



St Cecilia's Catholic Life Autumn 1 Newsletter

Year 7 Welcome Mass

As always, we began the new school year with our **Year 7 Welcome Mass**, a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and welcome our newest members into the St Cecilia's family.

This year, we introduced a **fishing net** as a symbol of inclusion and belonging.

Every new pupil and member of staff wrote their name on a coloured ribbon, which was then tied to the net. The net will be displayed from our lectern at Masses and Year 7 Celebrations of the Word throughout the year, gradually growing to include everyone in our community.

It will serve as a lasting reminder that **everyone is welcome and everyone belongs.**

The Mass was celebrated by **Canon Doyle**, who gave an encouraging homily reminding us that we are all created in the image of God. He encouraged our pupils to discover and develop their own unique, God-given talents and abilities.

We would like to thank **Miss Berry and the choir** for providing beautiful music, and all the Year 7 form tutors, led by **Mrs Vincent**, who helped prepare the Mass.

We were also delighted to use the candle gifted to us by **St Wilfrid's**, alongside artwork created by our pupils during their Transition Day visit. A truly wonderful way to begin the new school year and welcome our Year 7 pupils into the **St Cecilia's family**.



Prayer Programme

Sacred Art

At St Cecilia's, our prayer programme offers pupils a **wide variety of opportunities for prayer and reflection**, with experiences becoming more varied and developed as pupils progress through the school.

Our aim is to give pupils the skills and confidence to pray, develop their faith and grow closer to God.

Each Wednesday, pupils spend part of their form time in the chapel with **Mr Barden**, beginning with Year 7 and our **Sacred Art** programme.

Pupils are welcomed into the chapel and introduced to sacred artwork, including ***Jesus Calms the Storm.***

They listen to Scripture before taking time to reflect and pray, asking Jesus to bring peace and calm to the storms they may experience in their own lives.

Our Year 7 forms have responded wonderfully to the experience, showing **enthusiasm, respect and a real willingness to engage in prayer.**



Rosary Club

Our **Rosary Club** continues to go **from strength to strength**, and it has been wonderful to welcome new Year 7 pupils who were actively involved in the Catholic life of their primary schools, including former Mini Vinnies and pupil chaplains.

Many are already finding their place within the **Catholic Heart** at St Cecilia's and continuing their faith journey through our wide range of opportunities, including the **Rosary Club, Eco Club, Prayer Leaders, GIFT Team** and **CAFOD Group**.

The Rosary Club meets every Thursday lunchtime to pray a decade of the Rosary. We often bring our own intentions to prayer or focus on one of the Mysteries of the Rosary.

It is particularly lovely to see pupils bringing their own Rosary beads from home. One pupil recently shared a beautiful set of beads given to her by her grandmother after a visit to Rome.

They had even been **blessed by the Pope** — a wonderful reminder of how faith can be shared across generations.



Prayer Journal

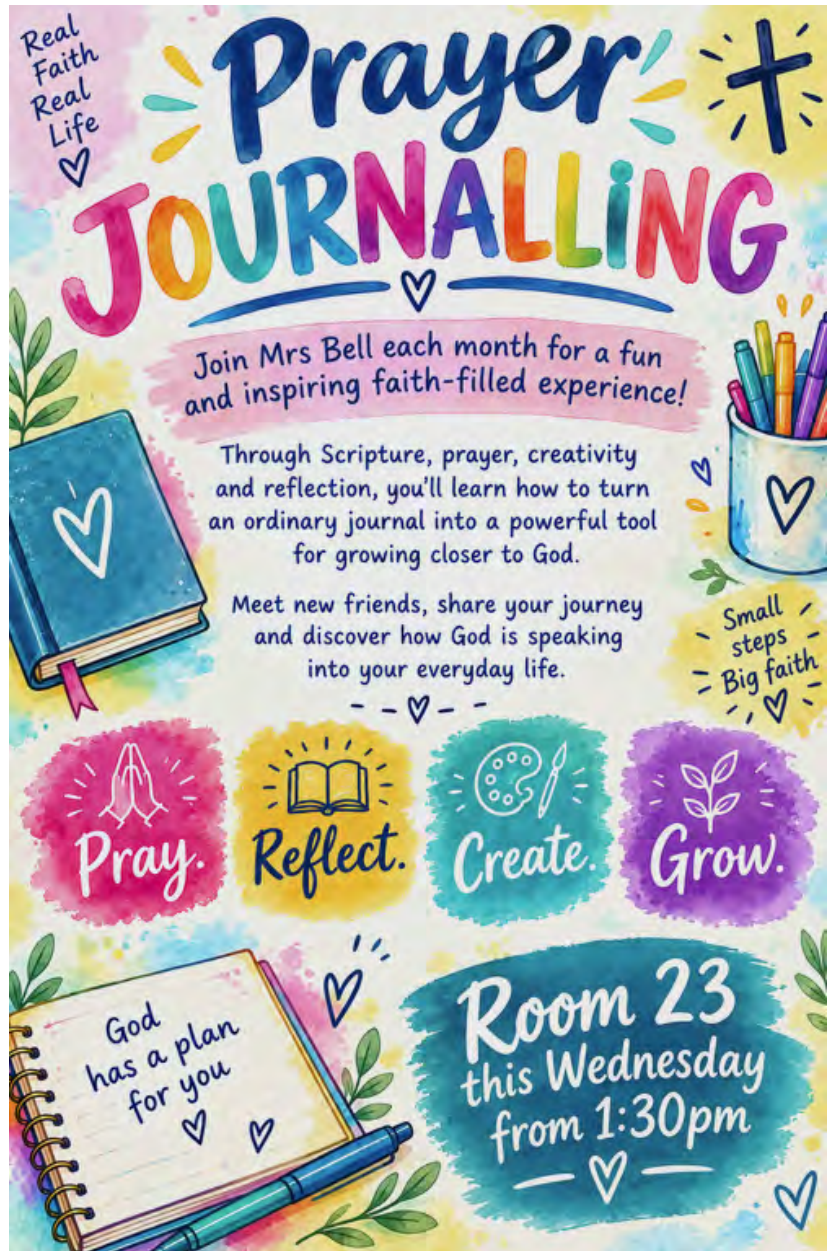
This half term, students from across the school have been taking part in our new **Prayer Journalling Workshops**.

The sessions provide a welcome opportunity to step away from the business of the school day for twenty minutes of reflection, creativity, and prayer.

Each workshop begins with a Bible verse and a theme carefully chosen by **Mrs Bell**, who also provides a variety of creative resources for students to use in their journals. Through colour, artwork, lettering, and doodling, students have explored different ways of responding to God's Word and expressing their thoughts and prayers.

Bible journalling has encouraged students to engage with scripture in a personal and creative way. For some, it has been a chance to think deeply and quietly while creating; for others, it has offered a new way to communicate with God and reflect on their faith. The finished journal pages are beautifully unique and serve as a lasting reminder of the message and prayer focus of each session.

It has been wonderful to see students from different year groups taking time to pause, reflect, and discover that there are many ways to pray and grow closer to God.



Visio Divina



At St Cecilia's, we are committed to providing our pupils with a rich and varied experience of prayer, helping them to develop their spiritual lives and deepen their relationship with God. Our prayer programme begins in Year 7 with **Sacred Art** and develops throughout the school, introducing pupils to a range of different forms of prayer, including **Meditation, Taizé prayer and, in Year 11, Lectio Divina.**

These sessions take place each Wednesday during form time, giving every pupil the opportunity to experience different ways of being still, reflecting and listening to God.

Alongside our form-time programme, we also offer opportunities for prayer at lunchtime. These are optional, allowing pupils to choose freely whether they would like to take part. It has been wonderful to see so many pupils choosing to give up part of their lunchtime to come together in prayer and reflection. This term, we have also introduced **Visio Divina**, led by Mrs Barton, a new member of our RE department.

Visio Divina invites pupils to use a sacred image as a starting point for prayer and reflection, allowing them to look more deeply at the Gospel message and consider what Jesus may be saying to them. The response from pupils has been extremely positive. They have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to engage with Scripture in a visual and reflective way, taking time to pause, reflect and deepen their understanding of the Gospel. It is wonderful to see our pupils embracing these opportunities and developing such a positive and personal approach to prayer.

Becoming People of Prayer

In response to the new prayer directory, **Love You More Dearly**, we are developing our school-wide focus of **“Becoming People of Prayer.”**

A key part of this is helping pupils to develop the confidence and skills to **write and lead their own prayers.**

Prayer-writing frames are provided for each year group, increasing in complexity from Year 7 to Year 11 and introducing different forms of prayer, including **adoration, thanksgiving and petition.**

Each Tuesday, every form selects a pupil to take a prayer from the class **Prayer Basket** and lead their peers in prayer.

Over time, this will provide clear evidence of progression, as pupils move from simple prayers in Year 7 to more developed and personal prayers in Year 11.

Pupils are also increasingly writing their own prayers for **weekly Masses, form prayer and significant times in the liturgical year.**

Through these opportunities, we hope to equip our pupils with the confidence and skills to develop a **rich and personal prayer life.**



Celebrating Our Form Saints

As part of Catholic Life at St Cecilia's, we **cherish and celebrate the lives of our Form Saints**. Each year, forms dedicate time to exploring the life, faith and legacy of a different saint.

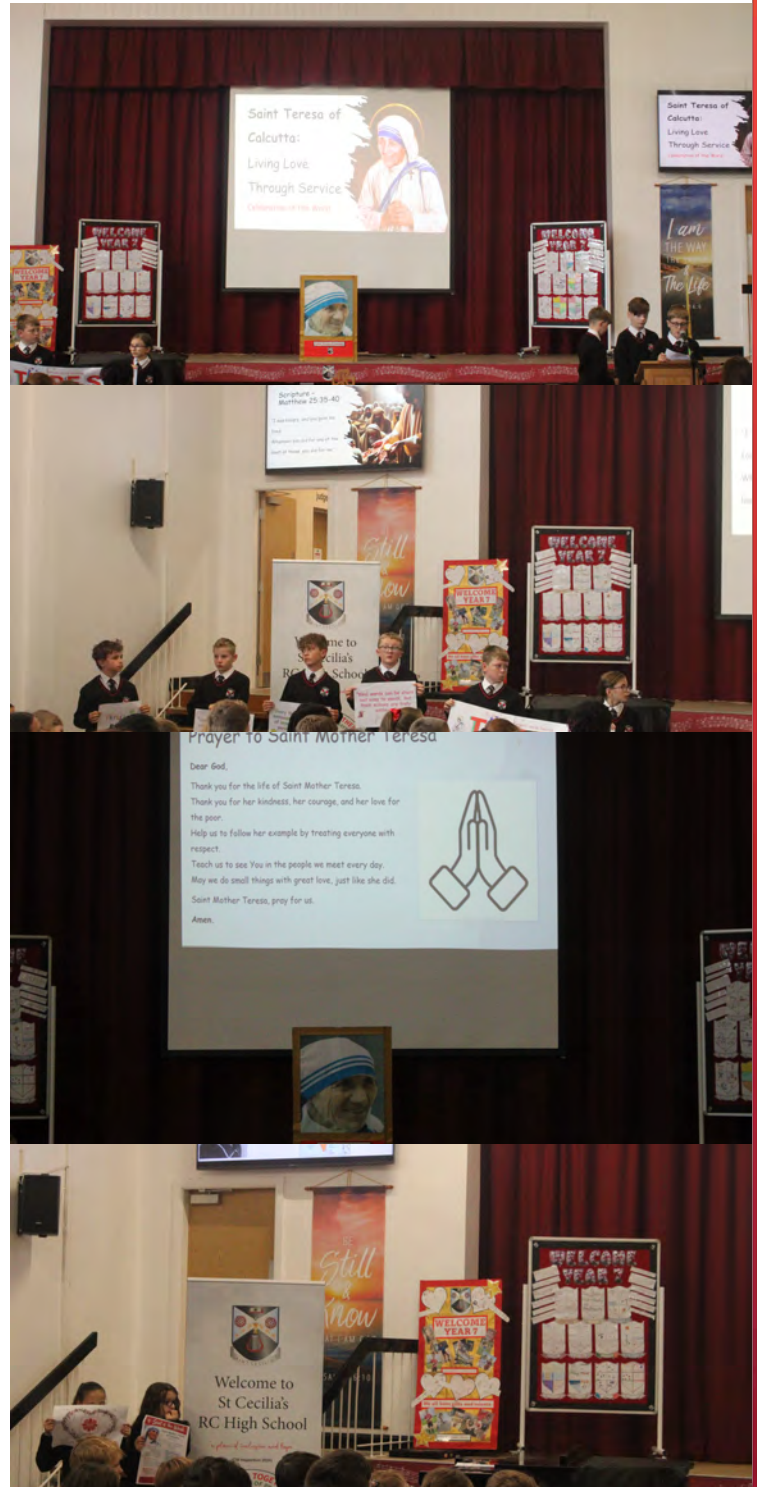
This term, we are celebrating **St Teresa of Calcutta, St Carlo Acutis and St John Paul II**. Each form prepares and leads a **Celebration of the Word**, sharing their knowledge and discoveries with others in their year group.

A key part of each celebration is exploring a piece of **Scripture that influenced the saint's life and mission**. For example, Mother Teresa was deeply inspired by Jesus' teaching about serving those in need in the **Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46)**.

This reflects her belief that we are called to recognise Christ in others and respond to those in need.

Her work also connects strongly with the Christian belief that **every person is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–27)**, providing a powerful foundation for the Catholic teaching of **human dignity**.

Through our Form Saints programme, pupils are encouraged not only to learn about inspiring Catholic figures, but also to **reflect on their example and consider how their faith can influence our own lives**.







Saint of the Week



Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta

(1910 – 1997)

*“Not all of us can do great things,
but we can do small things
with great love.”*

ST MOTHER TERESA

♥ Who was she?

Saint Mother Teresa was a Catholic nun from Albania who dedicated her life to serving the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world. She founded the Missionaries of Charity and worked with people who were homeless, sick, hungry and alone. Her kindness, courage and unwavering faith inspired millions.

☆ A life of service

Mother Teresa showed us what it means to live the Gospel. She saw the face of Jesus in every person, especially those in need. She reminded us that even the smallest acts of kindness can make a big difference.



Let us pray

Saint Mother Teresa, inspire us to see Jesus in everyone we meet, to be kind, compassionate and generous in our daily lives. Amen.



CST Link

Human Dignity

Mother Teresa's life is a powerful example of the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Human Dignity. She believed that every person, no matter how poor, sick or marginalised, is made in the image and likeness of God and deserves respect, love and care.

*Everyone is important.
Everyone matters.*



*See Christ
in others*



St Cecilia's Catholic High School

Discover, Develop and Rejoice

The Season of Creation: Caring for Our Common Home



This term, we began by celebrating the Season of Creation, an annual Christian initiative that encourages people of all denominations to come together in prayer and action to care for our common home. Inspired by the message of Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which calls us to care for our planet and protect the environment, the Season of Creation provides a wonderful ecumenical opportunity for Christians across the world to unite in addressing the challenges of climate change and environmental damage.

For the past 17 years, churches in Longridge have come together to hold the annual Service of Creation, demonstrating their shared commitment to protecting our planet. This year's service took place at Alston Lane at 6.30 pm on 18 October. Representatives from local churches and schools gathered to pray, reflect and renew their commitment to caring for God's creation.

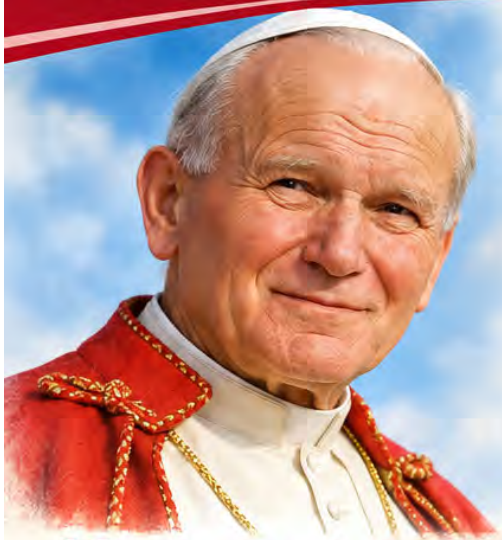
St Cecilia's was proudly represented by Mr and Mrs Barton, our Head Girl, Lucy, and members of our Eco Group: Sophia, Macie and Victoria. They took an active part in the service, with readings and prayers helping to highlight our shared responsibility to protect the world around us.

As a school, we remain committed to developing our Eco Garden and raising awareness of the impact human activity is having on our planet. Through these initiatives, we aim to put our faith into action, encouraging our pupils to become responsible stewards of God's creation.

We would like to thank the staff and pupils who represented St Cecilia's at this wonderful service and helped demonstrate our commitment to caring for our common home.



Saint of the Week



Saint John Paul II (1920 – 2005)

*"Do not be afraid.
Open wide the doors to Christ."*

ST JOHN PAUL II

♥ Who was he?

Saint John Paul II was born Karol Wojtyła in Poland in 1920. He became a priest in 1946, a bishop in 1958 and was elected Pope in 1978. He was the first non-Italian pope in almost 500 years. He travelled the world, spreading the message of Jesus and standing up for human dignity, peace and freedom.

☆ A life of service

John Paul II showed great courage, even during the difficult times of his country's oppression. He loved young people, families and the poor. He was a champion for peace and reconciliation, and he reminded us all that we are called to build a kinder, more just world.



Let us pray

Saint John Paul II, you showed us the power of faith, hope and love. Help us to follow your example, to be courageous in our faith and to always choose what is right. Amen.



CST Link

Human Dignity

Pope John Paul II was a strong voice for human dignity. He taught that every person is made in the image of God and has the right to be treated with respect, kindness and fairness. He worked for a world where everyone has the chance to live with dignity, freedom and peace.

Every person matters.



*See Christ
in others*



St Cecilia's Catholic High School

Discover, Develop and Rejoice