

CATHOLIC LIFE UPDATE

DECEMBER 2024
TERM 1

CATHOLIC LIFE AND MISSION

It has been an exciting term at Archbishop Ilsey Catholic School and it has literally flown by. With 2025 just around the corner it is true to say that the whole community is looking forward to the Christmas holidays. We are currently in the period of Advent which in the liturgical calendar is a time of joy and hope for all Catholics as Christians prepare for the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Since September there have been so many events that have taken place which as a school we know have brought joy, happiness and hope to many of our brothers and sisters both locally, nationally and internationally.

For the past 15 weeks, our pupils and students have been fantastic in finding the time to organise and run a host of different charity events. We have raised funds for many good causes including Macmillan Cancer Support, Breast Cancer Awareness, the Mind Charity and the Samaritan's Purse Shoebox appeal. Our Sixth Form students organised the Macmillan cake sales both after our Year 7 and 12 Welcome Mass for pupils and their families and for our staff in school. They also raised money by taking part in 'Dress Down Friday' and Stand Up Bingo. Students have been so generous in all our charity endeavours.



CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

Many of our families have also contributed to and continue to give to the school's annual Christmas hamper appeal. I would like to take this opportunity to remind all parents and carers that the deadline for donations is 13th December.

All of our parents and carers are cordially invited to the Hamper Masses which are scheduled to take place at the following times at Holy Souls Catholic Church;

- 18th December at 9.15am for Years 7 and 8
- 18th December at 2.15pm for Year 11 and Sixth Form
- 19th December at 9.15am for years 9 and 10

The hampers will be distributed across the Midlands with the help of the Holy Souls Saint Vincent De Paul group and will help many of those belonging to our extended family who are in need at this time of year. On behalf of the school, we would like to thank you all for your help in supporting the charity work of the school.



(Mrs Ruck with her tutor groups hamper collection. Five in total. A fantastic effort from 9FR)

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Father Marco, Deacon Martin and Deacon Tim have organised a number of Masses since the start of the academic year. Pupils and students in Year 7, 8, 11 and Sixth Form have all attended a whole year group Mass since September and Father has reflected on a host of different themes in his sermons, always encouraging our young people to put their faith into action. It is wonderful to report that since the start of the term, Mrs Jones and Deacon Martin have been running a school choir which comprises of over 30 pupil volunteers. They have worked hard every week to prepare for each Mass, enriching the delivery of liturgy with their voices. We are exceptionally proud of them all.



(The Archbishop Ilsey School Choir- Dec 2024)

(Photos taken at the Year 7 and 12 Mass. September 2024)



During our masses we have also inaugurated many of our pupil volunteers into the school Chaplaincy Team. They have enriched the Catholic Life of the school in many ways this year through carrying out numerous acts of charity. As of next half term, they will make even greater contributions to year group assemblies and they will run environmental projects for the school so that Archbishop Ilsley makes an even greater contribution to tackling the issues Mother Nature faces as highlighted by Pop Francis in Laudato Si.

Deacon Martin organised a trip for our Year 7 chaplaincy team at the start of the academic year to Oscott College. Oscott College, which is based in Sutton Coldfield, is where future priests receive their training. Highlights of the trip included a visit to the beautiful chapel, which was built by Pugin, the famous Catholic architect who also built the Houses of Parliament and a meeting with the Rector of the College, Father Michael Dolman.



(Deacon Martin and Archbishop Ilsley Chaplaincy Team representatives attending the Chaplaincy Commissioning Day at Oscott College on 16th September 2024)

Deacon Tim also took a cohort of Chaplaincy Team members to Archbishop Bernard Longley's Mass which took place at St Chad's Cathedral. It is great to note that Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School was represented alongside pupils from other schools from across the Birmingham Diocese. The Mass highlighted the plight of suffering and persecuted Christians, organised by Aid to the Church in Need.



(Deacon Tim and representatives of the Chaplaincy team attending Mass at St Chad's organised by the Catholic charity; Aid to the Church in Need)

Furthermore, our school has remained to committed to working alongside our brothers and sisters who run the Kenelm Youth Trust. On 9th December, ten Year 13 students will be accompanied by Deacon Tim and Father Marco on a three-day residential where students will have to the opportunity to reflect upon their faith and their spiritual journey alongside other Sixth Formers from across the Diocese. It's wonderful to note that we continue to work with the Kenelm Youth Team and our hoping to arrange more opportunities for Archbishop Ilesley to visit Alton Castle in the not-so-distant future.



(Year 13 students attending a three day residential at Soli House)

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN CATHOLIC LIFE AT ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY- JANUARY 2025 AND BEYOND

Since September all our staff and pupils have been working hard to ensure that their rooms have a designated focus area for daily acts of Prayer and Liturgy. Each Sacred Space includes information about the Liturgical year, our school prayer and images and information about our house saints. Every morning tutors or a pupil light an electric candle and pray for a host of intentions. As of next term, morning prayer will take on different forms throughout the year including Monday meditation on Scripture, the Tuesday 3 Minute Retreat, Wednesday Worship to Remember, Thoughts and Prayers Thursday and Friday's spiritual journey into the weekend.

As of January 2025, Sixth Form students will partake in a new initiative called the Archangel Gabriel Stewardship Programme. This is a new initiative in school will involve our oldest students helping pupils in the lower years achieve to the very best of their potential. Sixth Formers will focus on helping pupils develop their numeracy and literacy skills as well as skills in many other subject areas. It is hoped that some Sixth Formers will also visit our Catholic Primary Feeder schools to mentor and teach future generations of Archbishop Ilesley pupils. This programme is the epitome of what we stand for at Archbishop Ilesley Catholic School; our senior students using their own wisdom and God given talents to help nurture the skills and talents on pupils in Year 7, 8 and 9.

