



St Benedict's Newsletter 331

5 June 2026



Catholic Social Teaching

This week's reflection encourages us to recognise how our faith strengthens us to walk together and support one another on life's journey. In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus makes one of the most profound statements in all of Scripture:

"I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world." - John 6:51 Jesus goes on to explain that whoever receives Him will remain close to Him and draw life from Him. These words point us towards the Eucharist, where Christ continues to nourish and strengthen His people. Just as food sustains our bodies, Jesus sustains our hearts, minds, and spirits.

This Gospel reminds us that faith is not something we live alone. Through the Eucharist, we become part of a larger community united in Christ. Catholic Social Teaching teaches us that every person has dignity and that we are called to participate fully in our communities, supporting one another and working together for the common good.

This theme is especially relevant as many of our Year 7 students prepare to go on pilgrimage next week. A pilgrimage is much more than a journey to a particular place; it is a journey of faith. It is an opportunity to step away from everyday routines, spend time with God, and grow in friendship with others.

During their pilgrimage, our students will walk, pray, reflect, and learn together. In doing so, they will experience something important about our faith: that we are strongest when we journey together. The disciples followed Jesus together, the early Church gathered together around the breaking of bread, and today we continue to support one another as members of God's family.

The Eucharist is often described as food for the journey. As our Year 7 students set off on pilgrimage, we are reminded that all of us are pilgrims in life. We each face challenges, opportunities, and moments of growth. Through Christ, we receive the strength we need to continue our journey and to serve those around us with generosity and love.

This links beautifully with the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Solidarity. We are called not simply to walk our own path, but to notice those around us, offer support when it is needed, and recognise that we belong to one another as members of God's family.

As we reflect on this Gospel and pray for our Year 7 pilgrims, we are invited to live out our school values of Wisdom, Compassion and Resilience:

- **Wisdom:** Recognising that we need nourishment not only for our bodies but also for our spirits, making time for prayer, reflection, and learning.
- **Compassion:** Supporting one another on our journeys, showing kindness and encouragement to those who may be anxious, lonely, or in need.
- **Resilience:** Recognising that faith is a journey, just like a pilgrimage and trusting that God walks beside us through every challenge and continuing forward with hope and courage.

This week we might reflect and ask ourselves what helps to nourish my faith and strengthen my relationship with God? How can I support others on their journey? Do I recognise that I am part of a community that walks together in faith?

As our Year 7 students prepare for pilgrimage, may we remember that we are all on a journey with God. Strengthened by Christ, the Bread of Life, we are called to walk together, care for one another, and bring hope to those we meet along the way.

Loving God,

We thank you for the gift of your Son,

the Bread of Life,

who nourishes us and strengthens us each day.

We pray especially for our Year 7 students
as they prepare for their pilgrimage next week.
Keep them safe in their travels,
open their hearts to your presence,
and help them to grow in faith, friendship, and understanding.
Give us wisdom to seek you,
compassion to care for one another,
and resilience to continue our journey with hope.
May we always be strengthened by your love
and inspired to serve others with generous hearts.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Careers Update

It is that time of year when I shift my main focus from student meetings and running events to reviewing our Careers programme, gaining feedback from our stakeholders - including everyone reading this Newsletter! - and planning our provision for the forthcoming academic year. It always proves to be an interesting and illuminating exercise!

On that note, please find below a link to the Parents and Carers Feedback Form, which is the same as last year so that I can compare results: [Parent/Carer Feedback on St. Benedict's Careers Programme Academic Year: 2025-26 – Fill in form](#)

I would be very grateful if you would fill in this Form by the end of June so that I can use the results to plan forward. *Thank you in advance!*

INVESTIN

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Opportunities

INVESTIN

We are now a partner school with INVESTIN which means our students have access to a discount on the cost of work experience programmes they register for with the organisation. INVESTIN is currently offering London-based work experience [summer programmes](#) for students aged 15-18 across 15 different industries including Law, Banking, Medicine,

Psychology and Media. Students aged 12-14 have access to the [Career Discovery](#) programme.

See Miss Hahn for details of discounts and a bursary.

FUTURES FOR ALL

Futures for All - Summer Work Experience programmes

Futures for All offer a mix of in-person and remote work experience placements, as well as shorter Insight Days for students aged 14-19 years. These programmes are fully funded for students in state schools and colleges across the country. For more information, visit: [About Our Work Experience Programme | Futures for All](#)

[All About Apprenticeships - Apprenticeships Norfolk](#)

FREE - All About Apprenticeships Fair 2026

Tuesday 16th June, 3.30pm - 7.00pm the Forum, Norwich

All About Apprenticeships is Norfolk's largest apprenticeships and opportunities fair, hosting local employers of all sizes, apprenticeship training providers and experienced apprenticeship ambassadors. The event is for anyone looking for an apprenticeship or who would like to know more about them. There is no need to book and actual apprenticeship opportunities will be available.

New for 2026:

- All About Apprenticeships Information Sessions – find out exactly how apprenticeships work, what employers and providers roles are, how much you'll be paid, how to find one, and much more.
- Detailed event programme and map outlining each exhibitor.
- Designated quiet area for those with SEND or additional needs to speak to Apprenticeships Norfolk staff.

As previously mentioned, please do let me know if you access any of the above opportunities, via this form: [Careers Student Opportunities – Fill in form](#)

Miss Hahn

[St Benedict's Day Raffle](#)

As we look ahead to our St Benedict's Summer Fayre this July, we are beginning preparations for one of the highlights of the day – our raffle. We are reaching out to ask for your support in donating prizes, which play a vital role in the success of this event. All funds raised from

the Fayre will once again go to My WiSH (West Suffolk Hospital Charity). This is a cause very close to our hearts as a school community. My WiSH supports patients, families and staff at West Suffolk Hospital by funding equipment, improving facilities and enhancing care beyond what the NHS alone can provide. We are proud to continue supporting this charity, particularly in memory of members of our community, and to help make a difference locally.

Thanks to your generosity, our fundraising has gone from strength to strength:

- In 2023, we raised £2,544
- In 2024, we raised £2,504
- Last year, we were delighted to raise an incredible £3,544.29, exceeding our target

We would love to match or even surpass this total again this year, and every donation—no matter how big or small—truly helps us achieve this.

During the Fayre, each tutor group runs its own fundraising activity, and the raffle runs alongside these stalls, creating a fantastic community atmosphere and a real sense of shared purpose. If you are able to contribute a raffle prize, we would be extremely grateful.

Donations can be dropped into the School Office, clearly labelled with your name and contact details so that we can thank you personally.

If you would prefer to get in touch directly, please feel free to email me at: dhamilton@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of our school and this wonderful cause—it genuinely makes a difference.

Mrs Hamilton

Year 8 Girls Shine at Rounders Competition

On Tuesday, the Year 8 girls rounders team travelled to Thomas Gainsborough School to take part in a rounders competition. The girls performed brilliantly throughout the afternoon and remained unbeaten, winning two of their games with excellent teamwork and determination.

Unfortunately, the final matches had to be cancelled due to a thunderstorm, but this did not take away from the team's fantastic performances. The girls showed great skill, enthusiasm, and sportsmanship in every game and should be very proud of their efforts.

Well done to all involved on an excellent afternoon of rounders!

Mrs Szczech

Youth SVP Talking Table

On Monday 18th May 2026 our growing Youth SVP group planned and ran an activity for the SVP's Heart to Heart campaign which focuses on loneliness - a problem that affects people of all ages in our wider community.

The group produced a poster that appeared in the school newsletter to invite retired people to come in to the school at lunchtime for a chat. The group prepared the chapel to welcome visitors and made cakes to offer as refreshments.

Mrs Stannard, the grandmother of two of the students in the school, attended the event and really enjoyed it. The topics of conversation were varied and covered topics ranging from baking to crosswords, as well as the joy that family relationships can bring. It was lovely to see the connections and laughter between the generations.

The Youth SVP hope to run a similar event next half-term and would also like to run the same event for children who are home-schooled. If any of our **parents** know of any parents who have children in Year 7-9 who are home-schooled and would be interested in coming in to the school to spend a lunchtime with our students, please can they be asked to contact KMurphy@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

I'm the Talking Table.

I don't belong to anyone, and yet I belong to everyone.

I'm not fancy. No polished wood, no frills. Just a table.

But I've got space. I've got room.

And there's always room for more.

Come sit. Whenever you like. Pull up a chair. Make yourself at home.

I've heard quiet stories shared across my surface.

I've felt laughter bounce off my edges.

I've held hands, shoulders, and hearts.

People talk, people listen, people just...are.

And somehow, that's enough.

Sometimes conversations get messy.

Sometimes people don't know what to say.

That's okay.

The shared smiles, the quiet prayers, the courage of listening.

I'm a place of hope, because hope grows when someone is seen.

When someone is heard.

So come. Sit. Talk. Listen. Laugh. Pray.

Leave a little lighter, a little braver,

a little more connected than when you arrived.

There's always room at my table

(From the Youth SVP Talking Table Assembly Script)

Mr Murphy





Celebrating Volunteering Week at St Benedict's

Here at St Benedict's we have a holistic approach to education, that is to help the whole person develop and grow and encouraging volunteering is a key part of this approach. Our Sixth Form students take part in the Stella Maris Leadership Award, that not only encourages them to volunteer, serve their community, but also to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses as part of the process. By doing this they develop important work experience skills, a self reflection toolkit, as well as developing the positive habits or virtues that are important for a flourishing life. You can read more about the Stella Maris Leadership Award on our website [St Benedict's Catholic School - Stella Maris Leadership Award](#)

The students did a range of volunteering activities here at school and in the community and explained in their project presentations how it helped them grow as a person as well as the links between what they did, the school values and Catholic Social Teaching.

Mrs Herring

Stella Maris Volunteering Project

For my volunteering project, me and my group went out to the school field and around the school site to litter pick. We did this for a total of 3 hours, this included in the morning and right after lunch. Through doing this, I was able to learn values that will be of long-term benefit to me.

By litter picking in the morning, it meant that the school site was clean in the morning for all students, whether it was outside of the sixth form common room or the field where students would soon go to at break. And in the afternoon, after lunch, meant that the field would be clean of the lunchtime mess. Not only did this mean that the field would look cleaner, but it benefited the PE lessons which happen after lunch. This because they wouldn't have to be exercising in the middle of empty food packets and could prevent someone slipping on something or a seagull eating something that would make them ill. This demonstrates the school values of service and compassion as the act of litter picking itself is an act of service to the people who we share the school site with, and compassion as we were thinking about them specifically which doing it. This project also supports the pillars of catholic social teaching. The project links with the pillar of solidarity as once again we took time to clean up our shared space.

However, this project also personally helped me to develop virtues. The first virtue was resilience/determination as I had to

motivate myself to go out to litter pick even on days where I was tired. This is a valuable virtue for me as it taught me to keep to the plans I make even in times where I may not want to complete them.

The other virtue was empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand the experiences and perspectives of another person. While doing the litter picking, I was able to think about how the rubbish around the school site may affect someone, for example a seagull eating or chocking on a piece of rubbish or somebody stepping in chewing gum. Although it may seem like a small act, it can benefit the life of another person.

Stella Maris Award Volunteering Write-Up Emily Vince

Aiming for my Stella Maris award, I have been volunteering outside of school at my local Oxfam. To achieve the silver award, I need 6 hours of volunteering. I have been volunteering every Monday for an hour after school since October 2023 (approx. 2 1/2 years). Throughout my time at Oxfam, I have learnt important virtues and life skills which will benefit/help me in the future.

At Oxfam, my role is to organise donated books. As soon as the donated books come in, they are placed upstairs, ready to be sorted out. I make sure they are of good quality (not ripped or damaged) to go up on the shelves. I price label them and mark them with the week number before displaying them on the main floor, ready to be bought. I also take books that have been up on shelves for too long off and put them in crates to be recycled, so none go to landfill. I know which ones are ready to take off the shelves by looking at the week number, telling me how long it has been up for. Volunteering at Oxfam has given me an insight into how charities work and the effort put in by volunteers to do their own part in helping to raise money for those who need it.

My school's values are compassion, resilience, service and wisdom. During my time at Oxfam, I have expressed/learnt all 4 values.

Compassion- the importance of kindness and respect. Being able to be friendly and welcoming to those who come in, helping them find the book they are looking for.

Resilience- sometimes we can get a lot of donations and have limited space to put them to be sorted, which makes the space feel crowded and unorganised. It is important to be resilient and continue with what I'm doing in order to organise the piled-up book donations and complete tasks even when the tasks feel repetitive. Service- volunteering, even simple jobs like organising donations and helping customers, are important as they help the shop run efficiently. I have learnt that small actions make a difference.

Wisdom- with different people and getting along with coworkers has developed my communication, but taught me how to work alongside people of different ages. I value this trait as it will help me in any future job.

However, my time at Oxfam has also supported pillars of catholic social teaching (the common good, subsidiarity, solidarity and the dignity of the person), by raising money to support those less fortunate and providing them with respect and value.

Overall, volunteering at Oxfam has been a valuable experience for me as it has taught me many important traits for future life. And reinforcing the values taught at school. Working with Oxfam while studying A-levels at sixth form has taught me a work-life balance.

 Duncan MacInnes | Oxfam Volunteering

Mon, May 16, 4:13PM (19 hours ago) ☆ 📧 🔄 1

Absence today

Hi Emily,

I can confirm that Emily has volunteered with us once a week - every Monday afternoon from 4pm to 5pm - over the last two years.

She has been a very willing volunteer and has helped with many bookshop tasks.

Thank you,

Duncan MacInnes

Shop manager

Oxfam Books & Music F2924 2 Brentjovel Street Bury St Edmunds IP23 1EA



**Stella Maris
Leadership Award**

By Emma Payne, Rory Blewitt, Nuala McGinty, Joseph Marris, Toby Flood and Joseph Richmond

Stella Marris Project

Introduction

For our volunteering, we took part in litter picking during school as part of our Stella Maris award. Although it seemed like a small action, it helped us understand how simple acts can positively affect other people and the environment. Through this experience, we developed six important virtues: stewardship, compassion, responsibility, service, perseverance and respect. It also helped us understand how Catholic Social Teaching can be applied in everyday life, not just through large actions, but through consistent small acts of care for others and God's creation.



Stewardship - Emma

- Through litter picking, I developed stewardship by helping care for the environment around our school and local community. It made me realise how damaging litter can be to wildlife and our community space on the school field and around the school.
- This links to Catholic Social Teaching and *Lausato S'*, which teaches that we have a responsibility to protect God's creation for future generations.
- It also helped me further to improve and help care for God's creation.

Responsibility - Rory

- I developed responsibility by choosing to improve the environment instead of ignoring the problem.
- The volunteering made me reflect on our own actions, such as recycling and disposing of rubbish properly. It also showed commitment because I worked together with my group during school to complete the task.
- This links to Catholic Social Teaching through care for creation, as Catholics are taught to protect the world God created and take responsibility for their actions. By litter picking, I was putting my faith into action and helping care for the community around me.



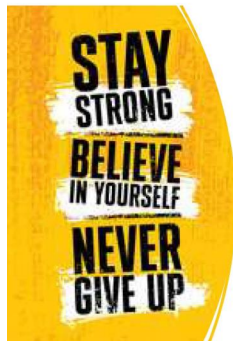
Compassion - Nuala

- Compassion was shown through helping create a cleaner and safer environment for students and staff.
- Some people thanked us while we were volunteering, which showed me how small acts of kindness can positively affect others. This links to Catholic Social Teaching through the dignity of the human person, which teaches that everyone deserves to live in a safe and cared for environment.
- Jesus taught people to "love your neighbour as yourself", and through my volunteering I was putting this teaching into action by helping improve the community for others.



Service – Joseph M

- Litter picking helped me develop the virtue of service because I gave my time to help improve shared spaces for everyone.
- It taught me that serving others does not always need to involve large actions. Even small acts can make a meaningful difference to the community.
- This links to Catholic Social Teaching through the common good, as my volunteering helped create a cleaner and safer environment that benefits everyone. It also reflects Jesus' teaching to help and serve others selflessly, showing kindness through my actions rather than expecting anything in return.



Perseverance - Toby

- At times, the litter picking felt repetitive and tiring, but I continued working hard throughout the activity.
- This helped me develop perseverance and showed me the importance of commitment and determination when trying to create positive change.
- This links to Catholic Social Teaching through the common good, as I continued helping to improve shared spaces for the benefit of the whole school. It also reflects the Christian belief of serving others with patience and dedication, even when a task is difficult or unnoticed.

Respect – Joseph R

- The volunteering helped me develop respect for both the environment and the people who use shared spaces.
- It made me more aware of how litter can negatively impact communities and encouraged me to think more carefully about our own behaviour and actions.
- This links to Catholic Social Teaching through the dignity of the human person, which teaches that everyone deserves to live in a clean and safe environment. By helping clean the area, I was showing care and respect for both the community and God's creation.





Behind the scenes



Conclusion

- Overall, taking part in litter picking during school helped us develop important virtues including stewardship, responsibility, compassion, service, perseverance and respect. Although the volunteering seemed like a small act, it had a greater impact on both the environment and the school community.
- It also deepened our understanding of Catholic Social Teaching, especially the ideas of caring for creation, human dignity and promoting the common good. Through this experience, we learned that living out virtues does not always require large actions. Consistent small acts of kindness and responsibility can also make a significant difference.

Bury Literary Festival Competition

EVERYONE WHO ENTERS GETS A BADGE!

GO ALL IN!

ALVA BURY SOUTH CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

WRITING COMPETITION

HELP US WIN
100 BOOKS for our SCHOOL LIBRARY
and win*** £50 in book vouchers and more for yourself!

All you have to do is
WRITE A STORY or POEM
upto 800 WORDS and 4 PICTURES
inspired by your favourite book

TO BE CONTINUED...

Have you read a book that you loved so much you wish it went on forever?
Imagine the story didn't end on the last page. What happened to your favourite characters after you closed the book?
Did they live happy ever after? Is there another adventure to be had?

Categories:

- Children 9-11
- Young People 12-17

Prizes:

Runner-up from each category will win:

- £25 book voucher
- Opportunity to be published in Bury Free Press
- Certificate presented at the festival

Winner from each category will win:

- 100 books for their school library
- £50 book voucher
- Opportunity to be published in Bury Free Press
- Certificate presented at the festival

If you want to join past St Benedict's winners (Alexis-Rose Josy – winner of the Young People category 2025; Suzie Francis – runner up in the Children's category and Isadora Edwards – overall winner of the Young People category 2024) – email your entry to Mrs Oakes by Friday 3rd July.

Fundraising Thanks

One of the Christmas jumper days in 2025 raised money for the Children and Families in Need in Zimbabwe charity. Through your wonderful generosity we raised £738.18 which the charity have used to buy a laptop, printer, ink and paper. Fr Tim from the school which the charity supports has written to thank us:

Thank you very much for the generous donation of a printer and a laptop.

Our office will never be the same again.

May God bless you.

I also attach photos of the produce from the school garden at Mwemba Primary school, which you kindly helped create last year.

Fr Tim has also sent some information about an appeal they are running to fund two teachers in the school:

Concerning the request for a subsidy of \$300 (£222) per month for Chezya Primary school, to support two community teachers with a small salary and food allowance.

We are looking for donors to help at Chezya Primary school, the request from the headmaster is for a monthly subsidy of \$300 US per month. It is to pay salaries and food allowances for two community teachers. i.e they will get \$150 each. The teachers have already been teaching there since the beginning of this term. Unfortunately, so few of the parents are paying school fees that these teachers have been paid nothing for the whole term. Unfortunately, the headmaster fears they will not be willing to teach next term.

The challenge is that there are only three teachers paid by the ministry. There are 9 classes in all at the primary school, covering students from 3-12 years of age. There are five classrooms, so with five teachers at least there is one teacher for each classroom. Since there are 9 separate classes some of the teachers have to teach two classes together. So if the number of teachers is reduced to three, each teacher will have to teach three classes at once, which will severely restrict their ability to give quality teaching.

Fr. Tim Peacock, Makwa, Zimbabwe

If anyone would like further information about this appeal, please contact Mrs Hamilton: dhamilton@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

Mrs Hamilton





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

Just a reminder that if you do not inform us by 9.00am using 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

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 where we will be able to help you.

Thanks

Mrs Defew

Dates for your Diary



15 -19 June - Year 8 French Trip

17 June - Year 11 Celebration Day

18 June - Year 12 Mocks start

19 June - Year 11 Transition Morning

19 June - Year 13 Prom

22 June - Year 11 Prom

22 June - Year 10 Mocks Start

24 June - Exam Contingency Day

7 July - Sports Day

10 July - St Benedict's Day and Fayre

17 July - Break Up for Summer

13 Aug - A Level Results

20 Aug - GCSE Results Day and Sixth Form Enrolment

[Term Dates](#)

Contact Us



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