baptiste Debrabant founded the Sisters of La Sainte Union. When he died in 1880 LSU schools existed in France, Belgium, England and Ireland. These schools catered for a range of social classes during a time of changing needs.

Today schools founded by the Sisters of La Sainte Union are challenged by current needs to provide an education for young people which reflects the vision of Jean Baptiste Debrabant and the call of La Sainte Union sisters today *to be at the heart of the world revealing God's love* (Constitutions).

Our LSU school communities strive to live the special gift of Union. This will be reflected in an attitude of openness, compassion and care, a desire to be one's best self, to bring out the best in others, to make our world a better place for all, with special concern for the planet and the most needy in our world. Characterised by simplicity, hospitality and warm relationships, we strive to be true to our LSU identity.

Inspired by their heritage our LSU schools will provide an education that caters for the whole person and their future, in a school community and learning environment which respects and cares for each student and values excellence and hard work.

