St Bernard’s High School
A Catholic Academy for Arts and Science

St Bernard of Clairvaux

Newsletter 1 - Autumn Term 2016
Dear Parents

Welcome to this newsletter, our first in this new format. We intend to publish this newsletter slightly less frequently than the previous fortnightly edition, but you will see the higher quality production allows us to fully celebrate the achievement of the young people in our care. Mr Walls has overseen the production of the newsletter, in conjunction with Olivia, Alice and Finley, our talented Head Student Team.

We would be delighted to receive any feedback on the changes that have been made. Please enjoy the stores and articles that follow - I am sure you will be impressed with the talent of our students and the dedication of staff.

Yours faithfully

Mr A Sharpe
Head Teacher
What is the Year of Mercy?
Seeing the great need for mercy and healing in the world, Pope Francis called for the Year of Mercy—a special period, also known as a Holy Year or Jubilee Year, for the Catholic Church. It is a time for the Church across the world to take approximately a year to focus on forgiveness and healing in a special way. Pope Francis has asked us as individuals and as a Church “to be a witness of mercy” by reflecting on and practicing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy (Pope Francis’ Announcement of the Year of Mercy). Beginning December 8, 2015, the Holy Year of Mercy focuses on studying and reflecting on mercy, receiving mercy, and being merciful towards others.

What is a Jubilee Year?
A Jubilee Year is when the Catholic Church across the world takes approximately a year to focus on forgiveness and healing in a special way. Catholics are encouraged to join together in prayer, go to confession, and share the genius of Catholicism with others. The purpose of a Jubilee Year is to help people grow spiritually, strengthen their faith, and encourage works of service, and to promote unity within the Catholic Church and society in general. The last Jubilee Year was in 2000, called for by Pope Saint John Paul II.
What is the Indulgence for the Year of Mercy?
Like any Jubilee Year, a person can receive a plenary indulgence for the Year of Mercy. A plenary indulgence removes all of what is called “temporal punishment” due to sins that have already been forgiven. Sin and evil are real. Every sin, large or small, is in some way a rejection of the-best-version-of-ourselves and a rejection of God. “Temporal punishment” is the natural consequence of that sin, the necessary purification following forgiveness of sin.

The Works and Significance of Mercy
The works of mercy are the practical ways we live out mercy. They are how we show loving kindness, compassion, and self-restraint to the people around us, both physically and spiritually. According to the Catechism, “The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbour in his spiritual and bodily necessities”. This is significant as it enables people not to just help themselves, but to help others as well, having a beneficial effect on their overall well-being.

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY
Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, harbour the harbourless, visit the sick, ransom the captive and bury the dead.

SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY
Instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish sinners, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offenses willingly, comfort the afflicted, pray for the living and the dead.
RAG Month Report

Since being elected as this year’s Head Student Team, Olivia, Finley and I have been delighted to be able to work with dedicated students and put on some truly exciting events. The first of these was Raising and Giving (RAG) Month 2016. After discussing the interests of the sixth form as a whole, we were able to choose four excellent charities to support, on a local, national and international level.

The Encephalitis Society provides support to those affected by the illness, and we chose to support them in memory of Nina Clarke, an ex-student who would have been in the year above us. Nina passed away in March of 2016, and many of the sixth form students at the time had been friends with her, so it was a charity very close to our hearts. After a talk from Dementia UK, many sixth former’s became ‘Dementia Friends’, so we decided to continue our support by choosing this as our national charity. The refugee crisis, which heightened in September 2015, inspired us to support the Red Cross as our International Charity, and we also donated a percentage of our wristband sales profits to a local charity – Conall’s Rainbow.
RAG Month was a huge success, and not only did we raise £2,600 for our chosen charities but this total was actually the record for the most money ever raised by RAG events at the school, an achievement the sixth form should be extremely proud of and will inspire further dedicated efforts next summer. Highlights of the RAG month include the traditional Student and Staff Talent shows, the inter-house bench-ball tournaments, the horror house and the RAG Carnivale, as well as the newly reimagined table quiz and the lip sync battle. I believe the image of our P.E.T.T.Y. sixth form cheerleaders is one that will last a considerable time...

On behalf of the HST, I’d like to thank the year 13s for the immense enthusiasm and effort they put into organising each event – the sixth form receive no starter funds from the school to initially pay for these events, and the organisation and advertising comes solely down to the students, so to raise such a large amount of money is a monumental achievement. I’d also like to extend this thanks to the staff and wider school community for helping us to support these charities.

School Council Reforms & Extra-Curricular Clubs
We have held a number of school council meetings in our time as the HST, and have really enjoyed hearing the opinions of the wider school body. As ever, issues such as blazers, the toilets and spaces to sit at lunch have been raised as well as new queries about the possibility of monitors around the school and a bell system. I’d like to reassure the student body that each of these concerns is regularly discussed
by the HST and Mr. Sharpe, with the hopes of being able to provide answers to these enquiries. We are currently working with Mr. Sharpe to subtly reshape the structure of the school council, in order to make it more conducive to the wider student body, so that clear solutions can emerge to the issues you raise.

The school council is not the only part of school life that is being reformed at the request of students; the HST is proud to say we are in the process of introducing more extra-curricular clubs. In the near future we will be trialling societies such as ‘Debate Mate’, ‘Model UN’, and other sixth form led activities.

**The Passion Play**

Work for the passion play of 2017 is also well underway, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of Year 13 for their involvement, be that as an actor, writer, musician or backstage staff. So that’s all from us; we’d like to welcome the new year 7 and 12 students and wish them well, as well as remind all students and staff that the HST exists to serve the school community, so please contact Olivia, Finley or I if you have anything at all which you’d like to discuss or share with us. Good luck for the following academic year.

**ADVENT**

*By Mrs Barnes, Assistant Head Teacher*

We began the season of Advent formally on Friday 25th November with our first Advent Service. This takes place outside the Library each Friday at 1.15pm. All students and staff are welcome. Please encourage other students to attend. Please also remind them that bags must be left in lockers as there is no space to accommodate them.

‘Advent’ means ‘Coming’ and the first four weeks of the new Church Year (or Liturgical Year) is dedicated to helping us to prepare for the loving mystery that is coming. This is a time of spiritual preparation and we use the candles of the Advent wreath and the calendar to count down, or build up, to the birthday of Jesus. Love expresses itself in giving and, as we know, a lot of effort, time and
money goes into buying Christmas presents. Whether it was Santa Claus (from the Dutch for Saint Nicholas) and the traditional story of him giving gifts of money to a poor widow’s three daughters; or the example of the Magi (often called ‘kings’) who gave their three gifts to the Christ child, we have the tradition of gift-giving at Christmas.

Now, that is an absolutely perfect way of celebrating the birth of Christ, because in our worship we remember the words of Scripture, ‘God so loved the world that he gave us his Son’ (John 3;16) and reflect on the amazing mystery of that. The God who is love (2 John 8) mysteriously makes a gift of his Son to us and, so appropriately, we celebrate that by gift-giving to our loved ones.
This play was an amazing way to learn about road safety because it was very entertaining, whilst also getting the central point across to the audience. The play was about a boy called Tom and his sister, Ann, who had to cross a very dangerous road every morning in order to get to school. Ann took crossing the road very seriously and would make sure that herself and her brother crossed safely. However, she had a best friend called Fran, who was very naughty. Tom was less careful and he didn’t really care since he thought he knew it all.

In the play there was a lot of peer pressure from Fran. She would dare herself and her best friend’s brother to run straight across the road, whether or not there was a car coming. One day Ann got very mad at Fran and Tom and ended up throwing her brother’s bag in the road. When she went to get the bag she did not pay attention and got hit by a car!

This play was very interactive because at the end of the play the actors asked us lots of questions about it and whose fault we thought it was, such as:

“Although Fran and Tom were the reason she got angry, was it Fran’s fault that she ran into the road?”

“Did Tom know she would throw his bag into the road?”

They even brought a volunteer up to the front and asked them to dress in a hoodie and earphones and told them to hold a phone. They then explained that this was an unsafe way to cross and why.

I really enjoyed this play and I would happily watch it again. It was very fun and interesting and I have learnt a lot and now cross the road differently........ safely!
Thursday 29th September 2016 saw the annual get together for our Macmillan Coffee Morning in the staff room. It is a charity which has been supported by the staff for a long time and is a chance for all of us to get together over coffee and cake for a catch up on all the latest news. Sometimes it is very easy for us to get caught up in our work and it is nice to take time out for reflection! People were as always very generous with their donations of cakes and biscuits, many of which were homemade and looked very tasty. In total we raised £153 which is the most we have ever raised and certainly a worthwhile cause. The Macmillan charity does some wonderful work in our community caring for the sick and elderly, and sometimes giving financial and pastoral support as well.

FROM HAIRSPRAY TO PATCHWORK QUILTS

By Mrs Seabrook, Head of Textiles
Last year the Textiles department was fortunate to be donated lots of very useful items, such as fabric, buttons, zips and embroidery silks as well as some fantastic vintage dressmaking patterns. Much of this was put to excellent use by the Year 10 students who made costumes for the school production of Hairspray. Year 9 students used the cotton fabrics to make patchwork quilts, which in essence utilise recycled fabrics.

With our commitment to environmental and sustainability issues, the Textiles department would welcome any of the above items that you may have at home. Many thanks.

**VOICE TRAINING**

**By Katy Lloyd, Year 10**

On Tuesday 27th of September a number of students across years 9-11 took part in a vocal coaching session in school. This was designed to help us to control our voices in a way that enabled us to read clearly and at a steady pace. The aim was to project our voices with clarity. I think that as a whole it was a really good opportunity to experience what working with a professional was like, it was really beneficial!

**By Benita Basil, Year 7**

All Year 7 students had the opportunity to volunteer for voice training with an outside specialist practitioner who delivers training within the school annually. The training included warm-up activities, individual reading to the entire group and individual feedback. This experience supported presentation skills and the projection of voice, enabling those participating to read with greater clarity, expressing words and punctuation more effectively. I am sure that it helped everyone who volunteered.
Cultural

OUR TRIP TO AUSCHWITZ

By Charlotte Brown & Niall Windass, Year 13

Last April, we had the incredible privilege of taking part in the Lessons from Auschwitz project. It is a one-day trip to Poland, run by the Holocaust Educational Trust for students across Britain. Four days before leaving, we took part in an orientation seminar which allowed us not only to meet our group, but to discuss and prepare for the humbling experience we were about to embark on. We knew the day would be touching; however, we could not comprehend the power and scale of the impact it would have on us individually.

Upon arriving, we visited the local Jewish cemetery in the town of Oświęcim (renamed Auschwitz by the Nazis during WW2) where we saw the tombstone of the last ever Jewish citizen to have lived in the town, who died of natural causes in 2000. We were shocked to hear that there are no longer Jewish people living in the town, whose population was 56% Jewish before 1939.

After spending an hour at the cemetery, we visited Auschwitz 1. When we arrived, we were surprised to see that the site was on the main road and not hidden in woodlands. The site had clearly been part of the culture and community of Auschwitz, where work camps had become the norm. Jews from Poland, Germany and Hungary were taken there to work or simply survive for as long as they could. The site consisted of many brick block buildings (formerly barracks for the Polish army) which were used as living quarters, prisons,
'hospitals', or kitchens for prisoners and are now used to exhibit belongings found after the camp was liberated in 1945; however, some of the buildings cannot be opened due to the atrocities committed there. The most shocking exhibition of Auschwitz 1 was most definitely the crematorium, which we were able to enter and see the original ovens used to cremate those who had been gassed. The cold and darkness of the tiny room made us both realise what the torture was really like, and what innocent people and families were forced through.

It was now time to travel to Auschwitz-Birkenau. As we drove towards the site, we could see the train tracks that took people into the camp. Upon exiting the cattle cars in which people arrived, they were separated into two groups: women, especially if pregnant; children (under 14 years) who were ordered to stay with their mothers; the disabled; unfit men and anyone else over 40 were sent to the right. Men over 14 who were fit for work were sent to the left. A ‘doctor’ would assess prisoners to see if they were fit for work, and if you did not prove strong enough, you were deemed useless and sent to the right. People sent to the left were sent into forced, hard labour; if sent to the right, they were walked straight to the gas chambers. In a matter of seconds, Nazi ‘doctors’ and guards would choose peoples’ future, whether forced labour or the end of life. We walked around Auschwitz-Birkenau, entering buildings such as the children’s and family blocks and also the registration room.

At the end of the day, at Birkenau, the whole of the LFA group (about 200 of us) gathered together and took time to reflect upon the day’s events. We had a Rabbi speak to us about his family’s history in WW2 and gave his view on how it affected his view on the world. This gave us both a chance to remember the sacrifices people have made so that we can live in relative peace today.

Following our trip to Poland, we all met again in London for our ‘Follow-Up’ seminar to discuss the impact the trip had on us and how it affected our thoughts and feelings. We also spoke about how to share our experiences with others for our ‘Next Steps’ of the project.

Taking part in the Lessons from Auschwitz project has helped us both gain wider knowledge of what actually happened in the Holocaust and World War Two as a whole. It has given us both a sense of humility about how we should act today to ensure that our community and the whole world is, and remains, a peaceful environment. We are very thankful to have been given this experience and will remember the message of the Holocaust for the rest of our lives.
VISIT TO THE V & A MUSEUM

By Ripley D’Souza, Year 13

Last July, Year 12 Textiles students had the opportunity to visit two exhibitions held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London, as part of preparation for our A2 level course in Year 13. We were able to attend the ‘Undressed: A Brief History of Underwear’ exhibition and the ‘Botticelli Reimagined’ exhibition, both of which were visually stunning and had many features which we could draw upon when designing for our individual upcoming projects.

It was hugely interesting to learn how underwear and lingerie have changed and progressed throughout the years, with garments presented from as early as the 18th century right up to the present day. We were able to look at over 200 objects in this exhibition and it was clear to see the influence that nightwear and underclothes had on traditional as well as modern fashion and how we could incorporate specific ideas and motifs into our course projects. For me, I observed the Italian, particularly the Venetian presence, in the shapes and colours scheme of some of the items that were on display, since this was my area of focus for Year 13. Others looked closely at the silhouettes and intricate patterns that they could interpret and streamline into their own designs.
The ‘Botticelli Reimagined’ exhibition was concentrated on the reinvention of the influential works of the famed Early Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli, such as ‘The Birth of Venus’. Modern prints with graphic Warhol-esque reminiscence and integration of the paintings to items of clothing proved to be immensely refreshing; the incorporation of traditional art with modern clothing was aesthetically enchanting. One way in particular that I found completely innovative was the reimagining of the character of ‘Venus’ as various different races, for example Yin Xin’s ‘Venus, after Botticelli’ a close-up painting of Venus’ face with Eastern features as opposed to her traditional Western features was greatly inspired. The mixture of the various colours, prints and fashion styles merged together helped us to appreciate the importance of both in our own work.

The museum itself also offered free exhibitions that we could attend such as the ‘Theatre & Performance Tour’ exhibition; this included multiple props and costumes used on stage in major West End and Broadway plays and was quite fascinating. Moreover, luckily there was a new instalment of ‘The Masquerade’ in an interactive film, which offered a fictional view of 18th-century Venice, and in which I was able to look at the architecture and dress and take pictures for later reference.

Overall, we are grateful to have experienced these two remarkable exhibitions at such a prestigious museum, with the trip proving extremely advantageous to all our creative processes for A2 study as we gained useful knowledge of particular styles that we were interested in and that we could build upon.
THE BENEFITS OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN YEAR 10

By Nyasha Mandiveyi, Year 11

I loved every minute of my work experience placement at Bentley Motors! I have always had a sincere passion for the automotive industry, as well as cars in general, so, given the opportunity to spend a week surrounded by them was a dream come true. However, saying that it all came at a price. The working hours were 8am to 5pm. I would wake up at 6am every morning to ensure my readiness to be at work for 8am. I would then hop on the 'Bentley Bus' which would take me to my desired destination and then pop off to work.

To my surprise it wasn't wearing blue overalls and lying underneath a broken vehicle getting covered in grease. Instead, I was sitting behind a computer desk using excel, power point and word. My job involved producing spread-sheets from real life interviews, as well as educational power-points and leaflets that would actually be used by the company. If I'm being honest, it was all bit scary. However, it was a personal goal of mine to exceed their standard of quality. Thankfully I did and they were very impressed by the quality of the work produced. From that I appreciated that hard work truly does pay off and that people can tell when you really put effort into things.

I also learnt that first impressions count for a lot. It was imperative that I dressed appropriately for the professional working environment. I learnt how to communicate with colleagues, set tasks and complete them, as well as being organised. All this really helped. Overall, I enjoyed the work experience placement more than I can put into words. I had the chance to sit in a new luxury model car that cost over £200,000, see the factories and production lines and meet new people. These I hope to see in the future.

I recommend that when choosing a placement make sure you pick somewhere that's relevant to your passion.

WORK EXPERIENCE WITH THE ARMY

By Olivia Ewing, Year 11

For my work experience at the end of the summer I was on placement at The Army Parachute Association, up in Netheravon, Wiltshire. This is a military base, with a skydiving drop zone on the base. For my work experience I got to service the planes before they took off, checking that the planes were refuelled and suitable to fly. As well as checking the planes I was also able to go up in the planes with the pilot when the skydivers were jumping out. In addition to all this, I worked in the kit shop, as well as the drop shop giving out rigs and jump suits and selling jump gear once they have jumped. On the days where jumping exercises did not take place I had to clean the hanger and sort out paperwork from previous jumpers and make packs for new tandem costumers.
Music Exam Results

by Mrs Maltby, Head of Music

Music Theatre Singing Exam Results Summer 2016

Many congratulations to the following students:

Elizabeth Blower               Grade 3 Merit
Tilly Slack                    Grade 3 Merit
Lucy Morris                   Grade 3 Merit
Catherine James              Grade 3 Distinction
Caitlyn Walton                Grade 4 Merit
Cliona Tanner-Smith          Grade 4 Merit
Megan McKenna                Grade 4 Merit
Leonie Davidson              Grade 5 Merit
Lily Miles                   Grade 5 Merit
Aiobh Pozsar                Grade 5 Distinction
Joanna Gaudini              Grade 5 Distinction
Rose Collis                 Grade 6 Merit
Elinor Silverman            Grade 6 Merit

Thanks must also be extended to Mrs Thompson for her hard work and support for these students ensuring such excellent results.

Clarinet Exam Results Summer 2016

Congratulations also to Katie-Ann Elliston who achieved Grade 3 Distinction in her Clarinet exam.

Many thanks also to Mrs Florish for her hard work and support for Katie-Ann.
THE HAT’S MADDER TEA PARTY: CREATIVITY, CAMARADERIE & CAKE!

By The Mad Hatter, aka Mrs Pestana, Head of Graphics

(an impeccable combination)

The Year 12 Graphic Designers were invited to “The Hat’s Madder Tea Party” as part of their first design unit, titled “Wonderland”. In order to gain entry to the tea party, the designers were briefed to “conceptualise and make” an innovative and functional hat which would serve as their “gig-pass”, providing entry to the event.

From a crown fit for a fanatical queen, a candy-coloured cupcake, a traditional rose garden and collapsing playing cards to multi-coloured rabbit ears, the designers produced an imaginative variety of extraordinary hats.
The objective of the tea party was to establish a thought-provoking, inspiring and bespoke setting for the designers to work within. They learned how to “set-up” for a photo shoot and how to art-direct and create imagery both individually and collaboratively. The expectation was to conceptualise and develop a range of unique and imaginative photographs for use within their final design outcomes.

Gathering inspirational and personalised primary resources is fundamental to creative development and the achievement of high grades. All students were given the opportunity and the freedom to challenge themselves in a real-life “photo-shoot” setting, creating unexpected and imaginative images which reflected the visual feast appropriately.

Each and every student embraced the challenge, took risks and produced an impressive and individual contact sheet showcasing their newly found art direction skills.