

Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy was as busy as ever during the Summer Term! It is impossible to describe everything that went on, but in this article we outline a few of the most important moments that we celebrated.

Tuesday 22nd April saw all staff return to school for our **Deanery Retreat**, where we were joined by all staff from our local Catholic primary schools for a day of prayer and reflection. Central to this event was a Mass celebrated by Father Dermott O’Gorman. He reminded us in his homily that Jesus is our Hope and is calling us to be Pilgrims of Hope for the young people in our care. Following the Mass, staff were able to take part in a variety of retreat workshops, including lectio divina, prayer and reflection, faith, pilgrimage and wellbeing. It was a pleasure to work in solidarity with one another in Catholic education.



On Friday 23rd May, we celebrated our 2025 Leavers’ Mass followed by shirt signing and cakes. Father Peter Murphy was our celebrant, and it was a joyful occasion reflecting on prayer, calling and mission, as our students move on to the next stage of their education.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you”, from John 15:16, was central to the service.

We continue to pray for our young people on their journey. Each of our leavers was presented with a prayercard including a message from Mrs. Lennon and the whole SJF community.



Friday 20th June saw our annual celebration of **St. John Fisher Day**. Celebrating the feast day of our patron saint is one of the highlights of our school calendar! Normal lessons are suspended and everyone in school is involved in activities on the day.

We began the day in our courtyard with a whole-school Mass, celebrated by Bishop Paul Hendricks, who said; "We can all be like the saints, making time for Jesus in our lives, finding out what we are called to be."

This year's events were particularly spectacular as they formed part of our 60th anniversary year celebrations.



Following the outdoor service, students chose from a variety of activities celebrating their gifts and talents. These included sporting activities, arts and crafts, games, prayer and charity fundraising stalls.

One of the most anticipated aspects of the day is the 'St John Fisher's God Talent' show. Thanks to the many God-given talents of our students, there was a wide range of acts, and it was a joy to see the students celebrate the abilities of everyone in our school family.

Following the festivities, we finished the day with a donation to our local community charity, The Street Angels. It was a memorable day for all involved and we look forward with hope to everything we will achieve in our community over the next sixty years.

On Wednesday 25th June, some of our Year 12 students had the privilege of supporting primary school students with the **Diocesan Jubilee Festival of Hope at Aylesford Priory**. It was a day of sunshine and shared experiences, including a liturgy celebrated by all the primary schools who attended.



As reported in last term's newsletter, celebrations for the continuation of the Year of Jubilee, 'Pilgrims of Hope', are ongoing. On the last day of the summer term we were delighted to welcome **Ann-Marie Whittle and Joanne Burford from the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership to our special service in receiving the Jubilee Candle**. Students led and participated in a Liturgy of the Word Service, which included prayers of the faithful written by our current students, as well as others by some of our new Year 7 students who had attended the recent primary transition day. We were treated to musical accompaniment by a selection of student pianists. It was a truly joyful celebration, and students were also able to make our School Jubilee Pledge for the Year of Pilgrimage.



During this celebration, our students, as agents of change, have pledged to live out Catholic Social Teachings.

The St John Fisher Community has pledged to:

- Hold more charitable events
- Fundraise globally, nationally, and locally
- Continue to work with Medway and Gillingham Street Angels
- Uphold the dignity of life by campaigning about mental health
- Focus on stewardship by raising awareness about upcycling and caring for our environment

Making this pledge is a way for our students to live out our Faith in action. Just as the Jubilee Year calls us to deepen our Faith, shine a light on hope and take a pledge to build a better world together, our pledge helps us to think about what we can do to make a difference.



As the year drew to a close, we held a final **staff service** to celebrate the achievements of the year and to pause and reflect in prayer, giving thanks to God and offering best wishes to staff leavers. The Gospel message of the service reflected on the openness of children to hear and act on the Gospel and its values.

