



16th December 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Celebration of the Word – Half Term Two, Week Eight

I am thrilled to share that both our **Carols for Caritas** concert and the **Retired Parishioner Party** were a resounding success! Both events were filled with festive cheer and a wonderful sense of community. Parishioners thoroughly enjoyed their time in school. They had the opportunity to hear our talented school choir and spent time with our Prefects. The party brought together friends old and new to celebrate the Christmas season in a spirit of joy and togetherness. I would like to thank all of our local parishes for advertising and supporting this annual event.

At Carols for Caritas, our choir showcased an array of festive carols and we raised over £800 for Caritas—a fantastic achievement! A huge thank you to all the staff and children who helped make both events so special and to everyone who attended. These occasions truly captured the spirit of Advent here at St James' and the strength of our school and parish community. Photographs from both events are available on our St James' app.

Last week we also held a **lunchtime Mass**. This was a lovely occasion and was well attended by our children. It was an opportunity to pause, reflect, and prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus during this busy Advent season. A heartfelt thank you to Fr Louis from Christ Church for leading us in this special time of prayer and worship.

This week, as we light the third Advent candle in school, our Gospel reading for the **Celebration of the Word is from Luke 3:10-18**. In this passage, John the Baptist calls us to a life of generosity, fairness, and compassion, urging us to share what we have, act justly, and consider the needs of others. His message challenges us to live our faith through action, preparing our hearts for the coming of Jesus. This third week of Advent is marked by the lighting of the pink candle, symbolising joy—a joy that springs from the hope and promise of Christ's arrival.

As we celebrate **Gaudete Sunday**, we are reminded to rejoice in the nearness of Jesus' coming and to be witnesses of His love in the world. In school, we embrace this joy through our Advent assemblies and acts of kindness, allowing the light of Christ to shine through us.

During this final week of term, our focus is on the **Catholic Social Teaching principle of Solidarity**, which reminds us of our shared responsibility to care for one another as members of one human family. As we journey through Advent, we encourage our children to reflect on how they can stand together with others, especially those who are vulnerable or in need. Advent is a time of unity and preparation, calling us to open our hearts to Jesus and to one another.

The **Travelling Nativity** will continue to visit each Key Stage Three form this week until 18th December, and we hope it will inspire and enrich your child's experience of Advent, keeping the spirit of Christ at the centre of our preparations.

I have included our Advent prayer below for your own reflection at home, so you can join us in this journey of faith and preparation during this holy season.



ST JAMES'
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



Prayer for Advent

*Christ, come into our world of darkness
Light up our lives with your coming.
Fulfil all our longings with the joy of your birth
Strengthen our resolve to work for change in our world
And to share the hope of your birth that each Advent brings.
Amen.*

We also continue with our **lunchtime prayer** each day:

Lunchtime Prayer

*Bless us, Oh Lord,
and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty
through Christ, Our Lord.
Amen.*

This week, John's words, "There stands among you the one coming after me" (John 1:26), serve as a powerful reminder of Christ's presence in our lives, even as we await His coming at Christmas. These words encourage us to open our eyes and hearts to recognise Jesus in those around us this week—in small acts of kindness, in moments of love, and in opportunities that arise to serve others.

As always, I welcome any feedback you may have. Please feel free to reach out to me at h.purkiss@stjamesheadle.uk.

I wish you all a joyous and merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Yours faithfully

Miss H Purkiss
Associate Assistant Headteacher



With God
all things are possible

Matthew 19:26