

The English Martyrs Catholic  
School and Sixth Form College

## **Catholic Life**

**Issue #7 | September 2024 – July  
2025 |**

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**English Martyrs Living Out Our  
Faith this Academic Year**



This publication is a celebration of all the wonderful  
opportunities taken this term to put our faith into  
action at EMS

# Recommissioning Mass

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On Thursday, 19th September, Ushaw College welcomed members of our Trust families, along with representatives from the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, for the Recommissioning Mass for Lay Chaplains. The Mass was a powerful moment of renewal and service, presided over by Bishop Stephen Wright, whose words reminded all present of the sacred mission entrusted to those working in ministry.

Our very own Mr McCartie was among those recommissioned, joining a vibrant community of faith committed to nurturing the spiritual lives of students and staff alike. It was a day to celebrate the unique and essential role of Lay Chaplains, who bring God's presence into schools and beyond, walking alongside individuals in their faith journey.

As the English Martyrs community, we hold these chaplains in our prayers, asking that they may be sustained and inspired by the Holy Spirit in their vital work. We pray too for our entire school family, that each of us may live out our God-given vocations with courage and love, in accordance with His holy will.

May this recommissioning Mass mark a new chapter of grace and blessing for all involved in the ministry of chaplaincy. Ushaw's historic walls resonated with the call to service, reminding us of the enduring beauty of our mission: to bring Christ's light to the world.



# EMS6 MET

## Macmillan Coffee Morning

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Our EMS6 students recently hosted a heartwarming Macmillan Coffee Morning on the 27<sup>th</sup> September, transforming the sixth form library into a vibrant hub of community and charity. This special event brought together our parish community, families, and friends for a morning filled with fellowship and generosity, all in support of those impacted by cancer.

The Sixth Form students worked tirelessly to create a welcoming atmosphere, serving a delightful array of coffee, tea, and cakes lovingly prepared and donated by our school students and staff. The tables were brimming with delicious treats, ensuring something for everyone to enjoy while sharing stories and laughter.

Adding to the fun, the students organised a series of activities, including a lively tombola, a competitive yet good-natured game of bingo, and even darts, which proved to be a hit with both students and families alike. These activities not only provided entertainment but also created opportunities for connection and camaraderie, reminding us of the strength found in coming together as a community.

Thanks to the incredible efforts of our students and the unwavering support of those who attended, the event raised an outstanding £519 for Macmillan Cancer Support. This contribution will help fund vital services, providing care and compassion to those navigating the challenges of cancer.

Events like this embody the spirit of the English Martyrs community: a spirit of generosity, kindness, and shared purpose. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our EMS6 students, staff, families, and all who joined us on the day. Through coffee, cake, and a little competitive fun, we came together to make a meaningful difference for a very worthy cause.

# Year 7 Welcome Mass

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On the 21<sup>st</sup> October our Year 7 community gathered to celebrate the Year 7 Welcome Mass, a cherished moment as we welcome our newest members into the English Martyrs family.

Presided over by Canon Paul, the Mass was a beautiful reflection of faith and unity, with Year 7 students taking on the special role of leading the readings and bidding prayers.

Together, we lifted our voices and hearts in prayer, asking God to bless our school community. We prayed for humility to guide our actions, for diligence in our studies, and for a spirit of generosity in all that we do. We remembered those weighed down by material concerns, asking for God's comfort and provision. We offered prayers for our teachers and mentors, seeking wisdom and strength for their mission.

In a world often marked by division, we prayed for peace and contentment, for unity within our school, and for clarity in moments of decision. Finally, we asked for the grace to recognize the blessings in our lives and to cultivate hearts full of gratitude.

The Mass was a moving reminder of our shared journey as a community of faith. Year 7 students embraced their new beginning with enthusiasm, while the entire school stood together, united in prayer and purpose. May this celebration inspire us all to live out our vocation with courage, kindness, and a deep sense of gratitude.





# Memorial for Sandra French

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Our school community came together in a heartfelt gathering to celebrate the life of Sandra French, a deeply valued and much-loved member of staff who sadly passed away during the summer holidays. It was a time to reflect, remember, and find solace in one another's company as we grieved her loss and gave thanks for the blessing of her presence in our lives.

Sandra was a light in our school—a source of kindness, wisdom, and unwavering dedication. Through shared memories, stories, and prayers, we celebrated the incredible impact she had on everyone around her. Her warmth and generosity left an indelible mark on our community, and her absence is keenly felt.



As we gathered, we found comfort in our shared faith and the support of one another. Together, we offered prayers of gratitude for all who cared for Sandra during her illness, and for the moments of grace and strength that accompanied her journey. We prayed too for her family and loved ones, that they may find peace in the knowledge of how much Sandra was cherished by all who knew her.

In moving forward, we hold fast to our hopes and faith, trusting in God's promise that we will one day see Sandra again. Until that day, we carry her memory in our hearts, striving to reflect the love, compassion, and joy that she shared so freely.



*Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord,  
And let perpetual light shine upon  
her.*

*May her soul, and the souls of all  
the faithful departed,  
Through the mercy of God, rest in  
peace. Amen.*

*May Sandra rest in eternal peace,  
and may we honour her legacy by  
continuing to support and uplift  
one another as a family of faith.*

# World Mental Health Day

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On World Mental Health Day, The English Martyrs School and Sixth Form College stood together to highlight the importance of mental health awareness by "wearing it yellow."

The school community was a sea of sunshine as staff dressed in yellow, and students participated with pride, adorning yellow ribbons as a visible show of solidarity.



The event aimed to spark conversations around mental health and reduce stigma, reminding everyone of the importance of kindness, understanding, and seeking help when needed. Staff embraced the theme with enthusiasm, donning everything from bright yellow scarves to vibrant accessories, adding a cheerful glow to the school halls.

Students wore their yellow ribbons proudly, a small but powerful gesture that symbolized their commitment to supporting mental health awareness. Throughout the day, discussions and activities centred on self-care, resilience, and how to support others, fostering an environment of openness and encouragement.

The day was a vibrant reminder that mental health matters and that even small acts, like wearing yellow, can have a big impact. The English Martyrs community once again demonstrated its ability to come together for a cause, inspiring hope and understanding in the process.

# Emmaus Centre Retreat

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The 16<sup>th</sup> of October saw a large group of our Year 7 and 8 students embarked on a memorable retreat to the Emmaus Centre in Consett, a trip filled with faith, friendship, and fun.

The retreat offered a special opportunity to step away from the classroom and come together as family year groups, strengthening bonds and deepening our shared faith.

Central to the day was celebrating the Word of God. Through prayer, reflection, and worship, we were reminded of the importance of Christ's teachings in our lives and how we are called to live as His disciples. It was a powerful moment to pause and reconnect with God and one another.



The retreat was also packed with engaging activities that encouraged teamwork and camaraderie. Students threw themselves into games like *Capture the Flag*, showcasing their energy and competitive spirit,



while the challenge of completing an escape room tested their problem-solving skills and creativity. Laughter and cheers echoed throughout the day, reflecting the joy of coming together as a community.

The Emmaus Centre provided the perfect backdrop for this retreat—a place where faith and friendship flourished. As we returned to school, we carried with us not only wonderful memories but also a renewed sense of unity and purpose.

We pray that the lessons learned and the connections made during this retreat will continue to inspire and strengthen our school community in the days ahead.



# EMS6 MET

## Prayer Bags

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Our EMS6 Met students worked on a beautiful project to enrich the Catholic life of our school, designing and creating prayer bags for each form family. These prayer bags are thoughtfully linked to the liturgical calendar, offering resources and reflections to support prayer and spiritual growth throughout the year.

The project was a testament to the students' dedication to their faith and their shared commitment to fostering a deeper sense of community within English Martyrs School. United in purpose, they poured their creativity, care, and faith into every detail of the prayer bags, ensuring they would be meaningful tools for prayer and reflection for their younger peers.

While the project itself was centred on enriching the Catholic identity of our school, it also became an opportunity for the EMS6 students to bond with one another. As they worked together—choosing designs, crafting materials, and sharing ideas—their collaboration strengthened friendships and deepened their sense of shared mission.

These prayer bags are more than just a resource; they are a gift of faith and unity from our Sixth Form students to our wider school family. They reflect not only the richness of the liturgical calendar but also the generosity and thoughtfulness of those who created them.

We are grateful for the dedication of our EMS6 students and the example they set in living out the Gospel values. May these prayer bags inspire every form family to grow in faith, prayer, and community throughout the liturgical year.



# The Masked Singer

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The stage was set, the lights were dazzling, and the costumes were truly out of this world as staff took to the spotlight for a unique and heartwarming rendition of *The Masked Singer*. The audience of pupils and judges were treated to a night of laughter, intrigue, and impressive vocals as the enigmatic performers kept everyone guessing.

In the lineup of mystery singers, we met the likes of *Mr Blobby*, a vibrant and bouncy spectacle; *Shark*, who delivered a jaw-dropping performance; *The Dustbin*, proving that even the most unlikely can shine; *The Penguin*, as cool as ever; and *The Knightmares*, whose harmonies were nothing short of gallant. Each act brought its own magic to the stage, leaving the crowd cheering and the judges with the impossible task of guessing who was behind the mask.

But this was more than just a show. It was a community effort to support a cause close to everyone's hearts. Through ticket sales, donations, and sheer goodwill, the event raised over £500 for Alice House Hospice, a charity that provides vital care and support for those in need.



The evening was not only a testament to the talent and bravery of the staff but also to the generous spirit of all involved. As the final masks were lifted, revealing the familiar faces behind the characters, the room was filled with applause, appreciation, and a shared sense of accomplishment.

A huge thank you to everyone who participated, attended, and donated to make this night such a success. Together, we proved that music, laughter, and a touch of mystery can truly bring people together for an incredible cause.

# Installation of the Tabernacle

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A moment of profound joy blessed our school community with the installation of the Tabernacle into our chapel. This sacred addition marks a significant step in the development of our chapel as the heart of our Catholic life, offering us a special space to encounter Christ in the Eucharist and deepen our connection with Him.

The Tabernacle's presence transforms our chapel into a place of even greater reverence and devotion. It provides us with the opportunity to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, to find solace and peace in Christ's presence, and to come together as a community of faith in moments of prayer and reflection.

Our chapel has always been a cherished space within our school—a haven of calm amidst the busyness of daily life and a reminder of God's constant presence among us. With the addition of the Tabernacle, it becomes not only a place of prayer but also a place of encounter, where the true presence of Christ will dwell in our midst.

We look forward to the opportunities this sacred space now offers, from moments of quiet personal prayer to collective worship, and the ways it will enrich our spiritual journey as a school.

We give thanks for this blessing and pray that the chapel and Tabernacle will continue to inspire and strengthen our school family as we grow in faith, love, and unity. May this space remind us daily of the power of God's presence and the privilege we have to carry His light into the world.

# Month of the Holy Souls

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November, the month of the Holy Souls, is a sacred time when the faithful unite in prayer for the souls of the departed. It is a month of remembrance, reflection, and hope, as we lift our hearts in prayer for those who have gone before us, trusting in God's mercy and the promise of eternal life.

At English Martyrs School, this special time extended beyond our immediate community, as families of our pupils and students were invited to join us in remembering their loved ones. Names of the departed were lovingly offered, each one representing a cherished memory and a connection to those who shaped our lives. These names were gathered with care and reverence, forming a powerful witness to the bonds of love and faith that transcend death.

Together, as a school family, we united in prayer during celebrations of the word, assemblies, and moments of quiet reflection. The chapel became a sanctuary for remembrance, where candles were lit, prayers were whispered, and hearts were comforted by the knowledge that, in Christ, we remain forever connected to those we love.

We are reminded in this month of the Holy Souls that our prayers are a profound act of love, an expression of faith in the communion of saints, and a source of hope in God's eternal promises. May this month continue to draw us closer to God and to one another, as we remember and pray for all the holy souls entrusted to His care.

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
And let perpetual light shine upon  
them. May their souls, and the souls of  
all the faithful departed,  
Through the mercy of God, rest in  
peace. Amen.*



# Prayer Trees

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Throughout November, the atrium at English Martyrs School was transformed into a sacred space of prayer and reflection with the presence of our beautiful prayer trees. These trees served as a visible reminder of our faith, inviting students and families to share their prayer intentions by hanging handwritten cards on their branches. Each intention was a heartfelt offering—prayers for loved ones, hopes for the future, and moments of thanksgiving.



These intentions became a central part of our school's prayer life during this holy month. As we gathered for weekly Mass, the rosary, and staff morning prayers, the prayer trees stood as a symbol of the unity and faith of our community. Each intention was lovingly included in our prayers, lifting the needs and hopes of our school family to God.

The prayer trees were more than just a display—they were a testament to the power of collective prayer and the strength of our community. They reminded us that in offering our prayers for one another, we share in the joys and burdens of our school family, and we entrust all our needs to God's loving care.

As November drew to a close, we carried forward the spirit of the prayer trees—a spirit of remembrance, hope, and unity in faith. We give thanks for the opportunity to come together in this meaningful way, and we pray that the intentions offered continue to bear fruit in God's perfect time.



# Remembrance Day

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On Remembrance Day, our school community gathered in solemn unity to honour the memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service of



peace and freedom. Our Celebration of the Word offered a moment for quiet reflection, heartfelt prayer, and collective gratitude. It was a poignant reminder of the price paid for the lives we live today.

Our students who serve in uniformed organisations took a leading role in the ceremony. With dignity and purpose, they led the procession to lay a wreath of poppies—each petal a symbol of lives given and sacrifices made. Their crisp uniforms and measured steps reflected their commitment to the values of discipline, service, and remembrance.

The school choir lent their voices to the occasion with a hauntingly beautiful rendition of *Fields of Gold*.



The familiar melody, enriched with heartfelt harmonies, seemed to carry the stories of those we remembered—stories of courage and loss, hope and resilience. The school fell silent as the final notes faded, leaving a space heavy with contemplation and reverence.

Through scripture, song, and silence, we remembered all who have given their lives so that we may have a future. As a school, we stood together to acknowledge our shared responsibility to honour their legacy by striving for peace in our own lives. This sacred time of reflection reminded us that remembrance is not only about the past but also a call to build a better tomorrow.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends"  
(John 15:13).

May we always strive to live lives worthy of their sacrifice.





# The Source

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On the 14<sup>th</sup> November a group of our students recently attended *The Source*, an uplifting evening hosted at St Mary's Catholic Cathedral in Newcastle. This special event welcomed students and staff from secondary schools across the Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, creating a sacred space for shared prayer, praise, and worship.

The cathedral, illuminated with warmth and light, became a haven for reflection and joy as young people gathered in faith. The evening was filled with inspiring talks that spoke directly to the hearts of the youth, encouraging them to embrace their faith in a deeper and more personal way. Through powerful music and

moments of silence during adoration, the presence of Christ felt tangible and alive in the room.

This gathering offered a unique opportunity for our students to join their peers from across the diocese in prayer. It was a beautiful reminder that, while we come from different schools and communities, we are united as one body in Christ. Events like *The Source* not only strengthen personal faith but also build lasting connections within the wider Church family.

As our students returned, they shared a renewed sense of purpose and joy, inspired by the message of hope they had encountered. Such experiences are a testament to the vibrancy of youth ministry within our diocese and the power of young people coming together to grow in faith.



# EMS6

## Drain Bags Project

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Our sixth-form students once again showed their commitment to putting faith into action, responding to the call of service with creativity and compassion. During their MET (Moral, Ethical, and Theological) lessons, they honed their sewing skills to produce drain bags for cancer patients, answering an appeal from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.

These drain bags, designed to provide comfort and dignity to patients undergoing treatment, are more than just practical items; they are symbols of care, hope, and solidarity. Each stitch represents our students' dedication to living out the values of Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the principles of human dignity and the call to serve others.



By engaging in this project, our students embraced the principle of the *Option for the Poor and Vulnerable*, recognising the needs of those enduring physical and emotional challenges. They also demonstrated the spirit of *Solidarity*, understanding that as a community, we are called to stand together, offering love and support to those in need.

This initiative not only allowed our students to develop practical skills but also deepened their awareness of how small acts of service can make a profound difference. Through their work, they became the hands of Christ, reaching out to offer comfort and care to the sick.



As a school, we are immensely proud of their efforts. Projects like this remind us that true faith is lived through action, and in serving others, we are responding to Christ's call to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). May their work inspire all of us to seek ways to bring light and hope into the lives of others.



# Invitation to Lourdes

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We were delighted to once again offer our sixth-form students the life-changing opportunity to join the HCPT annual pilgrimage to Lourdes. As part of the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust, our school proudly forms part of the largest youth group attending this inspiring event, embodying the values of faith, service, and community.



The pilgrimage sees our students accompany and assist *family groups*, supporting disabled and disadvantaged children from across the UK. In Lourdes, a place of healing and hope, they become the hands and feet of Christ, ensuring that each child experiences the joy, love, and care they deserve.

This pilgrimage is a powerful expression of Catholic Social Teaching. Our students answer the call to uphold the *Dignity of the Human Person*, offering their time, energy, and compassion to create a memorable and meaningful experience for those they support. It also embodies the principle of *Solidarity*, as young people from across our trust and beyond come together to form a united and caring community of faith.

From pushing wheelchairs through the torchlight procession to sharing laughter over meals and prayers, the pilgrimage offers our students a profound lesson in what it means to live out their faith. They return with stories of friendship, gratitude, and spiritual growth, enriched by the privilege of serving others.

We are immensely proud of the dedication and generosity shown by our students as they embark on this journey. Their participation reflects the heart of our mission as a Catholic school—to love, to serve, and to make a difference in the lives of others.

# Blessing of the Christmas Tree

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On the 27<sup>th</sup> November we held a heartwarming celebration for the blessing of the Christmas tree as prefects, the EMS choir, and staff joined together for a meaningful moment of reflection and joy.

The event was presided over by Canon Paul, who led the blessing with a spirit of reverence and community. The EMS choir developed the atmosphere as “Veni Redemptor” echoed through the gathered crowd, reminding all present of the true meaning of the season. The song’s melody, paired with the solemnity of the occasion, created a peaceful and reflective ambiance.

The celebration not only marked imminent beginning of advent but highlighted the unity and faith at English Martyrs. The coming together of students and staff in this shared moment of joy and spirituality set the tone for a season of hope, peace, and love.



# Confirmations

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Students from Year 9 and above began their sacred journey toward the sacrament of Confirmation. Attending classes at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, these young people embraced the opportunity to deepen their faith and affirm their commitment to Christ. Led by Canon Paul and Mr. McCartie, our Head of Catholic Life, the sessions have been a time of prayer, reflection, and learning, helping the students to prepare their hearts for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

On the evening of 27th November, the school community came together in a powerful show of support as the confirmandi received the sacrament during a spirit-filled Confirmation Mass at St Joseph's. Staff and fellow students joined family and parishioners to witness this moment of grace and celebration.

The Mass was a beautiful expression of faith, with the confirmandi standing in humility and courage as they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. Canon Paul's words inspired all present, reminding us of the significance of this step in the students' spiritual journey and the call to live as witnesses to Christ in the world.

The support from staff and peers highlighted the strength of our community, a living testament to the principle of *Solidarity* in Catholic Social Teaching. Together, we celebrated the confirmandi's commitment to their faith and their readiness to live out the gifts of the Spirit in service to others.

We pray that these students will continue to grow in faith, guided by the Holy Spirit, as they take their place as full members of the Church. May their example inspire us all to embrace the call to discipleship with open hearts and willing hands.



# EMS Live

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Organised by two of our very talented Sixth Form students, who also served the MC the evening, EMS students hosted and performed in EMS Live, an open mic night, held to raise money for CAFOD. This event was a vibrant showcase of talent, creativity, and community spirit, as students came together to support a worthy cause.

The night featured a wide range of performances, from solo singers to small musical groups, with students also playing instruments and even reading heartfelt poetry. The variety of acts reflected the diverse skills within the school and created an atmosphere of excitement and pride as our community of parents/carers and loved ones supported the performers.



The event not only allowed students to shine on stage but also brought the school community together in support of CAFOD's important work. Through their efforts, the students of EMS demonstrated the power of creativity and generosity in making a difference in the world.



# EMS6

## Met Coffee Morning

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On December 13<sup>th</sup> the EMS Sixth Form MET students demonstrated their commitment to the Catholic Social Teaching by organising a heartwarming coffee morning for the local Parish and families of the students. Rooted in community care for the vulnerable, and solidarity, the event was a testament to the students' dedication to putting their faith into action. The morning was designed not only to foster fellowship but also to raise money for Cafod.

The coffee morning was a vibrant blend of hospitality and entertainment. Students meticulously planned the event ensuring it would be a meaningful experience for the parish community. To make the event truly special, the students prepared and performed Christmas songs.



The funds raised through donations and a raffle when towards buying Christmas presents for families in need. Thank you to the Holy Family Parishes for joining us for this celebration.

# EMS6

## MET Christmas Hampers

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In a heartwarming display of compassion and community spirit, the EMS6 MET students came together to make a meaningful difference in the lives of local families this Christmas. As part of their ongoing commitment to the Catholic Social Teaching, the students organised a food donation drive and assembled festive hampers filled with essential items and seasonal treats for those in need. The initiative, rooted in the values of



the preferential option for the poor and solidarity, saw students collaborating to collect non-perishable food, toiletries, and holiday goodies. With the support of staff, peers, and their families, the students transformed the Sixth Form into a hub of generosity—sorting, packing, and decorating hampers with care and festive cheer.

Each hamper was thoughtfully curated to bring not only nourishment but also joy and dignity to families facing hardship during the holiday season. The students' efforts reflect a deep understanding of the true meaning of Christmas: giving without expecting, and loving without limits.

The Christmas hamper drive is a shining example of how young people, when empowered by faith and purpose, can lead with compassion and create lasting change. Through their dedication, the EMS6 MET students not only brought comfort to families in need but also reminded the entire community of the power of unity, generosity, and love in action.

As the hampers were delivered, they carried more than just food—they carried a message of hope, a sense of belonging, and the spirit of Christmas made real through the hands of those willing to serve.





# Travelling Nativity

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This Advent season, the staff of EMS found a meaningful way to bring the true message of Christmas into their homes through the tradition of traveling nativities. This cherished practice united colleagues and their families in prayer, reflection, and a renewed appreciation of the profound significance of the Advent season.



The traveling nativity tradition invites participants to host a beautifully crafted nativity set in their home for an evening. As each family welcomes the nativity, they gather to arrange its figures—Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, shepherds, and wise men—while offering prayers of gratitude, hope, and anticipation.



For many, the act of setting up the nativity became a moment of sacred pause in the busyness of the season. The prayers shared around the nativity brought families closer together, creating an atmosphere of peace and unity.

The traveling aspect of the tradition added another layer of connection. Each time the nativity moved to a new home, it carried with it the prayers and blessings of the previous family. For the EMS community, the traveling nativities became a powerful reminder of the true message of Advent: preparation, hope, and the joy of Christ's coming. In a season often overshadowed by commercial hustle, this tradition redirected hearts and minds to what truly matters.

As the nativity sets completed their journeys, the staff of EMS reflected on how the experience had deepened their sense of faith and connection. This simple yet profound tradition not only brought the story of Christmas to life but also illuminated the enduring power of prayer and the beauty of sharing it with loved ones.



# Advent Angels

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This Advent season, the staff of EMS found themselves immersed in the magical spirit of giving and receiving through a heartwarming tradition: Advent Angels. The initiative, designed to spread festive cheer and deepen connections among colleagues, was a resounding success that left everyone touched by the blessings of generosity and thoughtfulness.

The concept of Advent Angels is simple yet profound. Each participant is secretly assigned a colleague to whom they anonymously give small, thoughtful gifts throughout the Advent season. These acts of kindness culminate in a delightful exchange of final presents.

The beauty of this tradition lies in the mystery and joy it evokes. For the givers, the opportunity to observe and consider their colleague's likes and preferences sparked a sense of purpose and creativity. A small box of chocolates, a handwritten note, or a trinket aligned with a colleague's hobbies became symbols of care and thoughtfulness.

On the receiving end, the joy of discovering a surprise gift was equally enchanting. Each token brought a sense of being seen and valued. Opening a present that someone clearly put thought into, without knowing who to thank, is so special and reminds people of how deeply we can connect when we take the time to truly notice each other.

Advent Angels became more than just a festive activity; it was a celebration of the true spirit of Christmas—love, generosity, and connection. For the EMS staff, it was a season filled with laughter, warmth, and a renewed sense of camaraderie.



# EMS6 Advent Celebration of the word

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EMS6 students gathered for a special Celebration of the word presided by Mr McCartie. The chapel, filled to capacity, resonated with a sense of unity and spiritual reflection as the students came together to honour this sacred time.

The liturgy was a beautiful reminder of the true meaning of Advent—a season of hope, preparation, and anticipation for the birth of Christ. Mr McCartie, with his profound words and guiding presence, led the congregation through prayers, readings, and hymns that captured the essence of this holy period.

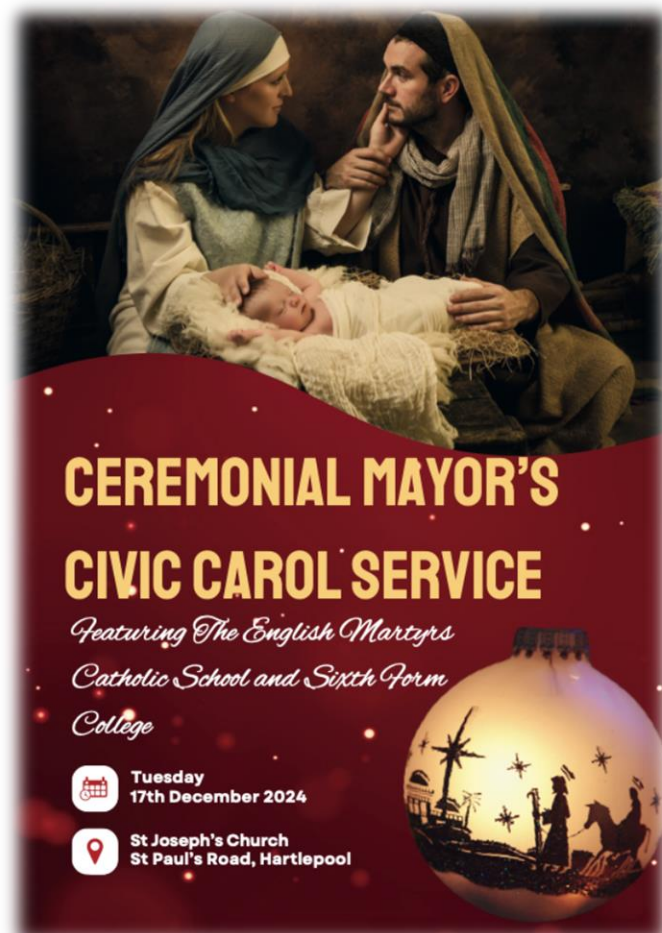
The atmosphere was one of reverence and joy, with every seat occupied and standing room filled, showcasing the students' eagerness to engage in their faith and community.

As the liturgy progressed, the chapel seemed to glow with the collective spirit of those present. It was a testament to the strength of the EMS6 community and their commitment to the values and traditions of the Catholic faith. The event not only deepened the students' understanding of Advent but also strengthened their bonds with one another.

In a world often marked by distractions and busy schedules, this Advent liturgy served as a poignant reminder of the importance of pausing to reflect and connect with one's faith. The EMS6 students left the chapel with renewed spirits and a shared sense of purpose, ready to carry the light of Advent into their daily lives.

# Ceremonial Mayors Carol Service

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# The Chalking of the Door to Mark the Epiphany

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The EMS community welcomed the new year and celebrated the Epiphany with a meaningful liturgy for the chalking of the door, presided by Mr McCartie and supported by the EMS choir. This beautiful tradition, rich with symbolism and prayer, set a tone of blessing and hope for the year ahead.

Gathering in a spirit of reverence and celebration, the choir and staff began the liturgy by singing the timeless carol "We Three Kings." The hauntingly beautiful melody and lyrics brought the journey of the Magi to life, reminding all present of the gifts of faith, hope, and love brought by Christ's coming. Reflecting on the story of the Magi, the chalking of the door—a centuries-old practice—followed, where the doorway was marked with the year and the initials "C+M+B," representing both the traditional names of the Magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar) and the Latin phrase *Christus Mansionem Benedicat* ("May Christ bless this house").

The liturgy continued with prayers for the year ahead, asking for God's blessings upon the EMS community, their families, and all who would pass through the doors. These prayers served as a reminder of the importance of welcoming Christ into every aspect of life, from homes and workplaces to hearts and minds.

The ceremony closed with a renewed sense of purpose and joy, as those gathered reflected on the meaning of Epiphany—the manifestation of Christ to the world.



# Porta Sancta



The Holy Door is a symbolic entrance to a church, traditionally opened during Jubilee years in the Catholic Church. It represents a pathway to spiritual renewal and forgiveness. By passing through the Holy Door, individuals are invited to experience God's mercy and grace, often during times of special religious observance or pilgrimage.

As part of the Jubilee celebration, the winning stained-glass design created by the Key Stage 3 art pupils at EMS will become a permanent and meaningful feature of the entrance to the main school building. The chosen design will incorporate symbolic elements related to hope, renewal, and divine grace. The window's vibrant colours, intricate patterns, and light-catching nature will reflect the transformative power of the Holy Door, as well as the journey pilgrims undertake in search of spiritual enlightenment. This piece of art will not only enhance the physical space of the school but also serve as a constant reminder for students, staff, and visitors of the hope and faith that the Holy Door represents.





# The Commencing of the Holy Year, Year of Jubilee

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On January 24th, the EMS community gathered in form families to celebrate a special Celebration of the word to mark the commencement of the Holy Year, the Year of Jubilee. This year, proclaimed by Pope Francis, calls all of us to be "*Pilgrims of Hope*". The Celebration offered a meaningful moment for the school to come together as a community to mark the beginning of this sacred time for the Church.

The gospel reading from John 10:1-9, speaks of the Good Shepherd and the gate to the sheepfold. In this passage, Jesus offers us the promise of safety, security, and abundant life through Him. He calls us to follow Him, to trust in His guidance, and to walk through the gate He provides, knowing that He is the way to true fulfilment and peace. This message resonates deeply with the theme of the Holy Year, inviting us to place our trust in Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate source of hope.

The Holy Year of Jubilee, as proclaimed by Pope Francis, urges us to restore a climate of hope and trust. Pope Francis encourages us to walk together on a path of renewal and rebirth, as we reflect on our faith and grow closer to God. The liturgy reminded us that hope is never lost because it is rooted in Jesus Christ, who is with us every step of the way. As *Pilgrims of Hope*, we are called to carry that hope forward into our lives, supporting one another and embracing the transformative power of faith.

This special Celebration of the word not only marked the beginning of the Holy Year but also reminded us of the significance of this time for the Church and for our own spiritual journeys. By coming together as a school community, we united in prayer and reflection, beginning this Holy Year with hearts open to the renewal and hope that Jesus offers. We are reminded that as pilgrims, we walk together towards a future of faith, trust, and transformation in Christ.



# Youth SVP Launch

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On 17th February, EMS proudly launched its Youth SVP, bringing together 30 dedicated pupils with a shared mission of community service and spreading joy. This initiative marks a significant moment in the school's journey, embodying the spirit of being Pilgrims of Hope.

The Youth SVP, a collaborative effort among students and teachers, aims to make a positive impact on the local community through various acts of kindness and support. The pupils, driven by a common purpose, have committed themselves to helping those in need and fostering a sense of joy and hope.

The launch event, led by Mrs. Snowball, provided an inspiring opportunity for reflection and action. As the pupils gathered, they united in their commitment to serve, celebrating their roles as Pilgrims of Hope. The event was filled with moments of contemplation, music, and, encouraging a sense of community and shared purpose with the Gospel at the centre.

Throughout the launch, the Youth SVP served as a focal point, reminding everyone of the power of collective action and community spirit. Each pupil's unique contributions highlighted their individual strengths and shared dedication to service, creating a supportive and uplifting environment.

The gathering strengthened the bonds within the EMS community, demonstrating the importance of mutual support and collective action in their journey of faith and service. By coming together to launch the Youth SVP, the pupils have enriched the Catholic life within their school, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.



# Sharing of Liturgical Themes



The EMS community embarked on a new initiative to share liturgical themes on a wider scale, enhancing the Catholic life within the school. This initiative involved the use of posters in assemblies and throughout the school, aiming to deepen students' understanding of the Liturgical Calendar, Catholic Social Teaching, BHCET Trust Virtues, and Fundamental British Values.

To bring the liturgical Calendar to life, EMS introduced visually engaging posters that were displayed prominently in assemblies and throughout the school. These posters depict scenes and symbols associated with each church season, from Advent, Lent, Easter, to Ordinary Time.

The visual displays serve as constant reminder of the spiritual journey students are invited to undertake. By sharing liturgical Calendar on a wider scale, EMS has strengthened its Catholic life and mission whilst deepening their understanding of British Values and the Liturgical Themes.



# EMS6 Stained-Glass Window

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The EMS community gathered to unveil a stunning stained-glass window in the 6th form building, a heartfelt tribute to Sarah Cain, whose life was tragically cut short in the summer of 2024. This window, incorporating Sarah's inspiring and uplifting artwork, serves as a poignant reminder of the joy she brought to EMS and the lasting impact of her creativity.

The stained-glass window stands as a symbol of the joy Sarah brought to EMS. Her art, now immortalised in glass, continues to inspire and uplift all who see it. The window's radiant

colours and intricate designs serve as a daily reminder of Sarah's positive impact on the school community. It invites students, teachers, and staff to reflect on the beauty of life and the importance of sharing joy with others.



As sunlight streams through the stained glass, it casts vibrant patterns across the hallway, transforming the space into a sanctuary of light and colour. This transformation mirrors the way Sarah's presence brightened the lives of those around her. The window not only enhances the aesthetic of the 6th form building but also serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration, encouraging everyone to carry forward Sarah's legacy of joy and creativity.

# Pilgrims of Hope Art Project

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2025 representatives from the 35 Bishop Hogarth Trust schools gathered at EMS to embark on a collaborative art project for the Year of Jubilee, embracing the theme of "Pilgrims of Hope." This initiative, led by EMS, aimed to create a traveling cross that would symbolise hope and unity, featuring prominently in a Year of Hope liturgy at each participating school.



Students and teachers from each of the 35 trust schools came together at EMS to work on the traveling cross. The project was a true testament to the power of collaboration and community. Each school contributed unique elements to the cross, incorporating symbols and designs that reflected their individual identities and shared

faith. The process was filled with creativity, teamwork, and a shared sense of purpose.

The traveling cross stands as a powerful symbol of hope and unity. It represents the collective journey of the trust schools as Pilgrims of Hope, walking together towards a future of faith and renewal. The cross's intricate designs and vibrant colours capture the essence of the Year of Jubilee, inviting everyone to place their trust in Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate source of hope.



Once completed, the traveling cross began its journey to each of the 35 trust schools. At each stop, it featured prominently in a Year of Hope liturgy, bringing the message of hope and renewal to every school community. These liturgies provided meaningful moments for reflection and prayer, uniting students, teachers, and staff in a shared act of faith and celebration.

# Pilgrims of Hope Trust Hymn

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On a momentous day, representatives from the 35 Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust (BHCET) schools gathered at EMS to embark on a musical journey, creating a trust hymn titled "Grace" in honour of the Year of Jubilee.

This initiative, led by Mr McCartie, embraced the theme of "Pilgrims of Hope," aiming to unite the school communities through the power of song.

Mr McCartie composed the hymn "Grace" with profound inspiration, capturing the essence of hope and unity.

The hymn's lyrics and melody reflect our collective journey of faith and renewal as pilgrims of hope, inviting everyone to place their trust in Jesus Christ, the ultimate source of hope.

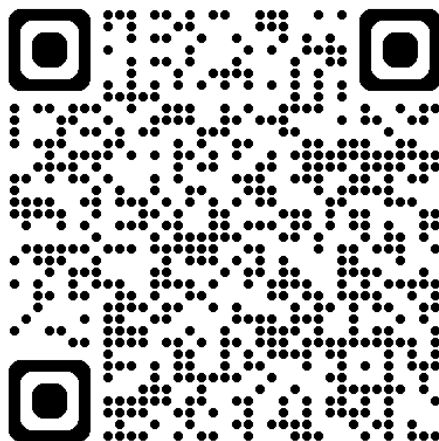
On the day of the recording, Mr Gardner led the schools in a Celebration of the word to prepare their hearts and minds for the special occasion. This set a reflective and prayerful tone, uniting students, teachers, and staff in a shared act of faith and celebration.

Pupils showcased their musical talents as they recorded the hymn. Each school contributed their unique voices and harmonies, creating a beautiful and powerful rendition of "Grace." The recording session was filled with creativity, teamwork, and a shared sense of purpose, highlighting the strength of the BHCET community.

The creation of the trust hymn "Grace" stands as a testament to the power of collective action and the importance of supporting one another in their spiritual journeys. This project has enriched the Catholic life within each school, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. By working together to create and record the hymn, the schools have demonstrated the power of collaboration and the importance of faith in their daily lives.

The hymn "Grace" will undoubtedly become a cherished part of the Year of Jubilee celebrations, bringing the message of hope and renewal to every school community.

A special thank you to Jason Snowball for his wonderful skills in sound engineering. Without his expertise our Trust Hymn would not have been possible.





# Pilgrims of Hope Pilgrimage Cross

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On 10th March, EMS students gathered as Pilgrims of Hope to share a special liturgy featuring the Trust Pilgrim Cross. This event was a significant moment in the Year of Jubilee, symbolizing hope, unity, and faith.

The Trust Pilgrim Cross, a collaborative art project created by students and teachers from each of the 35 trust schools, stood as a powerful symbol of the collective journey of faith and renewal. Its intricate designs and vibrant colours captured the essence of the Year of Jubilee, inviting everyone to place their trust in Jesus Christ, the ultimate source of hope.

The Celebration of the word provided a meaningful opportunity for reflection and prayer. As the Trust Pilgrim Cross was unveiled, the EMS students united in a shared act of faith, celebrating their journey as Pilgrims of Hope. The Celebration of the word was filled with moments of contemplation, music, and heartfelt prayers, fostering a sense of spiritual growth and unity.



Throughout the event, the Trust Pilgrim Cross served as a focal point, reminding everyone of the power of collaboration and community. Each school's unique contributions to the cross highlighted their individual identities and shared faith, creating a supportive and spiritually uplifting environment.

The gathering on 10th March strengthened the bonds within the EMS community, demonstrating the importance of collective action and mutual support in their spiritual journeys. By coming together to share the liturgy and celebrate the Trust Pilgrim Cross, the students have enriched the Catholic life within their school, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.

# Ash Wednesday

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On Ash Wednesday, EMS held a beautiful service led by Mr McCartie, marking the beginning of Lent with a profound sense of reflection and renewal. This special service was supported by students from the Youth SVP, who had diligently learned about the significance of the ashes and the practice of ashing.

The service, held in the school chapel, provided a meaningful opportunity for the EMS community to come together in prayer and contemplation. Mr McCartie, with the assistance of the Youth SVP students, guided the congregation through the service, emphasising the themes of repentance and renewal.

During the service, the Youth SVP students assisted Mr McCartie in distributing the ashes to their peers and teachers. Their involvement as faith leaders in our community is a credit to the Catholic life and mission of our school. Each gently placing the ashes on the foreheads of the congregation, saying, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." This act of ashing was a powerful reminder of the call to repentance and the journey of Lent.

This event not only marked the start of Lent but also strengthened the bonds within the EMS community. By coming together to share in the Ash Wednesday liturgy, the students and staff deepened their understanding of their faith and their commitment to the Lenten journey.

The Ash Wednesday service will undoubtedly be remembered as a significant moment of spiritual growth and unity, inspiring the EMS community to embrace the season of Lent with renewed faith and hope.



# Stations of the Cross

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Throughout Lent, the Youth SVP group at EMS, guided by Mr McCartie and Mrs Snowball, embarked on a profound journey of faith by walking the Stations of the Cross. This spiritual practice, held every Friday lunchtime, provided a meaningful opportunity for the pupils to reflect on the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus.



The Youth SVP came together with a shared purpose of deepening their faith and understanding of Passiontide. Each week, they gathered to walk the Stations of the Cross, to contemplate the events of Jesus' final journey.



Led by Mr McCartie and Mrs Snowball, the group engaged in thoughtful reflections and prayers at each station. These moments of contemplation allowed the pupils to connect with the profound themes of sacrifice, love, and redemption. The experience fostered a sense of spiritual growth and unity among the participants.

The weekly gatherings were filled with moments of silence, prayer, and shared insights, creating a supportive and reflective atmosphere. The pupils' commitment to this practice demonstrated their dedication to living out their faith and embodying the spirit of being Pilgrims of Hope.

The journey of walking the Stations of the Cross not only strengthened the bonds within the Youth SVP group but also enriched the Catholic life within the EMS community. By coming together to remember the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus, the pupils deepened their understanding of their faith and their commitment to serving others.

"We adore you O Christ and we praise you because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the World"





# Flame 2025

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On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025 the pupils and students of English Martyrs School embarked on an inspiring pilgrimage to London to attend Flame 2025. Despite the early start, the excitement of being pilgrims of hope filled the air, energising everyone for the journey ahead.



Upon arrival, we joined a vibrant gathering of 10,800 people, united in worship and adoration. The atmosphere was electric, with a shared sense of purpose and faith bringing us all together. The day was filled with profound moments of spiritual connection, as we collectively lifted our voices in praise and prayer.



One of the highlights of Flame 2025 was listening to the profound words of speakers such as Bear Grylls. His message resonated deeply with all of us, as he shared his insights on faith, resilience, and living a life of purpose. Bear Grylls' words were not only inspiring but also a call to action, encouraging us to embrace the limitless potential within ourselves.

As a special part of the event, we were thrilled to receive first editions of Bear Grylls' new book, which explores the Gospel of Jesus. This gift was a tangible reminder of the day's messages and a source of ongoing inspiration. The book's exploration of the Gospel provided us with fresh



perspectives on Jesus' teachings and how we can apply them in our daily lives.

The pilgrimage to Flame 2025 was a transformative experience for all of us. It deepened our faith, strengthened our bonds as a community, and inspired us to carry the message of being limitless into our lives. As we returned home, we were filled with a renewed sense of hope and determination to live out our faith with courage and conviction.

# Bl Carlo Acutis Relics Mass

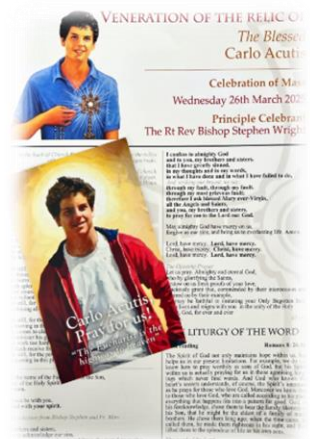


On the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 a group of pupils from English Martyrs School recently on a heartfelt pilgrimage to Seaham, where they attended a special mass featuring the relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis. As pilgrims of hope, this journey was more than just a physical trip; it was a profound spiritual experience that deepened our faith and strengthened our bonds.

The mass, centred around the veneration of Blessed Carlo Acutis' relics, was a powerful reminder of the young saint's devotion to the Eucharist and his inspiring life of faith. As we gathered in Seaham, the presence of the relics brought a sense of closeness to the divine, allowing us to reflect on our own spiritual journeys and the ways in which we can emulate Blessed Carlo's example.

Throughout the pilgrimage, we shared moments of prayer, reflection, and fellowship. The experience of traveling together, united by our faith, created a strong sense of community and mutual support. We were reminded that our journey of faith is not one we undertake alone, but one we share with others who inspire and uplift us.

The veneration of the relics was a particularly moving part of the mass. As we approached the relics, we felt a profound sense of blessing and grace. This sacred moment allowed us to connect deeply with our faith, feeling the presence of Blessed Carlo Acutis and the divine love that flows through his legacy.



This pilgrimage to Seaham was a testament to the enduring power of faith and the importance of coming together as a community. It was a journey that not only enriched our spiritual lives but also strengthened the bonds we share as members of the EMS family. Through this shared experience, we were reminded of the hope and inspiration that faith brings, and the blessings we receive when we walk this path together.

# Bl Carlo Acutis Relics 24 Hours of Prayer

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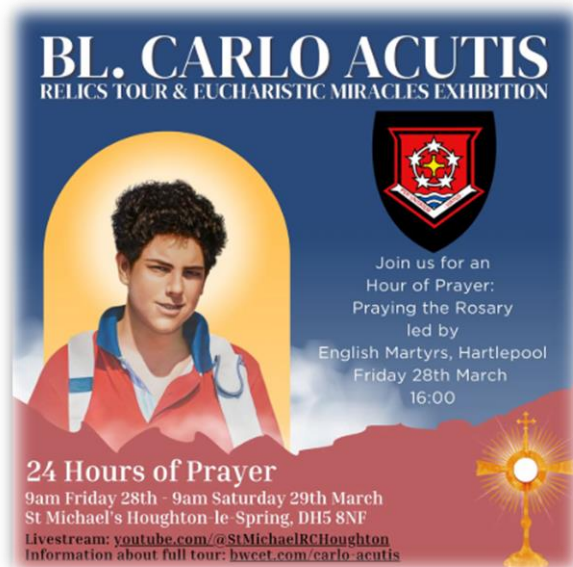
As part of our "Pilgrims of Hope" journey during this year of jubilee, pupils and students from English Martyrs School) participated in a profound 24-hour prayer vigil with the relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025. This spiritual event was a testament to the deep faith and commitment of our students, who led an hour of prayer with remarkable spirituality, faith, and grace.

During their dedicated hour, the pupils and students led a specially written rosary that highlighted the life and messages of Blessed Carlo Acutis. Each decade of the rosary was thoughtfully crafted to reflect his devotion to the Eucharist, his love for the Church, and his inspiring example of living a holy life in the modern world. The pupils' reverence and heartfelt prayers created an atmosphere of deep contemplation and connection with the divine.

As the rosary concluded, the sound of the students' singing filled the church, adding a beautiful and uplifting dimension to the prayer hour. Their voices, united in harmony, echoed through the sacred space, creating a sense of unity and spiritual elevation. This musical conclusion was not just a performance, but a heartfelt offering of praise and worship, resonating with everyone present.

The 24-hour prayer vigil with the relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis was a significant milestone in our pilgrimage of hope. It provided an opportunity for our community to come together in faith, to reflect on the inspiring life of Blessed Carlo, and to seek his intercession. The pupils and students' leadership in prayer and their deep sense of spirituality were a powerful reminder of the strength and beauty of our faith.

This event was more than just a moment of prayer; it was a shared journey of faith that deepened our bonds as a community and strengthened our commitment to living out the messages of hope and love that Blessed Carlo Acutis exemplified. As we continue our pilgrimage through this year of jubilee, we carry with us the blessings and inspiration from this sacred experience, united in our faith and hope for the future.





# CAFOD Big Lent Walk

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On Friday, 4th April, the Youth SVP group at EMS embarked on their Big Lent Walk at Seaton Carew, braving the cold to walk as Pilgrims of Hope and share the spirit of Jubilee. This event was a testament to their dedication and commitment to raising money for a worthy cause.

The pupils, guided by their teachers, gathered at Seaton Carew with a shared purpose of making a positive impact on their community. Despite the chilly

weather, their spirits were high as they set off on their walk, embodying the values of hope, unity, and faith.

Throughout the walk, the Youth SVP students demonstrated resilience and determination, embracing the challenges of the cold with a sense of camaraderie and joy. Their journey was filled with moments of reflection, laughter, and shared stories, fostering a strong sense of community and mutual support.



The Big Lent Walk was not only an opportunity for the pupils to raise funds for a worthy cause but also a chance to live out their faith as Pilgrims of Hope. Each step they took symbolised their commitment to spreading joy and making a difference in the lives of others. As they walked along the scenic paths of Seaton Carew, the pupils carried the spirit of Jubilee with them, celebrating their collective journey of faith and renewal. Their efforts were supported by generous donations from the EMS community, highlighting the power of collective action and generosity.



By coming together to walk as Pilgrims of Hope, the Youth SVP group has enriched the Catholic life within their school, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. Their dedication to raising money for a worthy cause exemplifies the values of compassion and faith, making a lasting difference in their community.

# Born For This

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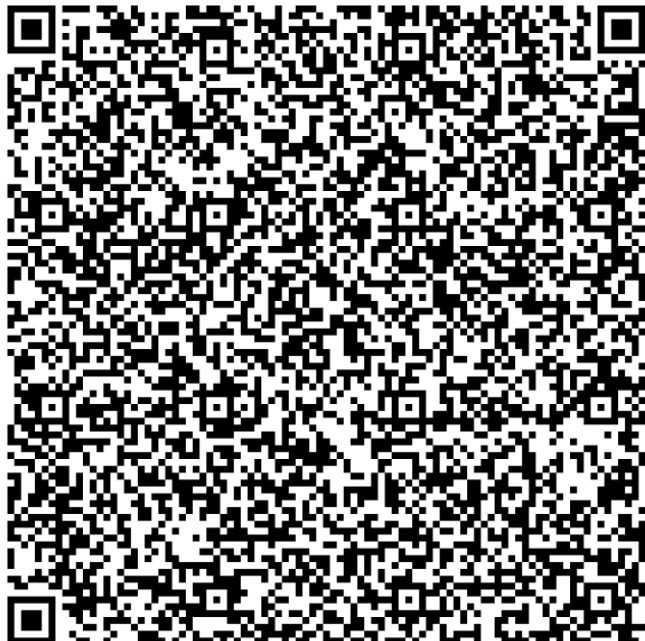
This Easter season, the English Martyrs Choir delivered a deeply moving performance of "Born for This," live-streamed across EMS as part of our Holy week celebrations. The choir's harmonious voices resonated with the profound message of Easter, capturing the essence of Jesus' sacrifice and the hope it brings to all.

Mr McCartie's poignant reflection during the recording was a highlight, reminding us of the true meaning of Easter. His words echoed the significance of Jesus' journey, from His suffering to His resurrection, emphasising the love and redemption offered to humanity. Through his heartfelt message, Mr McCartie invited us to contemplate the depth of Jesus' sacrifice and the transformative power it holds.

The live-streamed event not only showcased the choir's exceptional talent but also served as a spiritual reminder of the Easter season's core message. It was a moment of unity and reflection, bringing the community together to celebrate and remember the profound impact of Jesus' sacrifice for us all.

The performance was more than just a musical presentation; it was a spiritual experience that touched the hearts of everyone who tuned in. The choir's dedication and passion were evident in every note, creating an atmosphere of reverence and contemplation. As we listened to the beautiful rendition of "Born for This," we were reminded of the enduring message of Easter – a message of hope, renewal, and the boundless love of Jesus Christ.

The English Martyrs Choir's performance provided a beacon of light and a reminder of the strength we can draw from our faith. It was a powerful testament to the enduring spirit of Easter and the everlasting impact of Jesus' sacrifice for humanity.



# Lourdes Easter Pilgrimage

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This Easter, students from the EMS 6th Form joined staff members and hosted by Carmel College, embarked on a profound spiritual journey to Lourdes, embodying the theme "Angels Among Us." The pilgrimage was not only a testament to our faith but also a celebration of hope and love, as we donned angel our outfits to spread joy, hope, and love.

The theme "Angels Among Us" was central to the pilgrimage, symbolising the presence of divine messengers in our lives. Students and staff dressed as angels, creating a visual representation of hope and love. Their angelic presence was a reminder that even in challenging times, there is always light and support around us.

The EMS 6th Form joined the pilgrimage from Carmel College, who graciously hosted them. This collaboration demonstrated the unity and shared purpose of the pilgrimage, bringing together different communities in a collective expression of faith and devotion.

The students took on significant roles throughout the pilgrimage, showcasing their leadership and dedication. They led the torchlight procession, a moving ceremony that illuminated the night with faith and unity. Additionally, they spearheaded the regional opening liturgy, setting a tone of reverence and reflection for the journey ahead.

Worship was a key component of the pilgrimage, with students leading services at various sacred sites. They conducted worship at the grotto, where the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Bernadette, in the St. Bernadette Centre, and in the underground basilica. These moments of worship were powerful, fostering a deep connection with their faith and with each other.





One of the most poignant experiences was journeying through the Stations of the Cross together at the high stations. Some students chose to complete this barefoot, emulating Jesus' sacrifice and demonstrating their commitment to the pilgrimage's spiritual depth. This act of devotion allowed them to reflect on Jesus' suffering and pray for their families and the world.

The pilgrimage was not only a collective experience but also a deeply personal one. Each participant embarked on their own spiritual journey, discovering new aspects of their faith and themselves. Through shared experiences and reflections, they formed bonds and memories that will last a lifetime.



The EMS 6th Form's Easter pilgrimage to Lourdes, hosted by Carmel College, was a transformative experience. By embracing the theme "Angels Among Us," leading worship and liturgy, and journeying through the Stations of the Cross, students and staff alike deepened their faith and formed unforgettable memories. This pilgrimage was a testament to the power of hope, love, and community, reminding us all of the angels among us and that we are pilgrims of hope.



# Celebrating the Life of Pope Francis

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In a series of poignant assemblies, Mr McCartie led the pupils and students of the English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College in celebrating the remarkable life and legacy of Pope Francis. These gatherings were not only a tribute to the Pope's profound impact on the world but also a commitment to continuing his mission of compassion, humility, and social justice.

Mr McCartie began each assembly by highlighting Pope Francis's significant achievements. He spoke about the Pope's dedication to environmental stewardship, his efforts to bridge gaps between different faiths, and his unwavering support for the marginalised and oppressed. Through his words in reflecting the life of Pope Francis, Mr McCartie fostered our sense of unity and purpose, reminding us all of the importance of living out the values we admire in Pope Francis.

Mr McCartie emphasised the importance of continuing Pope Francis's legacy. He encouraged us to adopt the Pope's principles in our daily lives, whether through acts of kindness, efforts to protect the environment, or standing up for justice.

Through these assemblies as a community we not only honoured Pope Francis but also inspired us to carry forward his mission. It was a powerful reminder that each of us has the ability to make a difference, just as Pope Francis did.

**Pope Francis**

1936-2025



# Launch of Laudato Si' Enrichment

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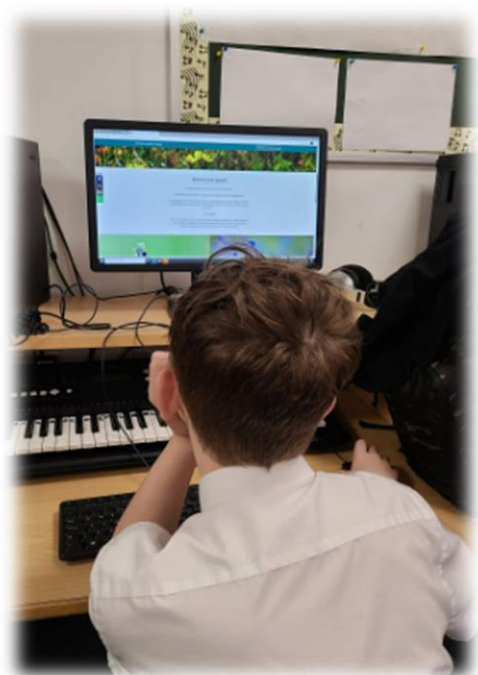


On 6th May, EMS proudly launched its Laudato Si' Enrichment Program, uniting passionate pupils with a shared mission of environmental stewardship and community engagement. This initiative marks a pivotal moment in the school's journey, embodying the spirit of being Guardians of Creation.

The Laudato Si' Enrichment Program, a collaborative effort among pupils and staff, aims to make a positive impact on the local environment through various acts of ecological awareness and sustainability. The pupils, driven by a common purpose, have committed themselves to protecting our common home and fostering a sense of ecological responsibility and hope.

The launch event, led by Mrs Snowball, provided an inspiring opportunity for reflection and action. As the pupils gathered, they united in their commitment to environmental stewardship, celebrating their roles as Guardians of Creation. Throughout the launch, the Laudato Si' Enrichment Program served as a focal point, reminding everyone of the power of collective action and community spirit.

The gathering strengthened the bonds within the EMS community, demonstrating the importance of mutual support and collective action in their journey of faith and service. By coming together to launch the Laudato Si' Enrichment Program, the pupils have enriched the Catholic life within their school, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose.





# The Feast of English Martyrs

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In May the English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College came together to celebrate the feast of the English Martyrs, a day dedicated to honouring the sacrifices made by those who stood firm in their faith during times of persecution. This annual event is a significant occasion for the school community, providing an opportunity for reflection, gratitude, and celebration.

Each class participated in the celebration of the feast day by sharing cake and cookies. The act of sharing food symbolised community and fellowship, echoing the spirit of the English Martyrs who remained united in their faith despite adversity.

The celebration of the feast day was not just about remembering the past; it was also about building a sense of community within the school. By coming together to reflect, pray, and share, students and staff strengthened their bonds and reaffirmed their commitment to the values that the English Martyrs stood for. The day concluded with a sense of unity and a renewed appreciation for the importance of faith and community.

The feast of the English Martyrs at English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College was a meaningful and joyous occasion. Through reflection, prayer, and celebration, the school community honoured the legacy of the Martyrs and reinforced the values of faith, courage, and unity. The sharing of cake and cookies added a sweet touch to the day, making it a memorable event for all involved.



# Celebrating Pope Leo XIV

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## Habemus Papem!

In a series of assemblies, Mr McCartie led the pupils and students of the English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College in celebrating the historic election of Pope Leo XIV. These gatherings were not only a tribute to the new Pope's promising future but also a commitment to embracing his vision of unity, peace, and renewal.

Last week, the entire school community watched with anticipation as the conclave progressed, culminating in the joyous announcement of Pope Leo XIV's election. This week, Mr McCartie began each assembly by reflecting on the significance of this momentous event. He spoke about Pope Leo XIV's dedication to fostering global harmony, his efforts to promote interfaith dialogue, and his unwavering commitment to social justice.

Through his words, Mr McCartie fostered a sense of unity and purpose among us, reminding everyone of the importance of living out the values that Pope Leo XIV embodies. He emphasised the need to continue the Pope's mission in our daily lives, whether through acts of kindness, efforts to protect the environment, or standing up for justice.

These assemblies were a powerful reminder that as a community, we have the ability to make a difference, just as Pope Leo XIV aims to do. By honouring the new Pope, we were inspired to carry forward his mission, embracing the values of compassion, humility, and social justice that he champions. It was a celebration of hope and a call to action, encouraging each of us to contribute to a better world.



# Pentecost Celebrations

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On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June, in a beautiful expression of faith and fellowship, the pupils of SVP and Laudato Si enrichments came together with the school choir to mark the celebration of Pentecost—a moment that brought the school community closer in spirit and joy.

The celebration took place in the school chapel, where Mr McCartie led a reverent and thoughtful celebration of the word. As the pupils gathered in the peaceful space, they reflected on the significance of Pentecost—the day the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, empowering them to go forth and share the Good News. This moment, often referred to as the birthday of the Church, was brought to life through scripture, prayer, and song.

The choir's uplifting hymns filled the chapel with a sense of unity and celebration. This was also combined with a virtual sharing of the Pentecost celebrations as each form group joined an online celebration of the word to reflect on the significance of the day.

Following the celebration in the chapel, in true birthday fashion we had cake! Pupils and staff shared sweet treats and joyful conversation, marking the occasion with smiles and laughter. It was a simple yet powerful reminder that faith is not only something we reflect on, but something we live and share together.



This Pentecost celebration was a shining example of how the EMS school community lives out its values—bringing together prayer, action, and joy in a way that leaves a lasting impression on all who take part.



# Year 10 Mass

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On 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025 Year 10 came together to share Mass celebrated by Canon Paul. This was a joyful and reflective celebration, bringing the year group together in prayer, thanksgiving, and community.

The Mass was a deeply meaningful moment for pupils and staff alike. Canon Paul led the celebration with warmth and wisdom, encouraging students to be Jesus hands and feet here on earth, reflecting the school motto, "Christ has no body now on earth but yours".

What made the Mass especially powerful was the active involvement of the students. They played key roles throughout the celebration of Mass from reading, leading bidding prayers, to assisting with the offertory procession. Their participation displays that active involvement of our students in the celebration of Holy Mass.



# World Environmental Day

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EMS pupils from our *Laudato Si'* enrichment have taken a bold step in environmental advocacy by producing a compelling social media video aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of microplastics. Their project, rooted in the principles of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, calls on communities to reflect on their environmental impact and embrace their role as stewards of the Earth.

The video, which has been shared across various platforms, highlights the pervasive presence of microplastics in oceans, rivers, and even the food chain. Through striking visuals and student-led narration, the pupils illustrate how everyday actions—such as using single-use plastics or synthetic clothing—contribute to a growing ecological crisis.

Their message is clear: small changes in daily habits can lead to significant environmental healing. What sets this campaign apart is its spiritual depth. The pupils drew inspiration from the words of St. Teresa of Avila: "*Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*" This powerful quote served as a guiding light for the project, reminding viewers that caring for creation is not just a scientific or political issue, but a deeply moral and spiritual responsibility. By echoing this message, the students invite others to see environmental stewardship as an extension of their faith and humanity.



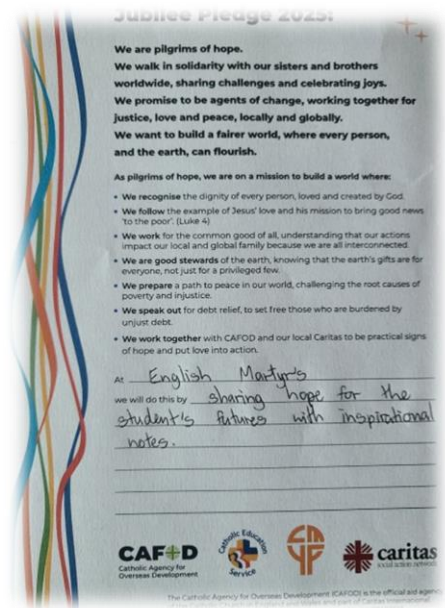
# Jubilee Pledge



The spirit of compassion and global solidarity is alive as our SVP pupils enthusiastically showed their support for CAFOD by completing their Jubilee pledges.

In celebration of the Catholic Church's Jubilee Year, students across all year groups have been taking part in a special initiative to make meaningful

pledges that reflect the values of justice, peace, and care for creation. These pledges, inspired by CAFOD's mission, range from environmental actions like reducing plastic use and planting trees, to acts of kindness such as helping at home, supporting classmates, and raising awareness about global poverty.



Each pledge is a personal commitment, and together they form a powerful collective effort to make the world a better place. Pupils have proudly displayed their pledges within a video on social media to spread their message far and wide.

As the Jubilee Year continues, SVP pupils remain committed to their promises, showing that faith, when paired with action, can truly change lives.





# The Feast of Corpus Christi

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In a beautiful display of unity and faith, our entire school community came together online to celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi, led by Mr McCartie in a special Word service that touched hearts and brought us closer to the meaning of this sacred day.

The Feast of Corpus Christi, which honours the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, is a significant moment in the liturgical calendar. This year, although we couldn't gather in person, the spirit of togetherness was stronger than ever as pupils, students and staff joined virtually to reflect, pray, and engage in live adoration of the blessed sacrament.

Mr McCartie guided the celebration with warmth and reverence, sharing scripture, reflections, and prayers that reminded us of the importance of the Eucharist in our lives. His message encouraged us to live out the values of compassion, gratitude, and service—echoing the love that Christ shows us through the gift of His body and blood.

The online format allowed every class to participate from their own spaces, creating a shared experience that transcended physical boundaries.

As we continue to grow in faith together, moments like these remind us of the strength of our community and the joy of celebrating our beliefs as one school family.



# Year 6 Transition Acts of Kindness



On 23rd June, the EMS SVP pupils took their first steps in preparing for the upcoming Year 6 Transition Week by engaging in a heartfelt activity rooted in compassion and community spirit. Embracing the school's guiding motto, "*Christ has no body now on earth but yours*," the pupils wrote messages of encouragement and kindness to welcome the new pupils who will soon be joining their school community.

This thoughtful initiative is designed to ease the nerves of incoming students and help them feel supported as they begin their journey at EMS. Each message, handwritten with care, reflects the pupils' understanding of empathy, friendship, and the importance of making others feel seen and valued. The messages range from simple words of reassurance—"You've got this!" and "We're so excited to meet you!"—to more personal reflections using scriptures to encourage the new pupils. These notes will be shared with the new pupils during Transition Week, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere from the very start.

By participating in this activity, the SVP pupils were not only preparing for a key moment in their school year but are also living out the values of their faith and community. Their actions serve as a beautiful reminder that kindness, no matter how small, can have a lasting impact.

As Transition Week approaches, the school looks forward to seeing these messages in action—bridging the gap between old and new, and showing that at SVP, every child is welcomed with open arms and open hearts.



# YMT Call to the Youth Festival

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This term, pupils at EMS responded with overwhelming enthusiasm to the opportunity to attend the YMT Secondary Youth Festival—an inspiring event that brings together young people from across the diocese to celebrate faith, friendship, and hope.

The response from our pupils was nothing short of extraordinary. As soon as the invitation was announced, pupils from all year groups expressed a deep desire to be part of the experience. So many wanted to attend that, for the first time, we found ourselves with more eager participants than we had space available. It was a powerful reminder of the spiritual hunger and hope that lives within our school community.

The theme of the festival—*Fear Less, Hope More*—resonated deeply with our students. In a world that often feels uncertain, the chance to gather with others in prayer, music, and reflection offered a beacon of light. Those who were able to attend embraced the opportunity with open hearts, representing EMS with joy, reverence, and a real sense of purpose.

We look forward to the pilgrimage to the festival.





# Year 13 Leavers

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As our Year 13 students prepared to take their next steps beyond EMS, they gathered for a Leavers' Celebration of the word, led by Mr McCartie. The celebration of the Word was a poignant moment of reflection, gratitude, and hope, marking the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

Held in a spirit of reverence and joy, the celebration offered students and staff, a chance to pause and give thanks for the journey shared. Mr McCartie's leadership brought warmth and depth to the occasion, guiding everyone through scripture, prayer, and reflection that honoured the growth, challenges, and achievements of our Year 13 pupils.

The theme focused on trust, courage, and being a prophet, a priest and a king. Through carefully chosen readings and heartfelt messages, Mr McCartie reminded our leavers that they are never alone—that their faith, values, and the support of their school community will continue to guide them.

As our Year 13s go forward into the world, we send them with our prayers and pride. Their presence has enriched our school, and we know they will continue to shine as they carry the light of EMS into new places.

# Year 11 Leavers

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Our school community gathered to celebrate and send off our Year 11 students with a beautiful Leavers Celebration of the word. The event was a moving tribute to the journey, growth, and achievements of our students as they prepare to take their next steps beyond the school gates.

Mr McCartie's reflection reminded us of the strength, resilience, and spirit that our Year 11s have shown throughout their time at school. With prayers, he asked for blessings on each student's future, encouraging them to carry forward the values they have nurtured here.

A particularly powerful moment came when form tutors anointed the palms of each student with oil—a symbol of being chosen and blessed. This sacred act was accompanied by a reflection on the biblical truth that we are all called to be prophets, priests, and kings. As prophets, we are called to speak truth and inspire change; as priests, to serve and care for others; and as kings, to lead with integrity and courage.

The celebration concluded with a vibrant and emotional farewell. The entire Key Stage 3 student body formed a "line of honour," creating a path of applause and admiration as the Year 11s walked through the school one last time. The school choir added a joyful rhythm to the moment, playing samba drums that echoed the energy and excitement of the day. It was a fitting tribute to the legacy Year 11 leaves behind—a legacy of joy, perseverance, and unity.



As they step into the future, we wish our Year 11 leavers every success and happiness. May they continue to shine brightly, knowing they will always have a place in our school family.

# Year 9 Mass

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On 25<sup>th</sup> June our Year 9 students gathered in a spirit of reverence and reflection for a special Mass presided over by Canon Paul. The celebration was a powerful reminder of our shared faith and the calling we each have to be Christ's presence in the world.

From the opening procession to the final hymn, the atmosphere was one of deep respect and unity. Canon Paul spoke with warmth and clarity, delivering a message that resonated with everyone present: we are the Body of Christ on earth. His homily beautifully echoed our school motto, "*Christ has no body now on earth but yours,*" challenging each student to live out their faith through compassion, service, and love.

The school choir played a vital role in lifting the spirit of the Mass. Their voices blended harmoniously as they led the congregation in hymns that reflected the theme of unity and service. "One Bread, One Body" was a particularly moving moment, reminding us of the shared bond we have through the Eucharist. The celebration concluded with a joyful and uplifting rendition of "Sing It in the Valleys," filling the hall with energy and hope.

As our Year 9 students continue their journey, they carry with them the reminder that they are called to be Christ's hands, feet, and heart in the world.





# Feast of St Peter and St Paul

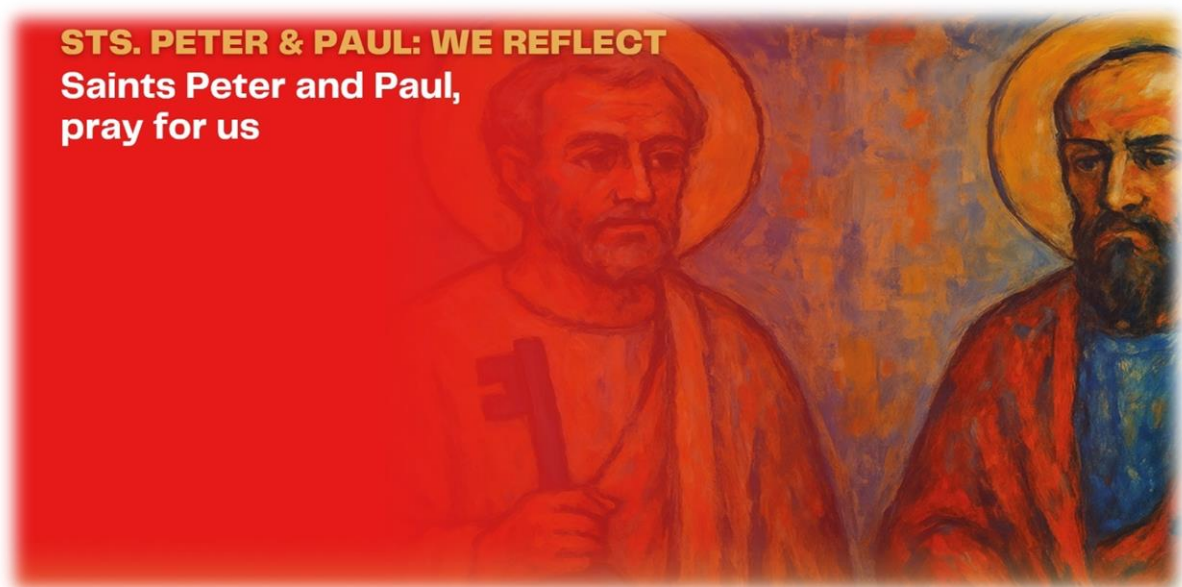
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On Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2025, the entire EMS community joined together in a live-streamed Celebration of the Word to mark the Feast of St Peter and St Paul. The service was a moving tribute to two of the Church's most influential saints and a powerful moment of unity for pupils and staff alike.

Led by Mr McCartie, the celebration focused on the Gospel message and the lives of St Peter and St Paul—men who gave everything to spread the Good News. Mr McCartie's reflection encouraged pupils to think about how they can show courage and faith in their own lives, just as these saints did.

As part of the service, pupils dressed the altar with meaningful symbols: a red cloth, keys for St Peter, representing his role as the first pope and "fisher of men," and a scroll and sword for St Paul, symbolising his teachings and martyrdom. These visual elements helped bring the stories of the saints to life and added a rich layer of meaning to the celebration.

This special event reminded everyone at EMS of the strength found in faith and the importance of coming together to celebrate and reflect.



# YMT Secondary Youth Festival

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From the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> July our EMS pupils shined as Pilgrims of Hope at YMT Secondary Youth Festival. Pupils proudly donned their hoodies, bandanas, and sunglasses as they embarked on a transformative journey. With hearts full of faith and excitement, they embraced their roles as *Pilgrims of Hope*, ready to absorb every moment of inspiration,

joy, and community the festival had to offer.

The EMS pupils arrived at the festival grounds with energy and anticipation. Clad in their vibrant festival gear, they joined hundreds of other young people from across the diocese, united by a shared mission of hope and faith. The opening day set the tone for a week of worship, reflection, and celebration.

The second day was a true highlight, filled with laughter, learning, and lively activities. Pupils engaged in powerful worship sessions and explored the theme of “fearing less and hoping more,” deepening their understanding of faith in action.



The festival spirit was in full swing as EMS students took on the karaoke challenge with enthusiasm, enjoyed a variety of games, and cooled off with well-earned ice cream. The day culminated in a beautiful celebration of Mass, followed by a high-energy silent disco where EMS pupils led the DJ battle, lighting up the dance floor with joy and unity.



After a restful night, the final day began with a peaceful time of worship and prayer. Pupils walked together as Pilgrims of Hope, reflecting on the joyful mysteries of the Rosary in a moving spiritual journey.

The festival concluded with a vibrant celebration featuring the uplifting sounds of "Saintz," as voices rose in song and hearts overflowed with joy. With memories made and spirits renewed, the EMS group packed their bags, ready to return home and continue spreading their message of hope in their school and community.

We are so proud of our pupils for embracing this experience with open hearts. They truly lived out the message of being Pilgrims of Hope, and we look forward to seeing how they carry this spirit forward.

**FEAR LESS**  
**HOPE MORE**  
DIOCESE OF HEXHAM & NEWCASTLE  
**FESTIVAL 2025**



# SECONDARY YOUTH FESTIVAL

*A FESTIVAL OF FAITH, FRIENDSHIP, AND FINDING LIGHT*



## NOURISHING OUR SOULS: FEAR LESS, HOPE MORE

In the rolling fields of the North East, beneath a sky that alternated between sunshine and summer rain, hundreds of young pilgrims from the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle gathered for a celebration unlike any other. God Camp 2025, themed "Fear Less, Hope More," was not just a religious retreat — it was a vibrant festival of music, reflection, and community that left a lasting impression on all who attended.

From the moment the coaches rolled in, the atmosphere was electric. "We were greeted with a warm welcome and lots of smiles from the friendly and polite team members," one student recalled. The excitement was palpable as tents were pitched, friendships rekindled, and the first notes of music drifted across the fields.







## *“People told us how they went from being in the dark into entering the light of God.”*

Music was the heartbeat of God Camp. Performances by artists like Lily-Jo, Talia Dean, Adinike Adewale, and the band SAINTZ brought the crowd to life. “They got to share their own songs, and everyone got to join in singing,” said Wiktoria Hadala. “It was so amazing — they really got the crowd involved.”

For many, the music was more than entertainment; it was a spiritual experience. “Even if people don’t enjoy religious events, it is still so much fun and truly enjoyable,” said Claudia Krancioch-Daniel. “The musicians were fantastic.”

Yet even these discomforts became part of the shared experience. “Even though it rained, it didn’t affect any of us,” Wiktoria added. “Me and everyone in my tent had an amazing time.”

Yet even these discomforts became part of the shared experience. “Even though it rained, it didn’t affect any of us,” Wiktoria added. “Me and everyone in my tent had an amazing time.”

The silent disco was a standout moment — a joyful, inclusive celebration where schools competed through music. “It really got us all involved,” one student said. “It was my favourite activity.”

Beyond the music and the marquee, God Camp was a place of connection. “We got to spend time with our friends but also meet others around us,” Claudia shared. Activities like karaoke, basketball, and hook-a-duck brought laughter and lightness. “There was something for everyone,” another student reflected. And at its heart, God Camp was about faith — not forced, but freely explored. “It really opened our eyes to life with God,” one camper wrote. “People’s religious stories made everyone feel not ashamed but welcome.” As the final rosary walk wound through the gardens and the last songs echoed across the fields, one thing was clear:

But it wasn’t just the music that moved hearts. Guest speakers shared raw, powerful testimonies of transformation — stories of darkness turned to light through faith. “It was interesting and very educational to listen to different stories and experiences,” one attendee noted. “People told us how they went from being in the dark into entering the light with God.”

Bishop Stephen’s address was a highlight, offering a message of hope and unity. “We engaged in prayerful experiences each day,” wrote Maisie Reed and Hollie Allison, “bringing ourselves closer to God.”

God Camp wasn’t without its challenges. Rain seeped into tents, queues for showers tested patience, and long hours on the marquee floor left some aching. “The tents were very cold due to the weather,” admitted one camper. “And I was stood in the queue for hours waiting to shower and brush my teeth.”

God Camp 2025 had left its mark. “Everything about it was just so amazing,” Wiktoria said. “I would definitely go to God Camp 2026!” In a world often marked by division and doubt, God Camp offered something rare — a space to fear less, hope more, and believe again.



“We can help young people to live a life of purpose and let them know that they are worth more than they could ever dream.”

Fr Dermott Donnelly



# Malala Day

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In July, English Martyrs proudly celebrated Malala Day in honour of Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize recipient and a global symbol of the fight for girls' education. Malala's story is one of extraordinary courage. Despite living under the oppressive rule of the Taliban, who

actively campaign against women's rights, she bravely spoke out about the right to education.

On October 9, 2012, Malala was attacked by a Taliban gunman, shot in the head and neck for her advocacy. Yet, this horrific event did not silence her. Instead, she continued her fight, becoming an unyielding advocate for girls' education worldwide. Malala Day is a moment for us to honour her resilience and to highlight the ongoing global fight for education rights.

Malala's unwavering dedication to her cause inspires countless individuals, serving as a powerful reminder that anyone can make a difference, no matter the challenges they face. We hope her story encourages our students to appreciate their opportunities and to find strength in standing up for what is right.

"I don't want to be thought of as the girl who was shot by the Taliban but the girl who fought for education. This is the cause to which I want to devote my life." – I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban

To mark the day, five strong female advocates from our school read a moving extract from Malala's book. This was shared with form classes and posted on social media, spreading her message of hope and determination throughout our community.





# Weekly Sharing of the Holy Gospel

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A group of dedicated pupils at EMS have worked throughout the year to bring the Gospel to a wider audience through the power of social media.

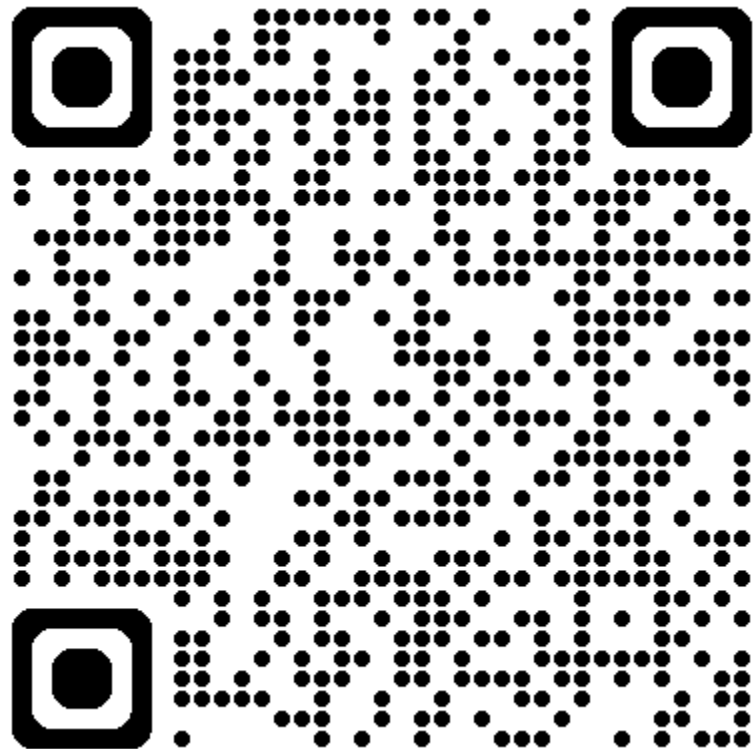
The pupil-led initiative involved students recording and producing weekly videos of the Sunday Gospel readings. These videos are then shared across the school's social media platforms, offering a modern and accessible way to engage with Scripture.

In addition to the regular Sunday posts, the pupils also created special videos for key liturgical celebrations, including Easter and major Feast Days. Each video features the Gospel acclamation and a thoughtful reading of the Gospel, as well as written reflection on the social media post.

The initiative has received positive feedback from the school community and beyond, with many praising the students' creativity and commitment to spreading the Good News.

As the project continues to grow, the EMS pupils hope their work will inspire others to explore the Gospel and find new ways to share their faith in the digital age.

Please scan the QR Code to watch every Gospel:



# Year 6 Transition Welcome Celebration of the Word

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