



Dear Parents & Carers,

As we approach the festive season, I would like to take a moment to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas. This time of year, is special for many reasons, but foremost is the celebration of the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is a time for reflection, joy, and gratitude, as we remember the love and peace that His arrival brings into our world.

Much of this newsletter details how we have been preparing our students for this special season.

Catholic Life of the School update

Hallmark 6: “We create community among those with whom we work and with those we serve”

Every year we take a different Hallmark from the Sisters of Notre Dame to focus on and inspire us. This message has been explored in assemblies, prayers and acts of charity.

Opportunities for Prayer, reflection and Christian Service in School



Over the last year we have seen a huge rise in students wanting to be active in their faith. We always have willing volunteers to read in assemblies, services and Mass but the area that has really grown is Student Leadership. We now have a thriving Faith in Action group, Sixth Form Chaplaincy leaders and a new Chaplaincy Champion team.

At the end of last year, the Sixth Form team planned and led a voluntary Mass which was attended by 60 students. The Chaplaincy Champions retreated for a day together to pray and start creating resources for the year ahead. This is as it should be – students leading their peers!

On a weekly basis student have opportunities to pray and reflect in different ways. The timetable for this term has been as follows;

Monday	Rosary	Thursday	Faith in Action
Tuesday	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Friday	Rosary
Wednesday	Prayer group and the Rosary		

Advent Services

Today, I had the privilege of being part of our school community's Advent celebrations, attending the Year 10 and Sixth Form services which took place in school as well as St John's, Ranmoor. I was truly proud to witness our students and staff come together and participate in a reflection of the important journey of Advent.

As we journey with Mary, Joseph, and the Wise Men, we are reminded of the importance of faith, trust, and hope in God's plan. The services provided an opportunity for all of us to pause and reflect on the light of Christ, who guides us through both the joys and challenges of life.

The services were joyful as well as reflective, with a live nativity scene enveloping before our eyes as students and staff became the star, shepherd and angels etc. The pictures here give you a little flavour of this!



On Tuesday, 17th December, our school community came together for the annual Carol Service at St. Vincent's Catholic Church in Crookes. The church was filled to capacity, with extra chairs brought in to accommodate the congregation.

The atmosphere was joyous as everyone sang their hearts out to well-loved carols, including Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, Once in Royal David's City, Silent Night, and Joy to the World. The Notre Dame orchestra, conducted by Mr. Ward, provided outstanding accompaniment, setting the tone for a truly magical evening.



We were treated to the beautiful voices of the children from St. Marie's Primary School, accompanied by Mrs. Twomey on the electric piano. A special highlight of the evening was a solo by one of the St Marie's children, which completely captivated the audience! Later on, in the evening a duet was performed by two Year 8 students from Notre Dame. So beautiful!

The service also featured thoughtful readings shared by students from both Notre Dame and St. Marie's, bringing the Christmas story to life. Fr. Paddy concluded the evening with a heartfelt blessing and a touching Christmas message, leaving everyone with a sense of peace and joy.

A huge thank you to everyone who made this event so special including;

- Fr. Paddy for his prayers, blessings, and the use of the church.
- Mr. Ward and the Notre Dame orchestra for their incredible musical leadership.
- Mrs. Twomey and the children from St. Marie's for their beautiful performances.

Advent Activities

Advent has been a very busy time in school as students have been preparing themselves spiritually as well as participating in acts of charity and Christian Service.

Throughout Advent, we have had Voluntary Mass available once a week before school which has been really well attended by students and staff. Additionally, 70-80 students have taken the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of their preparations.

This week we had a special voluntary Advent Mass at lunchtime which was attended by 60 students which is incredibly impressive considering how much else was going on including all the usual clubs and activities.

Christmas lunch at St Bernard's School

This week, two Year 10 Hallam Young Leaders were selected to assist at St. Bernard's School, Herringthorpe, for their annual Christmas lunch for the elderly and local parishioners.

It was a wonderful occasion, with around 50 people in attendance.



Staff news

Sadly, we are saying good bye today to Mr Roden (Assistant Head Curriculum and Timetable) and Mrs Baldwin (Biology teacher). I am sure you will want to join in with me in thanking them for their years of service to the school. We wish them joy and happiness for the future.

In January we will also be welcoming some new members of staff;

- Mr O'Shea and Mr Utley- Maths teachers
- Mr Delamere and Ms Marchant – Teachers of Science

And finally

I would like to offer a prayer for you and your families during this special time:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate this Christmas. We ask that Your peace, joy, and love fill every home and heart. Bless our families, keep them safe, and grant them strength and faith in the coming year. May we continue to walk in the light of Your love, sharing it with all whom we encounter. We pray for health, happiness, and harmony in our community. Amen.

May this Christmas be filled with blessings, and may the New Year bring hope and renewed strength to you and your loved ones. We look forward to welcoming back our students bright and early on the morning of the 6th January!

With warm wishes and blessings,

Dates for your diary

Last Day of Term	Friday 20 th December	
First Day of Spring Term	Monday 6 th January	
School Production: Sweeney Todd	Wednesday 15 th to Friday 17 th January 2024	7:00pm
Matinee performance	Saturday 18 th January	2:30pm
Y11 Parents Evening	Thursday 23 rd January	4:30pm – 7pm
Y8 Options Evening	Tuesday 28 th January	

Events happening in School over the coming weeks

Y12 Assessment Week 1	13 th – 17 th January
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