



St Benedict's Newsletter 320

27 February 2026



## Catholic Social Teaching

As we journey through **Lent**, we are invited to pause, reflect, and refocus our hearts. Lent is a time when the Church gently asks us to look beyond our immediate wants and comforts and to consider what sustains us. We are invited to slow down and turn our hearts more deliberately towards God. Lent is not only about what we give up, but about what we make space for. Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that our faith shapes how we live, relate to others, and understand what truly shapes us as human beings.

Jesus reminded us as he went through temptation in the desert: *“Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*— Matthew 4:4. This challenges us to look beyond our physical needs and recognise that prayer, reflection, and relationship with God are essential nourishment for our lives and for the way we care for one another.

In Matthew 6:7–8, Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray: *“When you pray, do not keep babbling like the pagans... Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”*

This reminds us that prayer is not about telling God something He does not already know. God understands our needs before we speak them. Prayer is not about perfect words or long explanations, but about trust, honesty, and relationship. As Fr Patrick van der Vorst explains: *“Our prayer does not inform God; our prayer forms us.”*

Because of this, Lent invites us to be more intentional about prayer. In the busyness of everyday life, prayer can easily become rushed or pushed aside. During Lent, however, we are encouraged to slow down and create space to be with God, not because God needs our words, but because we need that time to listen, reflect, and be shaped by His presence.

Spending more time in prayer helps us recognise what truly sustains us. Even a few quiet moments each day, a short prayer, a pause of stillness, or a simple conversation with God, can soften our hearts, clarify our priorities, and deepen our compassion for others. Prayer helps us become people who live more fully for the good of others.

St Teresa of Ávila described prayer not as a duty, but as a relationship, saying: *“Prayer is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.”*

This understanding of prayer fits deeply with Catholic Social Teaching. When we take time to be with God, we grow in love, patience, and generosity, qualities that shape how we treat others and contribute to a more just and caring community.

We are invited to live out this focus on prayer in simple, practical ways:

- **Wisdom:** Making time for quiet reflection, recognising that prayer helps us see what truly matters.
- **Compassion:** Allowing prayer to shape how we speak and act, becoming more understanding, forgiving, and kind to others.
- **Resilience:** Returning to prayer even when it feels difficult, trusting that God is present and at work within us.

As we continue through Lent, we might reflect: Do I see prayer as a task, or as time spent with someone who loves me? How is prayer shaping the way I treat others? What small moments of stillness can I create this week to be with God? When we pray, we allow God to form us into people who live with greater love, justice, and care for the world around us.

**Our Father,**

**Who art in Heaven,**

**hallowed be Thy name;**

**Thy Kingdom come,**

**Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**Amen.**

**Loving God,**

You know our needs before we speak them,

yet you invite us to come to you in prayer.

Teach us to trust, to listen, and to be still in your presence.

Form our hearts through prayer,

so that we may grow in wisdom, compassion, and resilience.

Help us to live this Lent more closely united to you

and more attentive to the needs of others.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

## Careers Update

**National Careers Week (NCW) 2026: 2-7 March - Theme for 2026: "*Own Your Future*"**

Next week (2 - 7 March) heralds National Careers Week (NCW) 2026, a one-week celebration of careers guidance and resources in education across the UK. This year's theme is "**Own Your Future.**"

NCW highlights careers guidance activity at an important stage in the academic calendar to support young people in developing awareness and excitement about their future pathways. Students will be introduced to NCW2026 by their tutors and teachers via a range of resources - including a Virtual Careers Fair (live from Monday 2nd March) - that aim to develop their self-awareness and knowledge of different career paths.

I invite you to click on the **NCW2026 Parent's Guide to Careers** (to download your copy) below to access a wealth of information about Careers support for you and your child(ren).

[Parents Guide to Careers](#)

[National Careers Week One Stop Shop](#)

I hope you are inspired by what you discover!



## Articulation Win

On Wednesday 25 February, Amy John in Year 13, presented a fantastic, informative and insightful presentation on the Augusta Prima Porta Statue for an audience of six other schools and adjudicators at the Sainsbury Centre's regional Heat in Norwich, as part of the National Gallery's Articulation Prize.

We are all super proud of her, as she won over the panel of judges with her natural flair for public speaking and her command of the subject. Her presentation helped the audience reflect on the importance of art across history, particularly in a digital age of propaganda and façade. She won the heat and is selected as the regional winner for East Anglia competing against others such as Hills Road in Cambridge and Sir Isaac Newton College, Norwich.

This means she will be speaking at the National Gallery on 24th March to compete for the full prize alongside schools from across the country.

Well done Amy, we watch with anticipation for the next stage now and look forward to supporting you.

*Ms Chacksfield, Head of Art and Design*



## Ski Trip to Stubai Valley: A Week to Remember

Our school's ski adventure to the stunning Stubai Valley in Austria was a huge success, filled with snowy slopes, shared laughter, and unforgettable moments. From day one, students impressed everyone with how well they listened, followed instructions, and supported one another — their enthusiasm and kindness set the tone for the entire week.

On the mountain, they tackled new challenges with confidence, growing more skilled and determined each day. Off the slopes, the fun continued with bowling, pizza night, and a popular swimming night at the local leisure centre, which had flumes, a lazy river, and an outdoor heated pool. A game of water volleyball brought the whole group together and was refereed by 'Awesome' Lawson, the only Year 13 student on the trip and much loved by the Year 8 and Year 10 students.

Another highlight came when Austria's Fasching celebrations reached our hotel. A lively group of masked musicians arrived, filling the room with music and dancing — and even encouraging a few brave students to join in.

Traditional Faschingskrapfen, the sweet, jam-filled doughnuts of the season, were offered to skiers as they passed by the middle station on the gondolas heading to Gamsgarten.

Throughout the trip, the hotel staff, ski instructors, ski rep, and coach drivers repeatedly told us that this was the best group of students they had ever hosted. Their humour, positivity, and excellent behaviour made the trip not only memorable but genuinely joyful.

By the time we returned home, everyone was tired, happy, and already talking about next year's adventure.

*Ms Mak*











## Sixth Form Trip to Nice

On Thursday 12th February 27 sixth formers and three members of staff set off for five days to the Côte d'Azur in Nice on the annual sixth form Art & French trip. After arriving at the hotel, we hopped on the tram to the *Libération* district for a meal at the Gare du Sud, a beautiful C19th train station remodelled as multi-tiered dining hall with cafés and games. The following morning, we ventured to the historical Cimiez district, to visit the Matisse and the archaeological museums. Students learned about the origins of the city, taking in the ruins of the Roman arena and thermal baths and admired the masterful artworks of Nice's most famous artist, Henri Matisse. An alfresco lunch was followed by a trip to the old town and the Cascade du Château. Saturday was spent in Antibes, a small town 20 minutes away by train. The proliferation of super yachts meant that everyone could decide on which would be theirs, and after touring the Picasso Museum all the students took part in our *en plein air* painting session. Many tourists stopped to enquire and applaud the artists. The following day saw the best of the weather, full sunshine and 20 degrees. A Segway ride of the city offered a personalised history tour of Nice and a visit to the Beaux-Arts Museum capped off the day's sightseeing.

Students were set creative challenges throughout the trip, and our French students made the most of their time in l'Hexagone to speak as much French as possible. A huge thank you to Ms Chacksfield and Mrs Peasey for making the trip so enjoyable, but an even bigger thank you to our wonderful sixth formers who make these trips so worthwhile.

*Mr Richmond*

And now for the experience of one of our students...

During the February half term, students in Years 12 and 13 were able to experience an amazing 4 days of sunshine in Nice, France. Every day on the trip was different; on some days we were wandering around museums and attempting to sell original artwork, others we were seeing waterfalls and trying not to fall off Segways, and others we were spending more money than we should have! Either way, one thing that remained consistent, at every second of the trip, was fun and laughter. No matter whether it was laughing at what Mr Richmond said, or during our 'evening heists', or even just at the hotel room with our friends. Millions of memories were made in these few days, and I'm sure none of us will ever forget this incredible trip. A special thanks to Mr Richmond, Ms Chacksfield and Mrs Peasey for being there with us the whole time. Even if one of them was almost run over by a tram on day 1!











## Data Collection Sheet Updates

It is important that the information we hold about your child is kept up-to-date.

Please remember that as a parent/guardian/carer, you can check, amend and update most of your child's information on Arbor, including changing your mobile number and address or adding information such as religion, family contacts, medical information and transport method.

If you are struggling to do this please email [Arbor@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:Arbor@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk) where we will be able to help you.

Thanks

*Mrs Defew*

## Reporting Absences

### Reporting your child's absence

If your child is unwell or has an appointment e.g. dentist/doctor could you please leave a message by 9.00am including the reason for the absence via:

Phone: 01284 753512 and Choose option 1:

And then choose option 1 for students in year 7-11 and option 2 for students in the sixth form

OR

Email: [attendance@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk)

For information on what to do if your child has COVID-like symptoms please see the following link for NHS guidance:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

**Just a reminder that if you do not inform us by 9.00am or use the above phone/email address, you will receive an email requesting the reason for your child's absence. All unexplained absences will be marked as unauthorised and there will be a follow-up phone call from the Attendance Officer.** Please note the school operates a first-day response to absences.

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to be absent from school during term time, you should complete a **leave of absence application form (please see link below)**, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the absence must be taken in term time. Please note that the Fixed Penalty Fine is now £80 per legal guardian for unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (5 days) or more.

<https://www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=74&type=pdf>

Thank you very much.

*Mrs Wesley - Attendance Officer*

## Dates for your Diary



2 - 7 March 2026 - National Careers Week (NCW2026)

6 March - Year 9 Options Deadline

10 March - Inter-House Competition Day

24 March - Year 12 UCAS Discovery Day

27 March - Break up for Easter

13 April - Start of summer term

[Term Dates](#)

## Contact Us



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