



21st December 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Last Sunday marked the third Sunday of Advent when the third candle was lit representing joy. This candle reflects the Joy that comes through Jesus' arrival and through the salvation he gifted us. It has been another busy week at the college and there has been much joy:

Monday 18 December: The Mark Patterson Show, BBC Radio Foyle

Yr. 11 pupil, Donal, was interviewed on 'The Mark Patterson Show' for BBC Radio Foyle on Monday. Donal is our elected representative on the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly. Donal is passionate about the environment and issues that affect young people from a rural setting. You can listen to a recording of the interview on BBC iPlayer.



Tuesday 19 December: Christmas Raffle

Thank you to everyone who bought tickets for the Christmas Treat Hamper organised by Yr. 11 and Yr.12 Prince's Trust classes. **£170.00** was raised in total. **£120.00** has been donated to the 'Kindness for Strangers' charity and an additional **£50.00** to Granaghan Outreach making our contribution now **£500.00** to this local charity. Congratulations to Mrs Jackson on winning the hamper.



Wednesday 20 December (Morning): Advent Reflection

Thank you to the pupils and staff who attended our final Advent reflection yesterday morning. The Advent reflections brought us much peace during the month of December.



Wednesday 20 December (Afternoon): Carol Service

Thank you to Fr. O'Kane, Governors, staff and pupils for yesterday's Carol service. It was a lovely occasion.

Christmas Hampers

Thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas Hamper initiative. The distribution ended this week.



Celebration

As we have come to the end of the second half term of this year, we have had celebration assemblies this week to mark the achievements of our pupils. These pupils can be justly proud of their achievements during this half term whether in the academic, sporting or other spheres. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff members and to you as parents/guardians to help make these successes possible.



Christmas Closure

Please note that the college will be closed from Friday 22nd December until Tuesday 2nd January inclusive. The college re-opens again for all staff and pupils on Wednesday 3rd January 2024.

Voice of the Pupil

Thank you to the pupils in our Journalism club for this term's 'Voice of the pupil' available to read on the school App.

Attendance

Parents/guardians are reminded not to take their children out of school during term time. A number of letters will be issued to some parents/guardians in January.

Uniform

A minority of pupils have been wearing their Sports kit to the college on a day when they are not involved in Sports. Severe consequences will be issued for any pupil who repeatedly does this. There will be thorough checks taking place at the beginning of Term 2 regarding Sports gear to ensure that all pupils have the correct items. More to come on this after Christmas.

Industrial Strike Action

You are likely to have already seen coverage of this in the news this week, but I wanted to inform you about the day of industrial strike action on Thursday 18th January. Schools will have to determine the risk attached and the impact industrial strike action will have on pupils, staff and visitors, and whether the school can run a full or amended curriculum when industrial strike action is announced. A decision has to be made on whether it is possible to operate a school safely during industrial strike action but in the interests of health and safety, it is likely that St. Patrick's & St. Brigid's College will have to close to pupils on Thursday 18th January. There will be further information provided on this when we return in Term 2.

Open Evening

Due to the planned industrial action the college's Open Evening has been postponed from Thursday 18th January to Thursday 25th January.

Head of Year 10

Thank you to Ms Devlin for her dedicated service as a Head of Year. Mr White is the new Head of Year 10 from January 2024. Ms Devlin continues in her role as Head of Science.

Hear Angels Cry

Amidst the rubble and ruins, a poignant voice rises to declare that the light of hope will persist in the small West Bank town where the Christmas story unfolded. Youstina Safar, a resident of Bethlehem and a student at Bethlehem University, has delivered a powerful message through a Christmas song, 'Hear Angels Cry'. The song resonates with the belief that hope for a better future, born in the hearts of humanity. The Pope has written that his hope was that the song "will inspire many people this Christmas to pray for a new flourishing of fraternal solidarity, reconciliation and peace in the Holy Land." You can watch 'Hear Angels Cry' on YouTube and the song is also streaming on Spotify and Apple Music. You can support fundraising efforts for the suffering in the Holy Land by buying the song via Amazon.

Key Dates

Wednesday 3rd Jan	All pupils and staff return for Term 2
Saturday 6th Jan	Ski party departs
Saturday 13th Jan	Ski party returns
Tuesday 16th Jan	Diocesan Mass at St. Eugene's to launch Catholic Schools Week
Wednesday 17th Jan	Year 8 Retreat
Thursday 18th Jan	National Industrial Strike Action
Friday 19th Jan	Winter Examinations for KS4 pupils begin
Thursday 25th Jan	Open Evening
Friday 2nd Feb	Cross Country event for Primary Schools

Final Prayer

*Heavenly Father,
Fill our hearts with the joy that comes from knowing your love.
May we rejoice in the good news of salvation
and share that joy with others during this season of Advent.*

Amen.

Yours sincerely,



Mr P. McCullagh BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH
College Principal

