



NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN (3) 2017

Dear Parents, carers and friends,

As our thoughts and preparations turn to the feast of Christmas, some reflections on highlights and celebrations this last half term.

During the half term holiday Mary, Mrs Cripps, Father Pat Sherlock and myself took thirty of our Year 8 and 9 students on pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi. Alongside visits to the Colosseum, St. Peter's and the Vatican Museums we attended the Papal Audience and came very close to Pope Francis himself. After a stop at the best gelato shop in Italy we came to Assisi, home to St Francis and St Clare. We made sure to bring back copies of Giotto's frescoes for our new Pope Francis Wing.



During the month of November, along with the whole Church, we remembered those friends and family who we have lost in the past. Our Requiem Mass was a beautiful and poignant commemoration, which although voluntary, saw St. Joseph's packed by students and staff wishing to remember their departed loved ones. We remembered and prayed for both the students and staff of our community who have died over these past forty years.

I accompanied our Head Boy and Head Girl to the service for Remembrance Day at the War Memorial in Basingstoke on the 12th of November, where they laid our school wreath with great dignity and respect. It was very good to see so many of our young taking part in the service as representatives of the Army, Navy, RAF, Fire and Police cadets. There were students too from St. John Ambulance, Scouts and Guides and the Salvation Army.



We celebrated a very successful School Mission from the 4th to the 8th of December. Mary, our chaplain organized and led a wonderful week of prayer, laughter and reflection. The theme for the Mission came from Jesus' words in John's Gospel where He says that He came to 'give us life to the full.' We were joined by several fantastic guests with Pippa Baker, John and Katie from 'Rise Theatre', and the renowned Christian mime artist Steve Murray. The event culminated in reconciliation and the celebration of Mass on Friday where Fr. Chris led us in deep reflection on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Our diverse community celebrated both Black History Month and an Asian Celebration Day this half term. Students from both continents organized lunchtimes of music, dance, language and food for the whole community to enjoy and learn from.



Our Carol Service on Monday was, as always, a real reminder of the reason for our forthcoming holiday. Mrs Smith and Mrs Johnson led the choirs and ensembles with help from our peripatetic music teachers, Mrs Jones and Mrs Atkinson. The students sang and played like angels! The same could almost be said for the ad hoc staff choir!

We welcomed our elderly neighbours into school yesterday to join our celebrations and to enjoy plenty of mince pies, dancing and musical entertainment. This is always a special occasion and the students were very diligent in their care and hospitality.

May I take this opportunity to wish two colleagues the very best of luck in their futures as they leave us this Christmas. Mrs Allen is off to pastures new and we thank her for her time as a wonderful tutor and member of the History team. Mr Bazen, as many of you know has been appointed Headteacher of Wyvern School in Salisbury. We know that he is just the man for the job and we thank him for his tireless service to our community over these past years. I know that both of our colleagues will be missed, and that they will continue to do 'ordinary things extraordinarily well.'

To finish, may I wish you and your families and loved ones a very blessed and peaceful Christmas and the very best of health and happiness for the new year.

God bless.

J P Wright
Headteacher