

St Benedict's Newsletter 343

23 October 2026

Catholic Social Teaching

This week our focus is on the Catholic Social Teaching theme of Creation and Environment. As we approach half term, it is a good opportunity to pause, appreciate the world around us and think about how we can care for the wonderful gift of creation.

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that the world is not simply ours to use as we wish. It is a gift from God, and we have a responsibility to look after it for future generations. From the changing colours of autumn leaves to the trees, wildlife and green spaces around us, nature reminds us of the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

Psalm 24:1 “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” This verse reminds us that creation belongs to God, and we are entrusted with the responsibility of caring for it. Looking after our environment is one way we show gratitude for God's gifts and respect for the life that shares our planet.

Pope Francis echoes this message in his encyclical Laudato Si’: “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue.” Laudato Si’, §217 This reminds

us that stewardship for creation is part of living out our faith. We do not need to make huge changes to make a difference. Small, everyday choices can help protect our planet: turning off taps, recycling, reducing waste, reusing items and taking care of the places we share.

As we head into half term, we have an opportunity to put this into practice. Whether we are spending time at home, visiting family, enjoying the countryside or simply going for a walk, we can appreciate the natural world and make choices that help to protect it. We can leave places as we would wish to find them, avoid unnecessary waste and remember that even small actions matter.

- Wisdom: Think about the impact our choices have on the environment. Could we waste less, recycle more or save water and energy?
- Compassion: Remember that caring for creation also means caring for people. Environmental damage can affect communities around the world, particularly those who are already vulnerable.
- Resilience: Keep making responsible choices, even when they seem small. Lasting change happens when we persevere and encourage others to do the same.

As we approach half term, take a moment to ask yourself: What is one thing in nature that I am grateful for? How can I reduce waste or save resources during the holiday? How can I help care for the places I visit? What small change could I make that might have a positive impact on our planet?

We may sometimes feel that our individual actions are too small to matter. However, when many people make thoughtful choices, those small actions can grow into something much bigger. Caring for creation begins with recognising its value and choosing to protect it.

Loving God,

Thank you for the beautiful world you have given us.

Help us to appreciate your creation, care for the environment and make wise choices every day.

As we enjoy our half-term break, help us to protect the world around us and remember those who share our common home.

Amen.

Amen.

6th Form Open Event

We would like to thank all of you who attended our 6th form open event on Tuesday evening it was fantastic to see so many of you there. We hope that you are thinking of applying to our wonderful 6th form, please use the link below to apply.

6th Form Application

Mr Richmond



Careers Update

"Here I Am Lord, Don't Send Me!" Careers Talk

On Thursday 8th October we welcomed Fr Dick (Richard White) into school to be of service in a new and slightly different way... to share his career and life experiences as a priest with our students.

Richard White was born in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset in 1948 to a military family. As such, he spent many of his early years moving and adapting to new environments. He attended secondary school at Stowmarket Grammar, leaving with seven O Levels (qualifications that existed prior to GCSEs!) and later (in 1964) joined the RAF. A new opportunity resulted in Richard moving to the Middle East where he served with the Omani Air Force.

After 3 years in Oman, Richard felt the need to return home to evaluate his choices... and his life purpose. He settled in Newmarket where he worked for a time. During this period, it became clear to Richard that his calling was to serve God. In 1984 he began seminary training at St Mary's College, Oscott (near Birmingham). Fr Dick was ordained as a priest in Bury St Edmunds in 1990, a path which led him to re-join the military 6 years later as an Army Chaplain which included serving in Germany, Bosnia- Herzegovina and Cyprus. Fr. Dick returned to the Catholic Diocese of East Anglia in 2005 and retired from active ministry in 2018, although continues to support the community in many ways.

Fr. Dick shared some of the life-changing events that have shaped his pathway - including near death from drowning - was it an Angel who saved him? He showed us his uniform, beret and caps from his peace-keeping roles in the Army and the different regiments he had served. Fr. Dick described how he has questioned his faith and teaching to find answers... and to reinforce his path of service. He shared with us a poignant prayer from his personal copy of *The Divine Office* - the daily prayer book for priests.

Fr Dick's talk felt both humbling and powerful - not just because it was held in our Chapel, but because of his core message: *Each and every one of us has a God-given purpose on Earth. Some may have been told they should not be here or are a mistake, but this is not the Truth! We are All on a journey to find our calling, whatever that might be, and each journey is blessed by God.*

Taking time to reflect on our purpose is so valuable... and necessary to hear our calling. Maybe this half-term will provide that opportunity...

Miss Hahn

Dates for the diary

Wed 18th November - BAE Systems Roadshow for Years 7 & 8

Theme: Material World: Engineering the Future


STAND WITH
UKRAINE









FutureChef Competition

During the week beginning 19 October 2026, our Year 10 Food Preparation and Nutrition students took part in the school heat of the FutureChef Competition. Their challenge was to create a delicious main course for two people on a budget of just £5. The dishes were judged on a range of criteria, including skills and techniques, composition, taste and flavour, creativity, and presentation.

We were incredibly impressed by the enthusiasm, determination, and talent shown by all of the students. Throughout the one-hour challenge, they worked hard, demonstrated excellent practical skills, and produced an outstanding range of dishes. The quality of food presented was exceptional, making the judges' decision an extremely difficult one.

After much deliberation, we are delighted to announce that Melanie Bochenek-Cichocka and Christian Wiggins will be progressing to the local final.

Melanie impressed the judges with a beautifully cooked Katsu Curry, packed with flavour and showcasing excellent technical skills. Christian's dish, Autumn Maple and Herb Roasted Salmon with Butternut Squash and Bacon Brussels Sprouts, stood out for its vibrant colours, thoughtful presentation, and effective use of seasonal ingredients.

We are incredibly proud of all the students who took part and the effort they put into the competition. A huge congratulations to Melanie and Christian on their well-deserved success.

We wish them every luck in the next stage of the competition and look forward to cheering them on as they represent the school in the local final.

Well done to everyone involved!

Mrs Reeman

Senior Maths Challenge

On 7th October we had 42 A-level mathematicians take the Senior Maths Challenge. This is a 90-minute, multiple-choice competition aimed at high ability Maths students across the UK. It encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency in using basic mathematical techniques to solve interesting problems.

In this year's SMC we were awarded 3 golds, 8 silvers and 16 bronze certificates! To recognise the highest performers in the Challenge, UKMT awarded the top-scoring 66% of participants Bronze, Silver and Gold certificates in the ratio 3:2:1. Please see below for those who secured certificates!

Gold

George Wightman (Best in School), Sean Dersley and Joe Ferdinand (Best in Year)

Silver

Rhodela Das, Lily Georgy, Michael Knight, Mevin Biju, Raf Calumpiano, Ollie Hayes, Isaac Spiller and Ben Warner

Bronze

Rufus Atkinson, Lukas Barisius, Ellen Beckwith, Zuza Bulacz, Archie Coogan, Alfie He, Camar Jogee, Rowan Kimber, Nikita Kotov, Izzy O'Flynn, Helena Bulacz, Violette Davy, Michal Maciejak, Emma Payne, Finn Senior and Maxim Zak.

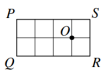
Following this challenge, UKMT have invited 6000 of the highest performing students to take part in the Senior Kangaroo, two of our gold award students have qualified for this next round. In addition, George Wightman, with a score of 109 has qualified for the British Maths Olympiad as one of the top performing 1000 students. Our outstanding mathematicians will sit this further round on Wednesday 18th November. We await the results and are proud of the achievements of all our pupils that took part in the Senior Maths Challenge.

The questions in the Maths Challenge increase in difficulty as you progress through the paper, here is a geometry problem relatively early in the paper that some of our students made a series of large representations to be able to solve.

Mrs Nicholls

6. Rectangle $PQRS$ is made from eight 1 by 1 squares as shown in the diagram. At point O, four of those squares meet. The rectangle is rotated through 180° about point O. Point P travels k times as far as point R during that rotation.

What is the value of k?



A $\sqrt{2}$ B $\sqrt{3}$ C 2 D $\sqrt{5}$ E $\sqrt{6}$

Year 7 Boys Football: West Suffolk Cluster Tournament

On Thursday 22nd October, the Year 7 boys' football team took part in their first competition representing the school at the West Suffolk Cluster Tournament, hosted by Sybil Andrews.

The tournament featured four clusters, with the winner of each progressing to the semi-finals and, ultimately, the final. St Benedict's were drawn against Sybil Andrews A, Sybil Andrews B and Mildenhall.

The team's first match saw them defeat Sybil Andrews A 1-0 thanks to a superb long-range strike from Macaulay Mingo. They followed this up with an impressive 3-0 victory over Sybil Andrews B, with goals from Ben Millington, Max Clarke and Beau Darnell.

Everything came down to the final match against Mildenhall, with the winners securing progression to the next round. St Benedict's rose to the occasion, winning 1-0 courtesy of a stunning free kick from Max Coyles that flew into the top corner.

The team showed excellent teamwork, determination and sportsmanship throughout the tournament. Such was the collective effort, it was impossible to select a Player of the Tournament, as every member of the squad played their part in the success.

Congratulations to the entire team on winning the West Suffolk Cluster Tournament and securing a place in the semi-finals. We wish them the very best of luck in the next round!

Mr Bates



Cross Country Success

This half term has seen some outstanding cross-country performances from our students, with success at both team and individual level.

On 6th October, 12 students travelled to Woodbridge to compete in the English Schools Cross Country Cup Suffolk Finals. Our Intermediate Girls' team of Sophie Bolton, Beatrice Harpur-Davies, Imogen Knight and Patrycja Golonka, alongside our Senior Boys' team of Oliver Lamas Nakagawa, Archie Coogan, Noah T'Sjoen and Noah Wilkinson, produced excellent performances to secure qualification for the Regional Finals at Felsted on 5th November.

We also took 49 students from Years 7-12 to the Suffolk Cross Country Cup at Royal Hospital School on 15th October. Every student represented the school brilliantly, demonstrating determination, resilience and sportsmanship throughout the day. The top 50 athletes in each race qualified for the next round at Woodbridge, with a fantastic number of St Benedict's students progressing.

Year 7 & 8 Girls Team

1st Rosie Coleman

7th Maggie Matthews

28th Lydia Astle

30th Amelia Viljoen

34th Aggie Gordon

41st Ainslee Breske

46th Alice Gladstone

Year 7 & 8 Boys Team

9th Louie Oxborrow

10th Ernie Abbs

Year 9 & 10 Girls Team:

1st Sophie Bolton

14th Beatrice Harpur-Davies

18th Imogen Knight

23rd Patrycja Golonka

32nd Genevieve D’Mello

41st Sophia Collins

Year 9 & 10 Boys Team

8th Solomon Brockenshire-Dyke

10th Gregory Slater

15th Sidney Astle

23rd Evan Cameron

28th Jacob Deeming

29th Oscar Grove

30th Alexander Balmer

36th Callum Sleight

Year 11 & 12 Girls Team:

3rd Molly Murphy

5th Amelia Smith

9th Lucy Murphy

18th Eliza Rowley

19th Lucia Harding

21st Elodie Massuard

Year 11 & 12 Boys Team

1st Oliver Lamas Nakagawa

9th Jake McConnell

13th Noah T'Sjoen

19th Jack Walsh

23rd Noah Wilkinson

24th Rupert Stafford

A special congratulations goes to our medal winners, who delivered exceptional performances in highly competitive fields. Rosie, Sophie and Oliver each won their races, finishing 1st, while Molly earned an excellent 3rd-place finish.

Well done to all students who took part. Your commitment, effort and determination have made this an incredibly successful start to the cross-country season, and we wish all our qualifiers the very best of luck in the next round.

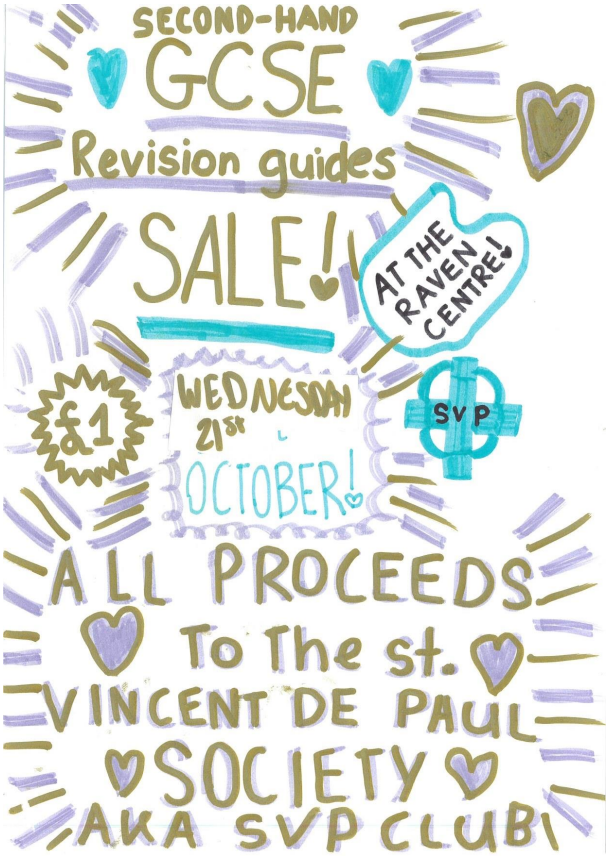
Mr Bates



Turning Concern into Action: Youth SVP Revision Book Sale

Showing true Vincentian spirit, our Youth SVP group organised a Year 11 Revision Book Sale in the Raven Centre on Wednesday 21st October. The event served a dual purpose: supporting our Year 11 peers as they prepare for their upcoming mock exams, and raising vital funds for charity. We are delighted to announce that the sale raised **£95**, which will be donated to the **Saint Vincent de Paul Society** to support families facing hardship. Thank you to our school community for making this act of charity possible.

Mr Murphy



Year 13 History: University Lecture on the Civil Rights Movement

On Friday 2nd October, we were delighted to welcome Doctor Hannah-Rose Murray from the University of Suffolk who visited St Benedict's to speak with our Year 13 History students about the African-American Civil Rights Movement.

A Journey Through History

First, she delivered a fascinating mini-lecture mapping out the movement's development, including:

- **The World Wars:** The vital contributions of African-Americans in WWI (including the famous Harlem Hellfighters) and the "Double V" campaign of WWII.
- **Core A-Level Topics:** Key events straight from the students ''The *American Dream: Reality and Illusion 1945–1980'* course, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Greensboro Sit-ins, Freedom Riders, March on Washington, and the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March.
- **Unsung Heroes:** An introduction to lesser-known pioneers of the movement, such as Bayard Rustin, Pauli Murray, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Claudette Colvin.

- **Black Power:** A deep dive into the Black Panther Party, featuring a biography of Fred Hampton and a recommendation for students to watch the film *Judas and the Black Messiah (15)*. The talk also explored the urban uprisings in Los Angeles (1965), Detroit (1967), and Newark (1967).

University-Style Workshop

Following the lecture, the students took part in an interactive primary source workshop. They closely analysed the *Black Panther Party 10-Point Program* and Pauli Murray's *'An American Credo'*.

The session concluded with expert recommendations on further primary sources and pioneers for students to research independently. It was an incredibly inspiring afternoon that gave our Year 13s a true insight into studying History at university level!

Mr Murphy



Parish Contact Details



Is your child a Young Carer?

Suffolk Family Carers
Living Fuller Lives

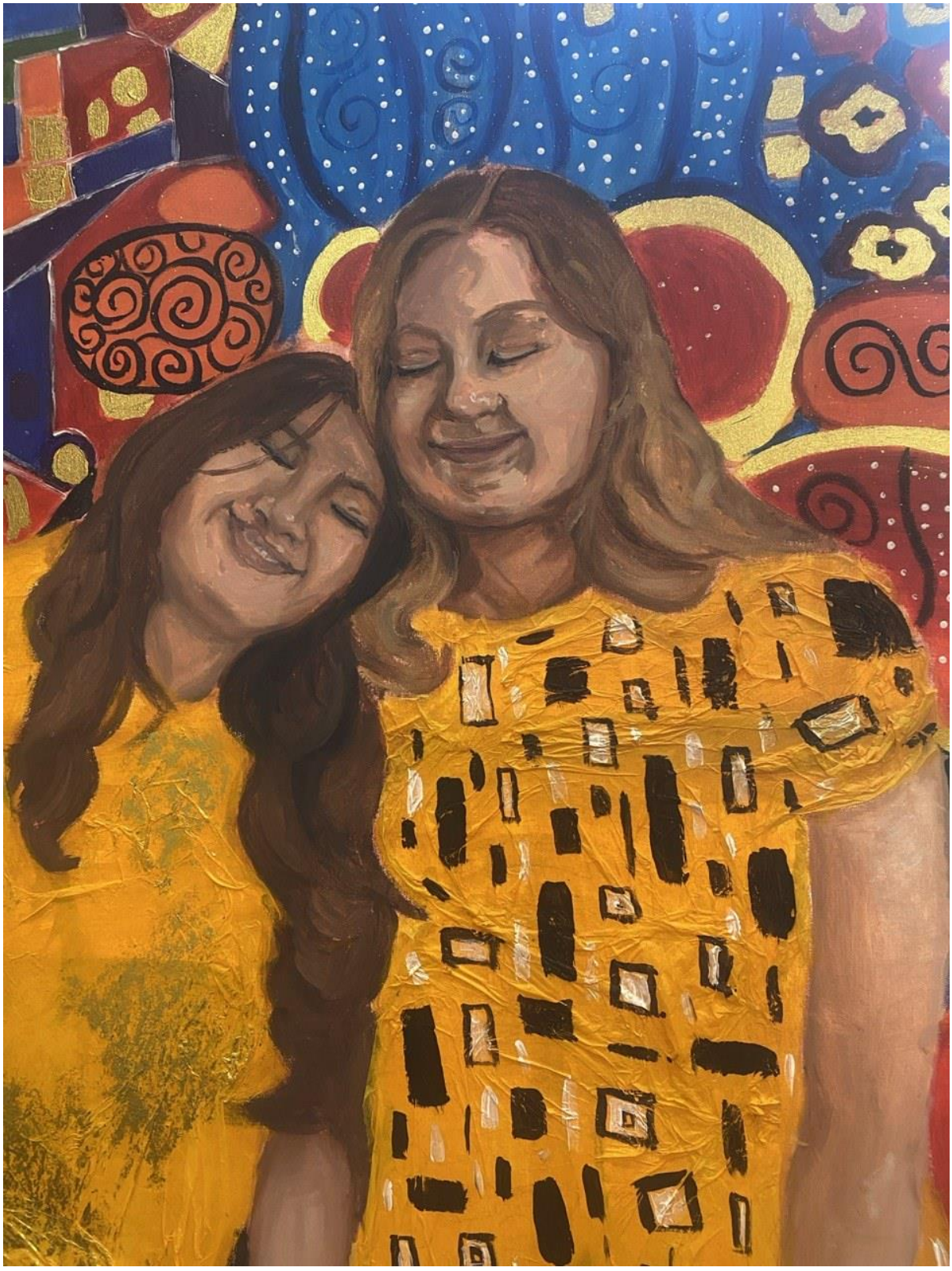
Young Carers
Young Adult Carers

A young carer is a child or young person aged between 5 to 25 years old whose life is in some way different or restricted because they provide, or intend to provide, practical or emotional support to someone else.

The person they provide care for is often a parent, a relative who is physically or mentally ill, frail elderly, disabled or misuses alcohol or substances. Young carers could also be supporting and caring for a disabled brother or sister.

If you think your child is a Young Carer, please call Ms Bourne on 01284 753512 to discuss, or contact Suffolk Young Carers directly at www.suffolkfamilycarers.org or 01473 835477

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

ARBOR Parental Information Verification



Please could we ask all parents to log onto their ARBOR accounts to ensure that you still have access to the system.

Once on the system, please check that the information that we hold is correct and up to date for each child that you have at the school. If it is not then please make any changes that are needed directly on the system.

If you are unable to make changes or would like some help then please email the school Arbor Support team on:

Arbor@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

Mrs Defew

Dates for your Diary



26 - 30 October - Half Term

2 November - Year 8 HPV vaccinations

6 November - year 7 - 11 Flu Vaccinations

Term Dates

Contact Us



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