



SPIRITAN EDUCATION TRUST

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2018



In his “Urbi et Orbi” address of Christmas 2014, Pope Francis expressed the hope that we would recognise in the Infant Jesus, the salvation given by God to each one of us. We ask that this divine power will soften the hearts of so many of us who are immersed in worldliness and indifference. As Christians, we are challenged to respond to the injustice we see every day in our society-inequality, poverty and discrimination. Through the redeeming strength of our saviour we can transform hatred and greed into love and generosity. We can help create a society which provides opportunity for all and not just for the few.

I thank all those school communities which, responding to their Spiritan charism “see the reality of the world from the perspective of the poor, forgotten and oppressed, because that is God’s perspective.” (Spiritan Education Guide 2.1).

I wish you and your families a joyful Christmas and hope that you find time to enjoy the festive break.

Beannachtaí na Nollag agus bliain nua faoi shéan agus faoi shonas dhuit. Go raibh síochán na Nollag leat agus le do mhuintir.

Pat Kitterick
Chair, Board of Directors

Tom Sheridan
Executive Officer



NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

Blackrock College

Carol Service 2018 – A Great Blackrock Occasion

Fr O'Brolchain reminded the boys of the importance of family - grandparents, parents, siblings - at our annual Carol Service held in Des Places Hall on Tuesday last, 4th December. He told the assembled student body, over 1150 strong, 1st to 6th Year, that we should live every aspect of our lives in a loving way. He urged us all to take time for prayer as we strive to make the lives of others better and more joyful. The Carol Service is a marvellous occasion, a coming together in preparation for Christmas. Brilliant!

Mass of Remembrance

"Look for me in the people you have known and loved; love does not die".

Fr. Marc Whelan was chief celebrant at our annual Mass of Remembrance, Wednesday 28th November. In a moving liturgy, we gathered in community to comfort those who mourn and to give thanks for the gift of life. President of the Union John Rogan (class of 1989) and his wife Nicki, represented the extended Blackrock family and laid a wreath on the altar in memory of our past-students who have passed away in the past year. Specific reference was made to the 54 past-students who died in World War I. The last post was sounded by Callum Byrne followed by a minute's silence.

"They whom we love and lose are no longer where they were before, they are now wherever we are".

'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' Tuesday – Friday, 19th – 23rd November



'Joseph' closed on Friday night after a sell-out week. The energy, colour, movement and music were of the highest order as our boys and the girls of Mount Anville delivered an outstanding production. The finale – an 11 minute megamix - had to be seen to be believed but this was just one of many highlights not forgetting the hard work done

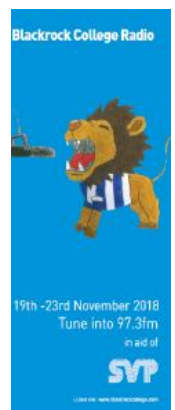


behind the scenes by the crew who laid the foundations, in terms of sound, light and set. All this does not happen by chance. I thank everyone involved in this wonderful production.

Blackrock College Radio (BCR on 97.3 FM) Nov. 19th – 23rd

BCR is without parallel. It is an extraordinary project that delivers an incredible range of experiences for the boys. Interviewing, marketing and P.R., editing, advertising, sound desk management, catering, security, research and recording are amongst the job descriptions put before the boys as they broadcast in a five mile radius of the college as well as over the internet. I thank our guest schools' Mount Anville, Sion Hill, Cluny and Loreto Foxrock who produced programmes.

Brilliant! Well done boys for the week.



St. Mary's College Junior School

The boys making their First Holy Communion celebrated their enrolment ceremony in the school chapel on November 23rd. Many thanks to Fr Paddy, our chaplain David, Mrs McKenna, Mr. Monahan and the boys' parents for the time and effort they put into preparing the boys for their ceremony. We're all looking forward to a great day in May! All classes attended their 'In November we Remember' services in the college chapel facilitated by our chaplain David. Each boy remembered their loved ones in a very special way.



Classes have been on various outings from book readings in Dubray Bookshop, to the sixth-class rugby trip to Drogheda to play Boyne RFC. The second class boys had a fantastic trip to Croke Park to have a training session with four of the All Black players on the eve of Ireland's big win in the Aviva Stadium. The All Blacks kindly donated a framed signed jersey to the school to celebrate the occasion.

The annual St. Vincent de Paul cake sale was held on Friday, 30th of November. Many thanks to the parents for organising such a successful event!

St. Mary's past pupil Gordon Murray came to visit our 5th and 6th forms to speak to them about Climate Change. The boys really enjoyed the talk and got the opportunity to ask many interesting questions.



Science week was celebrated during November with Mrs. Maguire and Form 4 making their own lungs! The boys had a great time!

The run up to Christmas is a very exciting one and there are great sounds of music and drama filling the school corridors as the boys from Forms 2, 3, 4 and 5 prepare for their Christmas performances. The orchestra is busy practising and rehearsing for their Christmas concert. Forms 6 have had their auditions for their big musical in May!

St. Mary's College Senior School

Fr. Olin has introduced further additions to the digital archive, which comprises downloadable versions of each of the College annuals, as well as copies of the school newsletter An Realt, and a searchable and downloadable edition of Fr Maher's 'A History of St Mary's 1890 - 1990'. The latest additions include records and photographs of the St Mary's school plays 1926-1950. Many thanks to past pupils Mr Vincent McGovern (1952) and Mr Liam Birkett (1959) who have supported the project from the start.

The college remembered those killed in the First World War, with Junior School student William Kelly ringing the St Mary's Church bell in memory of the casualties including his great-granduncles Joseph & Walter Tierney, Milltown, Dublin, past pupils who died with the Royal Engineers.



The College Student Drama Society, comprising of students from all years in the Senior School, produced and presented 'Alone It Stands' recently. Over four days the society staged seven performances to students, and two evening performances to parents. Past Pupil Tony Ward, of course a key character in the play, attended the performance for sixth-years and took part in a Q&A session afterwards. Many thanks also to Tony who recently presented his Lions cap to the College at the PPU Annual Dinner.

Congratulations to Jonathan Sexton, Class of 2003, who was named as World Rugby Player of the Year.

St. Michael's College Junior School

Cake Sale



The boys' favourite day of the year took place on Friday 23rd November when the annual Cake Sale organised by the Ladies' Committee took place! As always, it was a great success raising €1483.26. Sincere thanks to all the boys and their parents who made and purchased the delicious cakes and supported the raffle. We also appreciate all the work done by the Ladies' Committee on the day, in laying out and selling all the goodies. The proceeds of the Cake Sale go towards supporting the drama programme in the school and so benefits each boy from Pre-school to Sixth Form.

Advent

Each Week during Advent, boys will take part in Prayer services in the Chapel and decorate the Jesse Tree to prepare for the feast of Christmas.



Gifts at the Crib



As commitment to the poor is a core value of Spiritan education, gifts of food for those less fortunate will be presented by each class at the crib on Wednesday 12th December.

Christmas Art Competition

The boys in each class have drawn beautiful nativity scenes for the Christmas Art competition. All the pictures are on display in the Junior School foyer with many parents visiting each day to admire the wonderful creativity.



Carol Singing

The annual carol singing will take place in the Merrion Shopping Centre on Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th December with all proceeds on the day going to the St. Vincent de Paul Conference. Merrion Road.

Jingle Bells Run

On Thursday December 20th, boys in all classes will take part in the Jingle Bells run on the running track. This year the boys are being asked to make a donation from their own money towards Focus Ireland.

Annie Jnr

On November 30th and December 1st, the boys in Fifth and Sixth Forms gave outstanding performances of Annie jnr. The dress rehearsal was greatly enjoyed by all the boys in the younger classes. We are very grateful to the producer and choreographer Ms. Andrea Basquille and the musical director Mr. Ivan McKenna for producing such an enjoyable musical.

Fifth Form teachers Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Stephens and Sixth Form teachers Mrs. Lawler, Mr. Monaghan and Mr. O'Neill gave enormous support in organising the costumes and ensuring that everything ran smoothly backstage.



The help of all the Junior School staff was also invaluable on both nights of the show. We are also grateful to the parents who supplied the costumes, helped with ironing and make up and helped with the refreshments on the nights of the shows. We are also very grateful to Mr. Ruane and the Senior School boys who came in to help with front of house arrangements. Congratulations to all the boys who worked so hard to make the show such an enjoyable event for all concerned.

Christmas Concerts



On December 5th, Second Form and Fourth Form 1 presented their Christmas Concerts. It was a most enjoyable evening and reflected a huge amount of work by the teachers involved. Well done and thank you to Ms. Ryan, Mr. Hogan and Mr. Tierney for preparing the boys to such a high standard. The evening was a lovely start to the Christmas season. On the evening, guests made donations to the Pontifical Mission Society "Children Helping Children" which amounted to €997.40.

St. Michael's College Senior School

French Debating



St. Michael's College French debating team qualified for the quarter finals of the 'Les Joutes Ouratoires'. Captain Ben Gannon, Conor Duggan, Jack Kirwan and Mark Turley put in an impressive display, as the team successfully argued for the motion "TV reality harms our values". Mark Turley added extra gloss to the performance by being named 'Best Speaker' on the night. Bravo and a big thank you to their teacher Ms Chlyah.

Lón na Gaeilge

St. Michael's College encourages Lón na Gaeilge with the boys which takes place in Ms Mc Namara's Room (Seomra 31) every Friday at lunchtime. Lón na Gaeilge gives the boys an opportunity to practice their spoken Irish in a relaxed environment. Tea, coffee, biscuits and occasional treats are provided and the boys spend their lunch time eating their lunch and conversing as Gaeilge. It is a great way for them to gain confidence in preparation for their oral examination. We have Irish board and card games as well as Irish books available to the boys also. Boys that are líofa as well as those that have the cúpla focal attend - all are welcome regardless of the standard of their spoken Irish.



Díospóireacht na Gaeilge - Irish debating



Irish junior debating takes place every Wednesday in Room 31 from 1:00 -2:00 p.m. Fáilte roimh chách. Díospóireacht na Gaeilge is a great opportunity for the students to use and practice their spoken Irish in a different environment to the classroom. Debating encourages them to become critical thinkers, to articulate their thoughts, to show empathy and to think on their feet. It also gives

the boys great confidence in using the language. We participate in the national debating competition that Conradh na Gaeilge organises each year and we also organise debating competitions of our own. So far this year, we have hosted schools such as Gonzaga College, Oakland's College, Loreto on the Green, CUS and Jesus and Mary College.



The Writer's Block

It has been a busy and fruitful first term for 'The Writer's Block.' Meeting every Wednesday, a team of 6th Years, guided by Ms. Kennedy, go through student submissions from boys of all years ranging from 1st – 6th Year, editing and selecting pieces for the website. So far this year, we have published a number of pieces online from the student body. From short stories to reviews, the breadth and quality of work has been really fantastic. If you haven't taken a look at the wonderful writing produced by our students yet, do visit 'The Writer's Block' section on the school's News Section of our website: <https://www.stmc.ie/academic/writers-block.html>. As Christmas approaches, we have some festive delights for your enjoyment. Indeed, the two poems written by 2nd Year students really warmed our hearts. First of all, 'A Christmas Poem' by Ben Banerjee and Elias Murray Whelan is a beautifully poignant piece. The second submission, 'Christmas Presence' by Tom Tripp and Mel Mehigan, is a heartfelt poem that displays the innocence of this festive season. Have a merry Christmas and we will see you in the New Year!

Blessing of the Nativity Crib and Christmas Tree



The second annual blessing of the Nativity Crib and Christmas Tree of Intentions was held in the school concourse on Tuesday evening at 8pm. The event, which was hosted by the Chaplaincy Team, was specially offered to 6th Year students. It involved a short prayer service and blessing of the crib and tree. There was wonderful festive singing from our own parents' choir - The High Spirits Choir, and the event followed with a party atmosphere of music and festive food before the lads returned to study. Members of the Past Pupils Union were also there to offer words of encouragement. A big thank you to

all who helped on the night.

Movember – 1st Year Fundraising Activities



Well done to Mr. O'Mahony's 5th Year DCG class for raising €425.91 for Movember. They ran a competition where staff and students guessed how long Mr. O'Mahony would last in an ice bath. The students also held a bake sale, thanks to the delicious treats Ben Murphy whipped up. Congrats to Peter Garvey for guessing the closest guess of 3 minutes and 13 seconds. Well done to all students and staff for getting behind a great cause through the month of November.

5th Year boys celebrating Mr. O'Mahony's Movember Ice Bucket Challenge

TY Brazil Immersion



St. Michael's College Transition Year students were busy during the week painting up two walls in the school that will be used to display a pictorial history of our Immersion Trips to Brazil since 2006. We are embarking on our 13th immersion trip this Easter 2019 to Spiritan Missions in Brazil.



Board Games



Board Games Club in St. Michael's College kicked off on the 12th of September and has been going strong ever since! It takes place on Wednesday afternoons in the Library and there have been eleven sessions so far. Boys from First to Fifth Year have taken part, playing a whole selection of different games. They organise themselves into groups and choose a game or games to play. Agreeing on the rules beforehand has proved an important part of the set-up! The games then begin. Catan has proved a particular favourite so far, although Bananagrams and Chess are never far behind.



Some boys had never played Catan but we now have some experts in our midst! The club will start up again after the Christmas break and some might even have had some practice over the festive season.

St. Michael's College Gaelic Football



The First Year Gaelic football team is going from strength to strength. They are currently in the final of the Tom Quinlan Shield, unbeaten in their group and awaiting the final, hopefully before Christmas exams. The boys train every Tuesday and sometimes on Friday. They have beaten St. Marks, Colaiste de hIde, Colaiste Reachrann, Marian College and most recently Moyle Park CC in the semi-final. Hopefully, the boys will bring some silverware back to the school soon. Big thank you to their coaches, Conor Hurley, James Dillon and Michael Conroy. Meanwhile, the 2nd Year Gaelic football team have

played only one game this year and they won in convincing fashion against Pobalscoil Neassain. The boys train with the

REFLECTION



*Some say that ever 'gainst
that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is
celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth
all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit
dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome;
then no planets strike,
No fairy tales, nor witch hath
power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious
is the time*

Hamlet, Act 1 Scene1

First Years on Tuesdays and will have another competition after Christmas. We look forward to building on last years' experience. Thank you to Mr. Joyce for coordinating.

Archery Club

St. Michael's College Archery is held each Wednesday from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the College Sport's Hall. With up to 20 students participating from the different year groups, it caters for all levels of skill. Students shoot at 17 metres or 10 metres depending on their experience. During April and May, students shoot outside up to an impressive 30 metres. All equipment is supplied by the school and Pat McLoughlin, who is a former World Archery Champion, instructs the students about all aspects of the sport. On Saturday November 17th our students shot very well at this year's first Leinster Schools Competition at Oatlands College with many personal best results recorded. Congratulations to St. Michael's Archery who did very well on December 8th last during the Leinster Competitions played in St. Michael's College Sports Hall. This year, our students have topped their groups and recorded personal bests in both competitions. A big congratulations and well done to the team and their captain Stephen Pender.



Soccer

Congratulations to the three football teams representing St. Michael's College across three different age groups. The Minor Football team (U-15) are on the brink of qualification for the semi-finals of the Dublin Metropolitan League, with a must-win game against Marian College to be played before the Christmas break. The Transition Year



team (U-16) have qualified for the semi-finals of their league after an exciting cup run, while the Juniors (U-17) look poised to progress too after tough matches against St. Killian's and St. John's Ballyfermot. Congratulations to the lads for representing the school with such distinction and a big thank you to Mr. Lahiff, Mr. Molloy, Mr. O'Rourke and Mr. Shields for all their time and effort throughout the year, as well as the student coaches who work behind the scenes.

Rockwell College

Rugby



Congratulations to our Junior Ladies 7s rugby team who won the All Ireland Cup in Energia Park on November 7th. It was a double win for the Rockwell girls, whose Senior 7s players also won the Plate in their competition on the same day. Not to be outdone, the JCT boys won the Limerick Cup also on the 7th beating St. Munchin's in Limerick 28-10. Congratulations to the teams and their captains:

Equestrian

Max Wachman added to his impressive Silver Medal at the European Championships last August by going one better and winning the Stuttgart Indoor World Cup on November 18th. The competition, which took place on Friday and Saturday saw the best European ponies and riders compete over the two days.



Basketball

Our U-16 Boys have claimed the South East title for the first time in a number of years after a tight win against CBS Kilkenny. Well done to the team and good luck in your progression to the All-Ireland finals. The U-19s lost their competition final but are still in with a chance of All Ireland qualification over the next few weeks.



Business Studies Junior Cert Recognition

Rockwell College had 14 pupils recognised by WIT for A grades in the Junior Certificate Business examination in a ceremony in October. Well done to pupils and staff.

SVP Food Drive

The Student Council is spearheading the annual St Vincent de Paul Food Drive this year and they hope the positive response of previous years will be exceeded to help local families in need this Christmas.



Templeogue College

Sports Achievements

Under 16A Basketball team won the East League title beating Coolmine Community School 51 -32 and advance to the All Ireland League Competition. Matthew Harper was selected for the Ireland Under 18 Men's Basketball Team.

Big Dig Archaeological Excavation

The School of Irish Archaeology came to Templeogue College in November and the first year students took part in an on-site archaeological activity. They were able to excavate a simulated site and find artefacts from Viking Dublin.

Wellbeing

For the 4th year in a row, SOAR came in to deliver their wellness workshop to TY which was incredibly well received by the students. A key part of the wellness in TY this year was fitness where students climbed Djouce Mountain, walked the Bray-Greystones cliff walk and cycled the Waterford-Dungarvan Greenway. They have also flexed their brains by going to the puzzle and challenge rooms in GoQuest.

Development Education

Development Education workshops from AFRI and Concern on social inclusion and justice, climate change and climate justice began the Dev Ed programme for the year which will continue into 2019.

Science News

During space week, 1st and 2nd year students wrote a computer code which ran on a space station computer. Their code measures the ambient temperature of the ISS and displays a message to the astronauts from the students.

Astro Pi 2018



Two groups of 2nd and 3rd year students had their Earth Observation experiments run on the Space Station. Their experiments, using an infrared camera ran for 4 Earth orbits. One team used the camera to identify peatland from Space. The second group surveyed the health of plants in cities around the world.

Spanish Debating

The Senior Spanish debating team has progressed to the final of the Instituto Cervantes Cup Competition in January after defeating Belvedere College in the semi-final.

Religious Education

The 1st year celebration Mass was celebrated by Fr Paddy Moran C.S.Sp. The theme of this year's liturgical celebration was 'Community' and our Mass. The service was one that was rich in symbolism, music, word, scripture and movement. The school chapel was transformed into a captivating art exhibition entitled 'Finding Freedom' for the month of October. This exhibition showcased art work created by prisoners of ArbaMinch prison in Ethiopia. Prayers were read during 'Prayer for Prisoners Week' in the chapel and 'Mission Month' was a visible reality throughout the school.



'In November we remember'.



All students attended Remembrance services that took place in the chapel throughout November. This service was led by Fr. Paddy Moran and consisted of movement, participation, meditation and word. A service for staff was also held in the remembrance garden. Fr. Paddy Moran talked to Junior Certificate students as part of the Religious Education course. The talk was on his own Religious Commitment as a Spiritan Priest and highlighted the work he carries out in Ireland and abroad.

Past Pupils News

Eric O'Sullivan, loose head prop, has had a few impressive performances for Ulster in the Pro 14 and Champions Cup this season and has established himself as a regular starter in the senior squad. Dara O'Shea, who is playing for Exeter City, won the player of the round in the Checkatrade Trophy. Enda Stevens, left back for Sheffield United, who are in the top 3 of the English championship, received his first senior International cap during last month's Nations League competition. Enda leads his team with assists this season. Sean Flood has been signed up for Longwood College Division 1 Basketball Team, USA. He has impressed during the first few games, top scoring for the team and playing big minutes.

Willow Park Junior School

The Fr. Gavin Cake Sale in aid of St. Vincent de Paul



On Friday 30th November, the 4th Form boys and the Willow Parents Association hosted the annual Fr. Gavin Cake Sale. It was a brilliant day with the highlight being the school crest made out of cupcakes. Every boy in the school decorated a cupcake which was used to create the crest.



The Christmas ShoeBox Appeal

A 6th former and a Junior Infant helping load up the Dublin Bus with the school's contribution to the Christmas ShoeBox Appeal.



St. Andrew's Day in Willow Park

Mr. Docherty, the proud Scotsman, donned his kilt on St. Andrew's Day and taught the 4th form boys a Scottish Ceili dance.

STEM



STEM Week took place between Monday 12th November and Friday 16th November. Our School Hub was transformed into a Mini Laboratory where our boys got to make slime, crack eggs and practice operations on mannequins. It was a huge success and thanks must go to Ms Eimear Scannell for co-ordinating the entire event. A special thanks must also go to the Blackrock TY boys who came down to help throughout the week.

Week



Christmas in Willow Park



On Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th December the boys of Junior Infants and Senior Infants took centre stage for their Christmas nativities. They were wonderful occasions and the boys were outstanding.



Willow Park Senior School



It has been a quiet yet ever busy term here in Willow 1st year. We came back after the much needed midterm break to the sight of the new 1st year extension well under way. We look forward to moving in as soon as it's ready!

In November, we remember...

We held our annual Remembrance Service in the Cafeteria. This beautiful and reflective ceremony serves as a chance to remember our loved ones who have passed with joy and love. Fr Moran led the students in a peaceful hour of prayer, song and reflective readings. We thank all involved and the boys who put in such thought and hard work.



RCSI CPR Training

On Monday November 12th the students travelled to the Royal College of Surgeons to attend a day of CPR instruction. We have found this to be of huge value to the boys and we are very lucky to be able to avail of the facilities and expertise in the RCSI. The training took place in the main lecture theatre under the watchful eye of several oil portraits of past presidents of the College! A lucky few got a very quick glimpse into the old part of the college where a bullet hole from the 1916 war is still lodged in a door plate. These grand reception rooms are now used for graduations and other ceremonies. We thank the RCSI and all the instructors for their expert training.



Blackrock College Christmas Carol Service

We spent a lovely afternoon in the College on Tuesday 4th of December at the annual Christmas Carol Service. This came as a welcome break from the exams and the boys really enjoyed themselves.

SVP Appeal

We are now preparing for our annual Christmas appeal along with David Gough of St. Vincent de Paul. This annual appeal is coordinated through our Class Captains, Deputy Principal and Chaplain.

SPIRITAN EDUCATION OFFICE

Chaplains' Conference.



The Conference took place on the 29th November in the An Tobar Retreat Centre, Ardrbraccan. This was held in partnership with the Loreto Schools Trust and it was a very important day as it allowed our Chaplains and Pastoral leaders to network not only with colleagues from fellow Spiritan schools but also those from the Loreto schools. In this year's conference we welcomed Gerry O'Hanlon SJ. Gerry is a well-known and much-respected Irish theologian. Gerry spoke to the context that school chaplains find themselves practicing today. The conference proved to be a superb opportunity for our school chaplains and pastoral leaders to consider the many challenges facing our schools in the company of their fellow chaplains from across the sector.

BoM Training.



Training for new board members took place throughout November with our schools. The presentations were made by JMB officials on all aspects of good governance. A timetable window was set aside for us to meet with our people during which time the Spiritan ethos was articulated and considered.

This is an important input as all decisions made at board level should be underpinned by our Spiritan values.

Development Education.

Over the last number of years, sterling work has been completed by the teacher's network in the area of Development Education. Development Education is now an established pillar in Spiritan education experience. In our recent meeting, many plans were outlined by school 'Dev Ed' coordinators which will be brought to fruition.



Over the coming months in our schools, at various levels. We look forward to the Showcase event in Rockwell College on March 29th 2019.

Also, as we enter the season of the nativity we congratulate Ms. Grainne O'Neill on the birth of her new baby in early December. We also thank Ms. Karen Jeffares for her leadership in this area as the school liaison officer on behalf of SET. We also continue to thank World Wise Global Schools for their support to the network.

In the Footsteps of the Founders (October 25 - 28 2018)



Paris is arguably one of the most cultured cities on the planet. It has long been synonymous with the Arts, fashion, entertainment and cultural icons such as the Eiffel Tower. As the Spiritan pilgrimage to Paris neared, I could not help be distracted by thoughts of the museums, objet d'art and architectural sites in this beautiful city. Entering Dublin Airport on Thursday morning, I could almost hear the accordion playing La Vie en Rose!

The reality of the city hits you like a wave! The stunning buildings and constant rhythm is relentless, but one cannot help noticing that not everyone has been gathered up by the current of industry and creative expression. Just as in every cosmopolitan city in Europe, the plight of those less fortunate is very apparent. I was most grateful for the pilgrimage to Paris as it provided an alternative view of the city far from the blue, white and red flagged postcards, or the mini Eiffel Towers, and café society.



While Paris is undoubtedly a beautiful city, it was when we followed in the footsteps of Claude Poullart des Places and Francis Libermann, visiting the colleges and churches where the original group of men trained, lived and served, that a much more enthralling vision of Paris started to emerge.



The history of the Spiritans, the sacrifices, challenges and perseverance of the men as they overcame great obstacles to provide for the destitute children of the Parisian streets, was both humbling and inspiring. The fruit of this work, over three hundred years later, was especially tangible when our group visited the Foundation of Orphelins d'Auteuil. The Spiritan vision permeates the foundation in its delivery of educational programmes and board, to thousands of children from all over France, as well as from countries in Africa and Asia, allowing for so many young adults and

their families to have confidence in the future. It was here at the headquarters of the foundation, a mass celebrated in

Chappelle Ste Thérèse allowed the group to absorb all of the work and history of Orphelins d'Auteuil and to reflect on the Spiritan vision in our own school communities in Ireland.

The Mother House provided the base for the group for our time in Paris and we were extended a very warm welcome by both the staff and the Confrères. The pilgrimage to Paris was a journey that brought new friends, perspectives and an invigorated sense of the founding vision of the Spiritans. A huge thank you to Ronan Barry and all involved in making this pilgrimage happen.

Mary Jo Delaney St. Michael's College

Middle Leaders Programme 2018-2019

As the Middle Leaders training continues we wish all our participants every success, especially as they undertake their project work over the coming months. This programme has been made possible through the co-operation of SET with the Le Chéile, Jesuit and Loreto Trusts.

Deputy Principal Conference

The Deputy Principals Conference held recently in Newbridge in co-operation with Le Chéile Trust was a great success. The topics covered on Day 1 included GDPR, Child Safeguarding and Developing Leadership Potential. On Day 2 the delegates were addressed by Dr. Gareth Byrne who spoke about the social and spiritual benefits of religious education and Very Revered Maria Jansson, Dean of Waterford who considered the challenges facing schools in modern Ireland.

A Christmas Prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

