



SALESIAN SCHOOL

Newsletter

December 2023 - Issue 21



The Week Before Christmas

This year the Church is blessed to have the final Sunday of Advent coincide with Christmas Eve. This will mark the culmination of our four-week preparation for the birth of Christ. During the Advent season, we have observed the liturgical colour of purple, a symbol of both patience and hope. Patience, as we await the fulfilment of the promise of Christ's arrival, and hope, as we eagerly anticipate the joy and peace he brings. Throughout the course of Advent the 'Theme of the Week' at school has regularly reflected that we are awaiting the birth of our Saviour. As a school we paused for a short while on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, remembering the wholehearted Discipleship which Mary demonstrated. Something which we could all strive to emulate in our own lives.

On the 24th of December, the readings will remind us of the promise Jesus fulfilled. In 2 Samuel, the prophecy of a descendant of King David, a saviour to redeem humanity, is proclaimed. The Lord declares, "I will be a Father to him and he a Son to me". This promise finds its fulfilment in the Gospel of Luke's account of the Annunciation. Mary receives the divine message that she will conceive and give birth to God's Son. At the end of a busy and eventful Autumn Term, it is this message of joy and hope which makes being part of the Catholic community so special.

For our final day of term at school we will gather for lessons, liturgy and celebration (it is 'business as usual' for the rest of the week!). This will give the staff and children at Salesian a brief moment, at a busy time of year, to reflect and give thanks for everything that the Lord has given. The regular newsletters which you have received during the Autumn Term would have provided you with an opportunity to see some of the things that we have been thankful for. They would have also offered you a small insight into what has gone on inside and outside of the classroom. Unfortunately, it is only a fleeting glance into the day-to-day life of the children and staff at Salesian and what makes it such a unique place. Luckily, each day I am offered the privilege of witnessing students excelling inside and outside of the classroom and teachers living out their vocation and creating lessons that I can only wish I had at school!

Recently, this work was recognised through the school being ranked amongst the 'Top 10 schools' in the country. The school does not seek external praise, but it is wonderful to have the hard work of the community recognised! However, it is important to remember that this 'one off' recognition is simply the result of attempting to be the best possible school every day. This means creating great lessons, offering a broad co-curricular timetable and parents, students and staff all working together for the same outcomes.

I am sure that we can look forward to 2024 bringing more of the same and as a community being a place where we celebrate the peace, joy, hope and love that Jesus' birth brings to all people.

I hope that you and your family have a happy, holy and joyful Christmas.

Best Wishes,
Mr Bruynseels

Gospel Reflection
What does the scripture mean for us this week?

Gaudete Sunday

John 1:6-8, 19-28 This week's Gospel focuses on John the Baptist and his message of preparation for the arrival of Our Lord. However, on Gaudete (or "Rejoice") Sunday, as this, the 3rd Sunday in Lent is known, we are encouraged to pause amidst all the preparation and remember that the arrival of Jesus in the world should give cause for great joy.

The end of term is often a frantic time, the holiday can't come soon enough but we could do with the final week being a bit longer to get through that final to-do list. Oscillating between these two conflicting pressures whilst desperately trying to live up to the "no winding down" mantra can be exhausting and leave little room for focussing on spreading the joy that comes, not just from the celebration of Christmas but, from a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

Reflections on Gaudete Sunday

- What causes for joy do I have to celebrate in my life?
- How will I share this joy this week?
- Where might I make room for a joyful encounter with God this Christmas?

Getting To Know Our Teachers



Mr Harvey

Current Position in School:

I teach Science and am Deputy Head of Year 7.

How I got into teaching:

After completing a degree in Electronic Engineering I began a career in defence and worked on some really interesting projects.

I have a passion for enabling adventure and inspiring others to develop practical skills and in my spare time volunteer with the Scouts. We help children develop the skills they'll need to succeed and the values and mission are very similar to ours here at Salesian.

Volunteering through the pandemic provided me with a good understanding of the issues that affect young people and reaffirmed motivation to work with them to navigate their future. I decided to change careers to teaching and am so glad I did!

Why I love my job:

The students at Salesian are a delight to teach. They are lively, engaged and enthusiastic and every day brings opportunities for challenge and celebration.

Being a Year 7 form tutor is the highlight of my job. I really appreciate the time I have with the students at the start of each day. The students in 72Rua are very proud of their school and I've loved learning about their experiences, achievements and helping them rise to the challenge of their first term at secondary school.

We belong to the most caring, friendly and supportive community here at Salesian and we work together to achieve great things, it's a great place to be!

A Fact About Myself

I am a qualified Powerboat Instructor and have grown up with a love for all things outdoor adventure and water sports related.

In 2012 I was proud to have been given the chance to escort the Olympic Torch on day 70 of the Olympic Torch Relay as it made its way down the Thames to the Olympic stadium.

Year 13 Super-Curricular Day

21st November

Our Year 13 Biologists visited Royal Holloway, University of London, on 21 November for their Super-Curricular Biology experience. The day provided an excellent opportunity to work in a large university Biosciences' laboratory under the supervision of Professor Laszlo Bogre and a small team of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The aim was to investigate how plants see and direct their development using photoreceptors using the skill of observation and gene profiling techniques. The practical work involved purifying DNA from three plants (wild type, cry2 and phyB mutants), setting up a PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) to amplify the DNA samples and then analysing them with the aid of a restriction digest and separation using gel electrophoresis. From the results and observations of the plants, students were then invited to explain their findings.

Students also listened to a wonderfully enthusiastic presentation by Dr Enrique Lopez-Juez on vertebrate

development. Within the context of evolution, this presentation, which also involved observing microscope slides, considered a range of animal skeletons illustrating vertebrate development in animals and nuanced their evolution.

This opportunity gave our students a real insight into life as a science undergraduate and students very much enjoyed the chance to see the university in action. This was especially appropriate at a time when so many of them are in the timeframe of applying to university in preparation for the next stage of their academic journey.

- Mrs Moloney





Carol Service

On the evening of the 29th November, we held our annual 'Nine Lessons and Carols' Service at Christ the Prince of Peace Church in Weybridge. This concert was a celebration of Advent and Christmas through a selection of contrasting musical works. We were thrilled to have had just under 150 students involved in the concert, participating in a selection of five choirs and three instrumental ensembles. We were equally thrilled to have sold out the event, allowing the students to perform for an audience of 350 people, their family members and their teachers. We are incredibly proud of each student for their participation, hard work and dedication to the months of rehearsals that went into making each performance truly amazing.

The concert comprised of performances by the Junior Girls' Choir (The Time of Snow), Boys' Choir (Torches), Senior Girls' Choir (Christmas Lullaby), Scholars' Choir (Ave Maris Stella & The Waiting Sky), College Choir (Christmas Cards), Sinfonia Orchestra (Walking in the Air & White Christmas), Jazz Band (The Most Wonderful Time of the Year), Salesian Orchestra (Christmas Cracker), and the finale piece played/sung by everyone involved (Star Carol). The finale piece was a true showstopper, and a fitting end to a wonderful concert of musical celebration. The performances were beautifully punctuated by Gospel Readings from students in Year 7-13, Mrs Hibbins-Durkin and Mr Gower, which allowed everyone present some time to pause and reflect as we were approaching the journey through Advent.

The concert was underpinned by the importance of celebrating the many years of hard work that our Director of Music Rebecca Clarey had spent inspiring the students, and pouring her heart and soul into the musical life of the school through events such as these. Rebecca served the students at Salesian by working tirelessly and providing endless opportunities for performance, in turn cultivating a rich musical community, and year after year overseeing the growth of love for music from the students around her. The Carol Service was one of Rebecca's favourite events of the year, and we all felt her presence very much with us that evening. We wanted to pay tribute to the enormous impact that Rebecca had on those around her, and we know that she was with us all and feeling very proud of each and every student.

Mr Graham and I would like to say a very, very big thank you to everyone who helped to make it all possible, we couldn't have done it without you all. Thank you to Mr Creen, Mrs Garbett, Mrs Jones, Mr Graham, Mrs Hibbins-Durkin, Mr Boon, Mrs Alighieri, to the incredible premises team, to the finance department, to all of the staff who came to watch and support our students, to all of the parents who helped us to sell out the Church and who support their children's musical opportunities, and of course to all of our brilliant young musicians and singers.

We at the Salesian Music Department would like to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas. - *Miss Thom*



Year 7 Singing Competition

The Salesian Music Department kicked off the Advent season in style, with the Year 7 Christmas Singing Competition taking place on Friday 1st December. The students from all ten classes had all been practicing hard with their teachers, with the anticipation of being crowned the winning group of Band 1 or Band 2, and receiving the delicious doughnut prizes.

After a quick warm-up to make sure that everyone was ready to do their best singing, we introduced our wonderful judge, Mrs Shannon Badger, who is one of our incredible singing teachers at Salesian. Shannon is a very successful vocalist who, when not teaching and inspiring our young singers, has a busy performance career.

We all enjoyed listening to a wide selection of Christmas songs which got everyone in the festive mood, such as 'All I Want for Christmas is You', 'Frosty the Snowman', 'Rocking Around the Christmas Tree', 'Nazareth', 'Jingle Bell Rock', 'It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year' and 'Last Christmas'.

After each song we listened to the thoughtful feedback given by our judge, made up of lots of lovely praise for each class choir, highlighting the hard work that paid off in each performance.

It was a very difficult task for our judge to pick a winning class from each band, and we were certainly not envious of the task, but in the end the winners were chosen...



Another massive congratulations to 71P for the band 1 competition with 'Nazareth' from 'Nativity', and 72P for the band 2 competition with 'Last Christmas' by Wham! (72P were conducted by our new addition to the music department team, Mr Boon – well done on a very successful first singing competition Mr Boon).

We hope that you all enjoyed your doughnuts (they disappeared quickly enough!), as you thoroughly deserved them.

Mr Graham, Mr Boon and I want to congratulate every class for their hard work and commitment to the competition. It takes an awful lot of courage to stand up in front of your peers and sing, but you each did a fabulous job, and we were really blown away by the quality of the singing that we were treated to. We really look forward to hearing more of the fantastic singing from this year group in 2024. - Miss Thom



Lille trip 2023

French Department

On the first of December, we had the pleasure of taking 49 students on a two day trip to Lille Christmas market. Students were able to browse the 90 stalls, indulge in some delicious food (crepes/waffles etc.) and do some Christmas shopping for their family and friends. We do hope students will remember this experience for the rest of the lives. - Miss Vardapin



Salesian Compassion In Action

Salesian compassion in action have been busy this term serving in our local community and in our school. Board games, live music, hot chocolates, cake sales and rosary crafts on the yard have been some of the activities we have completed. Our students are such beacons of service and hope and we can't wait to do more next term. - Mrs Hibbins-Durkin



Drama Dept.

Co-curricular Trips

We had a fabulous time taking Year 7 students to the Pantomime in Woking on 11th December at the New Victoria Theatre in Woking. Anton Du Beke wowed us with his dance moves and all the usual panto jokes made it in courtesy of Paul Chuckle!

We are excited to be returning to the New Victoria in the new year for 'Everybody's Talking About Jamie' which will be for our KS4 Drama students and tickets will be available on a first come first served basis so please keep an eye out for an email with full details in January.

We are also excited to be running a workshop and careers event in January with Central School of Speech and Drama at the end of January for Years 9 to 13. Full details will be emailed in the new year.



Drama Clubs

Year 7 Drama club, run by Miss Murphy, took to the stage on 19th December for their first showcase. Over 50 talented students took roles from Roald Dahl's 'Revolting Rhymes' and performed to an audience of parents and siblings in the Drama studio. Miss Murphy is really proud of all the students who took part, not just for their acting but also the fabulous home-made props and costumes! Year 7 Drama Club will start again in January every Tuesday from 3.20pm to 4.20pm in Room 23 - new members very welcome!



On Wednesday 20th December it was Year 8 Drama club's turn to perform their winter showcase. Students rose to the challenge of performing extracts from texts such as Dennis Kelly's 'DNA'. The evening was a great success and Miss Welland is extremely proud of how professional the students have been throughout the term, showing a real dedication to rehearsing after school and through their lunch breaks. Year 8 Drama club welcomes new members in January, starting back every Tuesday in Room 22 from 3.30pm to 4.20pm.



Senior Production: 'Blood Brothers'

Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 students thoroughly enjoyed the production week for 'Blood Brothers' starting with a special matinee performance for the whole of Year 9. This gave the year group a brilliant chance to watch the play they will be studying next term and inspire them to take to stage next Easter for their very own production led by Miss Welland.

'Blood Brothers' told us the tale of the mother, Mrs Johnstone (Maddie B Year 13) who, in desperation, gives away one of her twin boys to her employee, Mrs Lyons (Olivia W Year 13)). Mrs Johnstone is warned from the start by the ominous narrators (Hanna D, Cheryl M & Josie S Year 10) that if the brothers find out they have been parted they both will die. Fate plays it's role in bringing the boys back

together when they are 7 and we meet Mickey (Evelyn S Year 10) and Edward (Aela M Year 10) who make their promise to become 'blood brothers'. The years that follow see the boys reunite age 14 (Beau H & Jude C Year 10) and again age 18 (Luca H Year 11 and Will R Year 12), always accompanied by their friend Linda (Alessia B Year 10, Aoife F Year 11 & Kayleigh G Year 11) with whom both of the boys are in love. The tragic tale weaves it's way to the foregone conclusion that ends with the mourning of the brothers, who grew up having very different experiences of life.

The show was a great success, not just because of the talented cast of over 30 actors, but also the huge numbers of people who worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Miss Mckeogh masterminded the brilliant set design with the help of Mrs Kimmins and lots of students from the Set Dec Crew. Mr James and Jack W (Year 10) built the set which wouldn't have looked out of place in a professional theatre! Robert K (Year 13) was a true professional designing the lighting and sound whilst Mrs Stopps, Mrs Alighieri and Mrs Alessi co-ordinated students in DT to design the poster (Orla H Year 12), set design logo (Imogen M Year 12) and costumes. The show was directed by Mrs Garbett, with the help of Mr Graham, and both are so proud of everyone who took part. - Mrs Garbett





Sports Dept.

There are so many highlights from this term it really would take forever to list them all. Firstly a massive thank you to all the students who come along and commit their time to the clubs, the staff both PE and beyond who facilitate the clubs and lastly the parents, who give lifts, sit and wait for late fixtures and have been brilliant at emailing asap when students can't play.

A few highlights from later in this term are as follows:

1. Year 7 girls and Year 8 boys who won the District cross-country and congratulations to those students who have been selected to go on to represent the District in January.



2. U13 Girls and U16 who are Surrey Team Table Tennis Champions! Year 8 boys and U13 girls who continue their march in the Football Cups.



3. Year 8 boys and U13 girls who continue their march in the Football Cups.



4. Year 10 Boys who remain unbeaten in the District Basketball League.
5. We have completed over 115 fixtures this term and what remains a constant throughout is how well our students conduct themselves both on and off the pitch. We have also had a record number of students volunteering their time to come and help with clubs - this is a tremendous help to us, especially with year 7 where we have over 50 students attending netball and football each week.



It is also incredible to hear about the amazing achievements of some of our students in their sports outside of school, please do let us know so we can pop it on the PE Instagram page to celebrate their successes. Emily and Emma who became European Acrobatic Gymnastic Champions this term to name just a couple we are aware of. Follow @salesianPE for the most up to date information and results from the department. We will be running a slightly changed co-curricular timetable in the new year so please look out for changes to some activities. - Mrs Gallagher

Wellbeing Wednesday

Year 12

At the end of term we warmly welcomed 'Wellbeing Wednesdays', in which our year 12s had the opportunity to come out of their regular timetable and get involved with different activities around the School and College. These activities included self defence, table tennis, volleyball, football, yoga, body conditioning, tabletop games, colouring and films!



Chertsey Town U15's New Players Wanted



Chertsey Town U15's Blues (current year 10) are looking for experienced players to strengthen our current squad.

We play on Sundays in the Premier Elite Division of the Surrey Primary League & train every Wednesday evening at Salesians School (Chertsey)

Please call Romeel Patel on 07961 198484 or

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