

St Cecilia's Catholic Life Newsletter Spring Term 2026

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Saint Carlo Acutis once said: ***“When we stand in front of the sun, we get a suntan; when we stand before the Eucharist, we become saints.”***

At St Cecilia’s, we strive to provide opportunities for pupils to pray and deepen their faith. Inspired by the example of Carlo Acutis, we encourage our young people to grow in their relationship with God, especially through devotion to the Eucharist.

Carlo was an ordinary teenager, yet his deep love for the Eucharist shows us that holiness is possible for everyone. Through his example, we hope to spark and inspire our pupils to live their faith with joy and commitment.



The Sacrament of Reconciliation



At **St Cecilia's**, the season of Lent invites us to focus on the three traditional pillars of **prayer, fasting and charity**. It is also a time for reflection and renewal, as we prepare our hearts and minds for the joy of Easter. During this season, Catholics are encouraged to seek forgiveness and turn back to God.

To support this, we offered pupils the opportunity to receive the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** during the school day, alongside time for **Eucharistic Adoration** in our chapel. This beautiful Catholic tradition allows the faithful to spend quiet time in prayer in the presence of the **Blessed Sacrament**. Catholics believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, making this a deeply prayerful and reflective experience.

Many pupils respectfully took the opportunity to spend time praying in the chapel before celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It was encouraging to see such thoughtful engagement from our young people.

We extend our sincere thanks to **Fr Dutton** for administering the sacrament and for helping us with the beautiful **Monstrance** and the **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**. The day began with Mass and provided a meaningful opportunity for prayer and reflection during this important Lenten season.

New Artwork of Forms Saints

At the start of this academic year, we introduced our new Form Saints: Carlo Acutis, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Óscar Romero, John Paul II and Josephine Bakhita. These saints were chosen by our pupils, and their lives and messages link beautifully with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

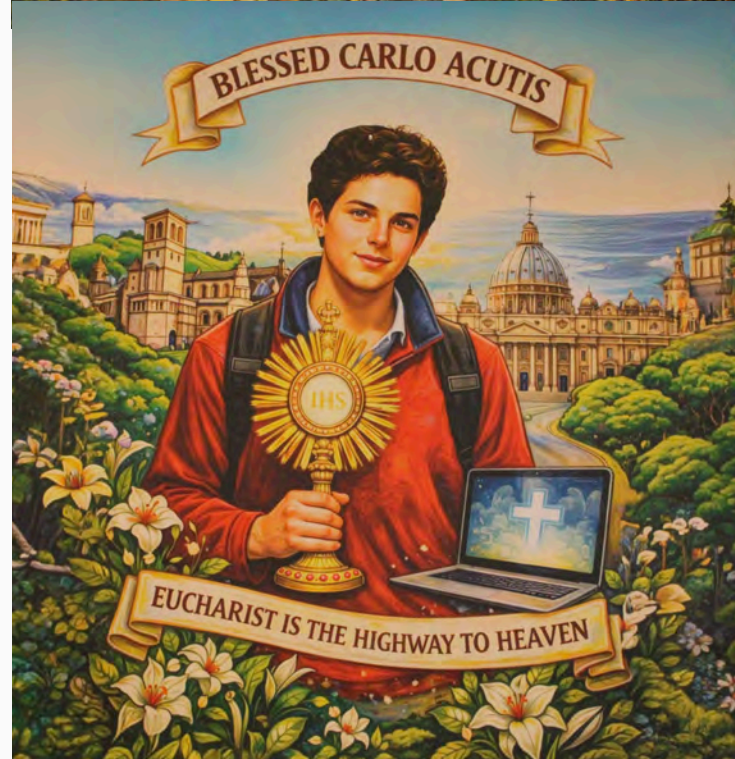
As modern-day saints, their stories feel especially relevant and relatable for both staff and pupils. They provide inspiring examples of faith in action, showing how courage, compassion and service to others can make a real difference in the world today.

There is also a wealth of resources available to help us learn more about their lives and to reflect on how we can follow their example in our own school community.

Because the school hall is used daily for our Celebration of the Word, we felt it would be the ideal place to display these saints.

The new artwork around the hall helps to create the prayerful atmosphere that supports our celebrations and Masses.

We are very proud of our new Form Saints and the beautiful artwork that now honours them in our school.



Lenten Charity- Faith in Action

Putting Faith into Action at St Cecilia's

Social action is very important to us here at St Cecilia's. We are always looking for ways to *put our faith into action*, caring for others and following Jesus' teachings—especially the commandment to “love thy neighbour” and the message of the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

During Lent, we place a special focus on prayer, fasting, and charity. As part of this, each year group supports a chosen charity:

- **Year 7:** CAFOD
- **Year 8:** Caritas
- **Year 9:** Macmillan Cancer Support

- **Year 10:** Derian House Children's Hospice

A variety of events have been organised to raise money and awareness for these wonderful causes. Highlights include:

- **Year 7 Lenten Walk/Carnival** – Special thanks to Mrs Bell, 7P, Mrs Vincent, and the Year 7 pastoral team for their contributions and for organising this memorable event.
- **Year 8 Colour Run** – Due to bad weather, this will take place after Easter. A big thank you to Mr Taylor for arranging it.
- Other fundraising activities across the school have included:
 - **Darts Competition** – Organised by 8 Paul, Theo, and Mrs Livesey.
 - **Design an Easter Egg Competition** – Led by Mrs Holt and 8 Acutis, with prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place.
 - **Cake Sales** – With Mr O'Rourke and 8 Teresa.
 - **“Raffle the Easter Egg”** – Led by Mrs Crosbie in support of Derian House, alongside many other initiatives.

We are incredibly proud of the generosity and enthusiasm shown by our pupils and staff. Together, they support others and truly live out our faith in action.



Christian Meditation

As part of our prayer programme, which has been featured in previous newsletters, Year 9 pupils are taking part in **Christian Meditation** this term.

The programme aims to provide pupils with a wide range of prayer opportunities and experiences through which they can engage with, and encounter, God in different ways.

Christian meditation combines gentle mindfulness and breathing techniques to help pupils calm and centre themselves.

During the session, pupils are guided through a scene from Scripture, such as the Parable of the Prodigal Son from the Gospel of Luke. They are encouraged to imagine the scene and place themselves within the story, allowing them to observe the events as they unfold and reflect more deeply on the message of Jesus.

These sessions take place in the peaceful surroundings of our school chapel, where we create a calm and reflective atmosphere using soft lighting, appropriate music, beanbags and yoga mats.

The feedback from our pupils has been overwhelmingly positive, with many describing the experience as calming, reflective and spiritually enriching.



Year 8 Retreat

We would like to thank **Fr Simon Gore** and his team at the **Animate Youth Ministries** Retreat Centre in **St Helens** for providing our pupils with a wonderful and enriching day of games, prayerful reflection and self-discovery.

Fr Simon led an action-packed day filled with a variety of exercises, games and activities, all carefully designed to include Scripture and a meaningful Christian message. The theme of the day was “**Discovering Our Talents,**” linking closely to an important part of our school mission statement.

Throughout the retreat, pupils took part in a range of engaging activities, including baking bread, participating in simulation games, and guiding remote-controlled cars along a straight path. Each activity carried a deeper message: that it is okay to fail and make mistakes, because we are fortunate to have the support of family, friends and teachers who help guide us and encourage us to try again.

The day concluded with a peaceful session of Christian meditation, giving pupils time to reflect on their experiences. As a lovely reminder of the day, pupils were also able to take home the bread they had freshly baked.

It was a joyful and meaningful experience for all involved.



Stations of the Cross

Each Lent, Mrs Hall leads our **Celebration of the Word** centred on the *Stations of the Cross*, offering pupils a powerful opportunity for prayer and reflection. This solemn para-liturgy invites us to journey with Christ through the events of His Passion, pausing at each station to reflect on His sacrifice and love.

Traditionally, there are fourteen Stations of the Cross, tracing the path Jesus walked along the *Via Dolorosa*—the “Way of Sorrows.” During our service, Mrs Hall focused on six key stations, helping pupils to engage more deeply with their meaning. She thoughtfully linked each station to aspects of modern-day life, encouraging pupils to consider how the experiences of Jesus—suffering, compassion, injustice, and perseverance—are still present in our world today.

As always, our pupils responded with great maturity and reverence. They embraced the opportunity for silence and contemplation, taking time to reflect prayerfully and personally on each moment of the journey. These periods of stillness created a calm and respectful atmosphere, allowing pupils to deepen their understanding of Christ’s sacrifice.

As Good Friday falls during the school holidays this year, it was especially important that pupils were able to experience this traditional Catholic devotion within school. The Stations of the Cross remain a meaningful way for our community to enter into the season of Lent, helping us to prepare our hearts for the joy and hope of Easter.



Faith in Action Award



The Oscar Romero Award is presented to a pupil who has made a significant contribution to our Catholic life and mission. It recognises someone who has truly put their faith into action, following the example of Oscar Romero by being a visible and committed witness to the Gospel.

This term, we are delighted to recognise a pupil who has been a key member of our GIFT Team. She is completely reliable, regularly arriving early before every Mass to set up, organise the booklets, and ensure everything is prepared before others arrive. She is exceptionally willing and helpful, using her initiative to see what needs to be done and simply getting on with it.

She helps to welcome the priest into school and ensures he is seen off at the end of the visit. During Mass, she supports reverently by assisting with the offertory and ringing the bell at the consecration of the Gifts. In addition, she faithfully leads our weekly Fairtrade sales—unpacking, organising, selling, and packing away—taking full responsibility for this alongside Daisy over the past few years.

She is consistently generous with her time, dependable, and exactly the kind of pupil who strengthens and sustains the Catholic life of our school.

This term, the Oscar Romero Award goes to **Isla S.**

