



9th February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Sharing in the Prayer Life of St James' Catholic High School – Week 21

Thank you for your continued support in encouraging our pupils to attend the Chapel activities at lunchtime.

Monday: Drop in to meet the Chaplain/ Reel Faith Planning

Tuesday: Knit and Natter

Wednesday: Choir

Thursday: 1:30 pm Youth SVP

Friday: REEL Faith

Sunday February 8th, was the beginning of Week 5 of Ordinary time, Year A.

What does it really mean to love our neighbour, especially given the current narratives of hostility, fear, suspicion and hatred of the ‘other’, particularly asylum seekers, refugees and anyone who is not British or Irish ‘enough’. The Bible provides a blueprint for a world where everyone belongs; where everyone is loved, valued and affirmed for who they are, and not what they look like or have to offer. Our identity is ultimately to be found in Christ, as brothers and sisters of one ‘race’: the human race.

This message is ‘for such a time as this’ (Esther 4:14). It is one that speaks through the ‘flags’, banners, protests and spread of misinformation, relaying a message of unity and hope. Just as the greatest commandment speaks about loving God and one another, Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross offers us all the hope of being united with God and with one another.

Let us stand together in love, rejecting those words, actions and behaviours that go against Christ’s teachings, and embracing those biblical principles that encourage unity, cohesion and engagement.

Cardinal Giorgio Marengo I.M.C.

Last week, 15 KS4 pupils met Cardinal Marengo. Aquinas College hosted a talk and Q&A session in which our pupils were invited to ask questions.

On August 27th, 2022, Pope Francis created Marengo a cardinal, making him the youngest member of the College of Cardinals at the time, aged just 48. The appointment was a surprise, not least to Marengo himself, as the Pope had only met him the day before at a private audience in the Vatican. However, his



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Matthew 19:26



elevation to the cardinalate came to be seen as a recognition of the Church's mission in Mongolia and a sign of the Pope's interest in the Asian continent. Marengo saw it as evidence of how important interreligious dialogue is to the Pope. The Italian cardinal is known for his approach to evangelisation, which he describes as "whispering the Gospel." This method involves building relationships and sharing the faith with discretion and respect for local culture. He first heard of the term from an Indian cardinal who used it to describe what the Church was doing in Asia.

Our pupils thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and listened attentively to his talk about his missionary work. They confidently posed questions about his vocation and missionary work to him and both the staff at the college and the Cardinal were full of praise for them. Some of the Aquinas students asked him about his experience of voting in the last Conclave. Cardinal Marengo's responses showed us that he is a humble person who believes in the power of prayer and his advice on how to pray was inspirational.

MiniDASH

On Friday 6th February, the secondary headteachers met again, (Diocesan Association of Secondary Headteachers) and seven of our Year 8 pupils went to St John Plessington School on the Wirral. They joined pupils from other schools in the Diocese and were involved in MiniDASH activities, based on Catholic social teaching (CST). Our pupils were asked to give a presentation about how we live out CST in school. They watched in awe as pupils from other schools explained all the things that they are doing. This prompted them to ask Mr Pontifex whether they could do more in school. They had a list of ideas of how to help the poor and vulnerable, how to support each other and how to care for the environment. Their behaviour was impeccable and they were great ambassadors for our school.

On Wednesday 11th, we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Each year, the Church observes the World Day of the Sick. Established in 1992 by St. John Paul II, the day was created to raise awareness of illness, encourage prayer, and invite Catholics to unite their suffering with Christ for the good of the Church and the world.

The Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, has released his message for the 34th World Day of the Sick. World Day of the Sick was established in 1992 by Pope John Paul II as a dedicated day of prayer for those who are ill and for everyone who cares for them. It is also a moment for the Church to reflect more deeply on suffering, dignity and Christian compassion. This year's theme is "The compassion of the Samaritan: loving by bearing another's pain."

In his message, Pope Leo reflects on the parable of the Good Samaritan and reminds us that compassion is not simply a feeling. It is something we choose. It means stopping, noticing, drawing near and giving our time. It means refusing to pass by when someone is suffering. Caring for the sick is not an optional extra in Christian life. It is central to the Gospel.



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Prayer for the week ahead:

We pray for those who are ill, the elderly, those living with long term conditions, families and carers, and all who work in healthcare. May we grow in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, willing to see, to stop and to love.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Our Lady, Health of the Sick, pray for us. 

Amen

Yours faithfully



Mrs T McGeough

Lay Chaplain



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