



Our Lady Catholic Primary School

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20th December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy Holidays:

On behalf of the staff and governors at Our Lady Catholic Primary School, I would like to wish all pupils and parents a very happy and holy Christmas and every blessing for the New Year. As we approach the end of what has been a very busy but productive autumn term, the whole school community is looking forward to a well-earned rest.

Christmas Services in Welwyn Garden City:



As we approach the fourth Sunday of Advent, it is inevitable that our minds may start to drift away from the hard work of our day to day school business, to the festive period itself. The prospect of Christmas cheers us and lifts our spirits away from the cold, dark and depressing seasonal weather. I do hope that as parents you will encourage your child to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Mass during the Christmas holidays. It is our duty to proclaim and celebrate the birth of Christ and to ensure that the real message of Christmas is at the forefront of our hearts. Here is a list of the services in Welwyn Garden City over Christmas weekend:

Sunday 22nd December:

8.00am	-	St. Bonaventure Mass
9.30am	-	Holy Family Mass
10.30am	-	St. Bonaventure Mass
11.30am	-	Our Lady Mass
6.00pm	-	Holy Family Mass

Tuesday 24th December:

5.00pm	-	Our Lady Children's Christmas Mass
6.00pm	-	St. Bonaventure Christmas Mass
8.00pm	-	Holy Family Christmas Mass
9.00pm	-	Our Lady Christmas Mass

Sunday 25th December:

9.00am	-	St. Bonaventure Christmas Morning Mass
10.00am	-	Holy Family Christmas Morning Mass
11.00am	-	Our Lady's Christmas Morning Mass

Marking Advent:

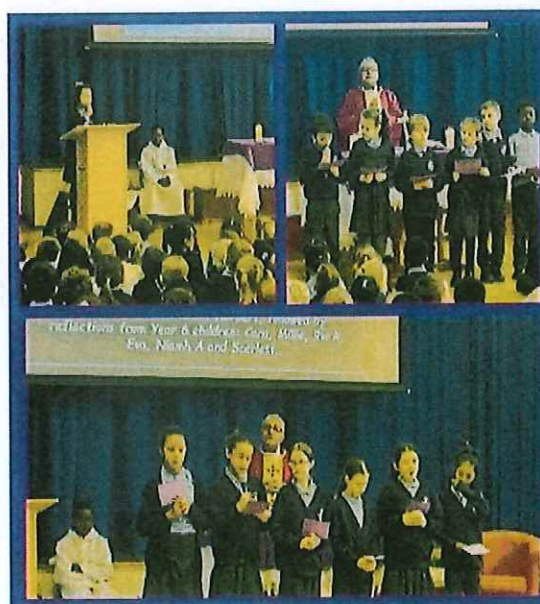
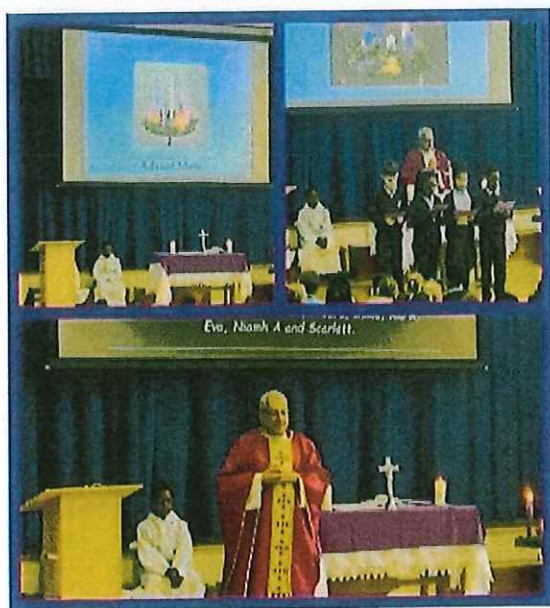
Advent began on 1st December and it marked the beginning of a season of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. As each week passes throughout Advent, it seems that the busyness of life begins to step up a gear, so we were pleased to be able to mark this important season in the liturgical calendar at our school in a number of different ways, which allowed us all to reflect upon the true meaning of Christmas.

On each Monday morning throughout Advent, children, staff and parents were invited to join us in the school hall at 8.40am to reflect on the start of each new week throughout Advent. In each reflection, we lit the next candle on our Advent wreath to mark the passing weeks of preparation. These sessions provided us all with a quiet, reflective time to listen to the messages of Advent and prepare ourselves for the special day. Thank you to everyone who attended each Monday morning.



Thank you to all of the children, staff and parents who joined us each week for our reflection.

On Tuesday 10th December, we celebrated our special Advent Mass in the school with Canon Norbert. Parishioners were also invited to attend this mass so our special celebration was a wonderful opportunity for our school and Parish communities to join together to mark the start of this important season. The children read and sang beautifully throughout the service.



Canon Norbert celebrated our Advent Mass in the school hall. It was a beautiful service.

The Christmas Story:

In addition to the EYFS Nativity Performances that took place on the 4th and 5th December, we were delighted to be able to present our Christmas Carol Concert to our school community on Wednesday 11th December at the church. Both events were such joyous occasions and were events that the children really enjoyed participating in. It provided us all with the opportunity of reflecting on the true meaning of the Christmas Story with each and every child in the school being represented – allowing us all to observe the holiness of the season amidst the flurry of excitement that is in the air (for both children and adults alike!) Throughout both events, the children's reverence was truly humbling and the singing was equally as wonderful. It was great to see so many parents and carers at these events and we hope you enjoyed every moment!



We were blown away by the quality of the singing and dancing by our EYFS children. Well done!

Reasons to be Thankful:

Being prepared to think of others, of course, is a particular strength of Our Lady Catholic Primary School. Raising money for charity is something that our children and staff do readily and willingly. This sense of community is something very special about our school; and it was incredibly pleasing to see the £500 that was raised for Children In Need last month. The community also drew together to raise a £135 for Save the Children on Christmas Jumper Day, £371 at the Year 6 Christmas Fair (for The Passage), £43 for Young Minds (Hello Yellow) and a further £315 for our EYFS department at the Christmas Nativity. Thank you one and all for your generosity. It is truly appreciated!



Mini Vinnie's Food Bank Project:

It was such a pleasure to also see our team of Mini Vinnies leading the way in our support for the local New Zion Food Bank in Welwyn Garden City last week. The children, who were instrumental in arranging for the various donations that were generously provided by our families, packed the bags for the visitors from the food bank to collect. This project is such a wonderful opportunity for the children in our school to live out their faith and by providing them with 'real life' experiences of following the teachings of Christ. I cannot express my gratitude to Ian Matthews and his colleagues at the New Zion Food Bank for allowing our children to shine.



We collected so much food and drink for the New Zion Food Bank – thank you for your support!

Christmas Carols in the Community:

I would also like to mention our fantastic Year 3 children, who visited Oak View Lodge (our local residential home for the elderly) to sing Christmas Carols to the residents. This small act helped to not only spread a little cheer and good will in this festive period but also helped to promote the role of our school within our local community. The Year 3 children made a very big difference to the lives of the people at Oak View Lodge. Thank you!



The Year 3 children were a credit to the school at Oakview Lodge Care Home

Getting in the Christmas Spirit:

We celebrated Christmas a little early at Our Lady's this year. On Tuesday 11th December, Year 6 ran their annual Christmas Fair after school. The Year 6 children have been working so hard making items to sell at the fair in order to raise money for their chosen charity, The Passage. I am delighted to announce that they raised a whopping £371 for their endeavours and deserve a HUGE pat on the back. Well done, Year 6!

On Wednesday 11th December, the whole school, performed our annual Christmas Carol Concert to the school community. The story of Jesus's birth was told through a mixture of traditional Christmas Carols, some more modern festive classics and some beautiful reflective readings and prayers. It gave both our school and Parish community the chance to come together during Advent to prepare ourselves for Christmas and share in the joys and happiness that this time of year brings. Well done, children!



All classes performed so beautifully at the church for our annual Christmas Carol Concert

On Thursday 12th December, the whole school were treated to a festive pantomime at Campus West. The PTA kindly paid for the children to watch a hilarious performance of Sleeping Beauty (oh yes they did.....sorry, I couldn't resist!) The show had children laughing out loud – and a few of the adults too! It was a great way to get into the Christmas spirit. Thank you to our wonderful PTA for this early Christmas present!

On 14th December, our school was also invited to be part of a Christmas Showcase Concert at Westminster Cathedral. Our school choir joined with pupils from other schools across the Diocese to sing a mixture of traditional and contemporary carols, telling the Christmas story. The children sang beautifully and we are extremely proud of each and every one of them.



The Festive Pantomime at Campus West



Our Choir at Westminster Cathedral

On Wednesday 18th December, children also enjoyed their special Christmas lunch – roast turkey with all of the festive trimmings. Children loved coming together to share their Christmas meals (or packed lunches) and they had a very merry time together. It really was the most joyful lunch of the year and the smiles were there for all to see!

And then, to top it all off, on Thursday 19th December, we were treated to the arrival of a very special visitor to the school – who came all the way from the North Pole to give each and every child a lovely little gift.

It was such a surprise for the children to see Father Christmas himself coming into their classrooms. We hope this helped to spread a little Christmas cheer to one and all!



Children enjoying their Christmas lunch



A special visitor from the North Pole!

Thank You Children, Staff and Parents:



I would like to thank all our wonderful children for their hard work throughout this term and for being such great ambassadors for our school. It has been a privilege to see our children thriving each day – learning new concepts from an increasingly challenging curriculum and making progress throughout the term. Each and every child has contributed to the school's improvement journey and they should feel very proud of their fine achievements.

I am sure that you would also like to join with me in thanking all of our fantastic staff team for their continued tremendous hard work and commitment to the children of the school during this term. Our dedicated team have put so much into making this school what it is and for providing the very best education for each and every child in the school community. Thank you for all that you do!

Finally, I would also like to thank our fantastically supportive parents and carers. We are so lucky at Our Lady's to have such a richly diverse community and I have really enjoyed seeing the school's partnership with parents and carers in action over the past term, which has helped to ensure the very best outcomes for our children. By working together, we can ensure that our children enjoy their time at our school, make good progress and leave us as responsible, well-qualified, mature young people, ready to make a valued contribution to society. We have received so many positive comments about the children's behaviour and attitude from a range of visitors to the school and you should all feel very proud of them!

Dates for the Diary:

Below is a list of dates for your diaries – further information will be given later in the term with regards to upcoming class trips.

Christmas Reflection:

To finish, we should reflect on the true magnitude of Christ's birth. Let us remind ourselves that this is the one time of year when it is commonplace to find the spirit of human kindness alive and well. Let us embrace this by ensuring that we enjoy ourselves safely but also take time to look out for those nearest and dearest to us and those less fortunate than ourselves. The true joy of Christmas is the love of Christ, shared with family and friends. May you find His peace, love and joy in the coming New Year. Please remember that our new term begins on **Tuesday 7th January** and we look forward to seeing all of our children return refreshed and eager to learn in the new calendar year. Merry Christmas to you all!

With very best wishes for the festive period,

Richard Curry

O HOLY NIGHT

