

St Matthew Academy Chaplaincy Update Spring 2022

Apprentice Chaplain

We are very pleased to have appointed an apprentice chaplain to join our chaplaincy team at St Matthew Academy. Mrs Ramsammy started her journey with us in February and played an important role in supporting our preparations for our Ash Wednesday and Easter Liturgies and our Year 7 retreats in March.

Ash Wednesday Liturgies at SMA

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a solemn 40-day period devoted to reflection, prayer, spiritual preparation and fasting before Easter. As an outward expression of faith, Catholics on Ash Wednesday may have ashes applied to their foreheads in the shape of cross

On Wednesday 2nd March 2022 the entire school marked the beginning of our Lenten journey with an Ash Wednesday liturgy. Monsignor Rothan celebrated our liturgy and all children from both primary and secondary took part. The children were given some time to quietly reflect on their upcoming Lenten journey and were then invited to write their Lenten promises down.

Confessions at SMA

During the Lenten period and in preparation for Holy Week both staff and students had the opportunity to go to confession in our school's prayer room. Fr Daniel Adayi from St Saviours parish in Lewisham was on site for a short time to facilitate this. The SMA community thanks Fr Daniel for giving his time to help us during our Lenten journey.

Retreat at Aylesford Priory for YR 7's 24th and 25th March

It was truly wonderful to be able to take all the Year 7 children to a retreat at Aylesford Priory in Kent over a two-day period. The weather for the end of March was glorious and the children enjoyed being outdoors in the beautiful grounds, among the medieval buildings at the Priory. They were all welcomed by one of the Carmelite Friars who live there and were given a short talk about the history of the Friars. With the help of their form tutors the children took part in different faith and school spirit building activities. At the end of the day we all gathered in the St Joseph chapel, where the children shared their written prayers and experiences from the day.

SMA Walked Against Hunger

As another part of our Lenten journey and to re-inforce SMA's commitment to serving our Catholic Community, the students and staff at SMA walked from school to Greenwich park and back to raise money for Cafod. The children carried banners and as an entire school, we walked the designated mileage. The children all showed excellent behaviour whilst out and about and there was a wonderful spirit of community and togetherness.

Our Response to The Ukraine Crisis

The war between Russia and the Ukraine took hold of the headlines in February of this year. Many European countries responded to this war and the refugee crisis that ensued, by opening their borders and lending assistance. The staff and students at SMA joined many other schools and organisations in the UK and beyond to lend assistance. Some of our students selflessly gave up their mornings and afternoons to stand at the gates with buckets, encouraging parents and fellow students to help donate to the cause. Thank you very much to all who donated to this cause. The school was able to go above its designated target!

Secondary Light Bearers Let Their Lights Shine

The Light Bearers were very busy during this period shining their lights through peer support, charity work, leading on liturgies and assemblies during Lent, as well as supporting younger students with their faith journey. Light Bearer buddies (peer support) also expanded its reach by inviting younger pupils for lunches where they could socialise and make friends. The Light Bearers worked incredibly hard taking part in our Lenten fundraising for CAFOD and the Catholic Children's Society through selling donuts and raffle tickets as well as encouraging their peers to get involved. Furthermore, they have competently led liturgies with prayer and infused their own creativity, innovative artwork and reflective drama. What is more, they led and facilitated the Youth Alpha Course for the first time for both year 8 pupils, seeing a great turnout and many making decisions to cultivate their relationship with God.