

Fred's Prayer for the Week

We pray that all Christians may love you more, that by our love we can show countries that are divided how to live in peace and be reconciled. That all people may be more generous in their giving and look after those who have nothing. Let us open our hearts and reach out to those who are alone at this time of year. Let us listen to the call of John the Baptist to change and prepare a way for the Lord. Amen.

God bless - Fred (Chaplain)



Message from the Headteacher

Everyone is SO very busy nowadays. As Christmas fast approaches we all have so much to do in preparation. It is important that we find time during Advent to stop rushing and start reflecting; what is Christmas really all about?

This week we have had Commendation Assemblies for Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9. It is always lovely seeing so many families joining with us to celebrate the achievement of their sons. If your son was awarded a certificate and you had a photograph taken, you can get a copy by emailing the school on admin@st-columbas.bexley.sch.uk. Please make the subject line 'Commendation Photo'.

We were again able to host a group of senior citizens from Geddes Place this year for some Christmas fun, drama, sing-a-long-a-Southby and a buffet. It's lovely to watch our young men ensuring our guests had a good time.

On Wednesday evening we had our annual Carol Concert. Once again this event was well attended and enjoyed by all. We watched the drama group perform "Scrooge", the choir singing magnificently and listened to Fred helping us to reflect on Advent. Next week we are providing a free Christmas lunch to all students, please

see the panel on page 3 for details of the date.

You may recall me writing about Tobi Alabi in early November and the non-uniform day we held to raise funds for the Heart4More Foundation. On Thursday Tobi was able to visit us again to collect the funds raised by students. The wonderful sum of £963.66 was raised. A big thank you to our students and their families for their generosity.

Last Sunday, Miss Anand and Fred took the choir to sing at Greenhithe's ceremony to switch on the lights on their Christmas Tree (see picture on page 3). The choir was requested by Cllr Kelly, a governor here at St Columba's and he commented afterwards that the boys had 'further enhanced the standing of the school with their behaviour and singing'. It was a pretty bleak Sunday afternoon but they did help bring some warmth to the event!

Next Friday we will be holding a whole school mass and as is our custom and practice, we will be releasing students from 12.00 midday onwards.

Only twelve days to go!

Mr N Fisher



Commendation Assemblies

Year 7



Year 8



Year 9



Choir Performs for Geddes Place Senior Citizens



CHRISTMAS MEAL DATES

MONDAY 15th DECEMBER
Years 7 & 8

TUESDAY 16th DECEMBER
Year 9

WEDNESDAY 17th DECEMBER
Year 10

THURSDAY 18th DECEMBER
Year 11

Christmas dinner
is free for all
students!



Greenhithe Lights Switch on!



*Visit our website just
scan our QR code here!*



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT Follow us on twitter!



@SCCBS_English



Head Teacher
N.Fisher MA, BA(Hons), PGCE, NPQH

Deputy Head Teachers
Dr.L.Fripps EdD, MA, B.Ed(Hons), NPQH
B.Woodcock B.Sc.(Hons), PGCE

School Business Manager
J.Hobbs



**St Columba's
Catholic Boys' School**

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Website: www.st-columbas.bexley.sch.uk

A Christian community where everyone has the right to be happy, be safe and achieve.

Dear Parents,

The Manna Centre Christmas Collection 2014

Every year at this time Year 7 and 8 students are asked to think of those less well off than themselves. There are many deserving causes to which we are repeatedly asked to contribute and in keeping with tradition we are collecting for the homeless of our own city, one of the richest in the World.

The Manna Centre in Bermondsey is a day care centre providing food, clothing, medical and a range of services to the homeless of that area of Central London. Our main collection is not of money, although donations can be made to the school via Parent pay.

The Centre asks for donations of:

FOOD	Cereal	Socks *	Blankets*
Tins of Tomatoes *	Pasta sauces*	Boxer shorts *	Tea mugs and dinner plates*, cereal bowls. (If breakable could parents bring to school office, please do not send with boys)
Tins of Soup*	TOILETRIES	Winter coats	Towels
Sugar*	Soap	Shoes and boots - especially Trainers *	Toilet and kitchen rolls
Powdered Milk*	Shaving Foam	Jeans*	
Coffee	Deodorant	Coats*	
Ham & Corned Beef/Spam*	Shampoo	Gloves*	
Tins of vegetables *	CLOTHING	OTHERS	
Diluted Drinks*	Trainers*	Sleeping Bags*	
Tinned Fish*	Underwear *		

* indicates most needed

These are the main items that they are short of at the moment, although they will be grateful for other non perishable foods, tea, coffee and toiletries. All donations should be brought to school where the Year 7 and 8 form tutors will receive them at morning registration, or brought to the school office.

Perhaps could remember this list whilst at the supermarket. The families of St Columba's have always been remarkably generous to the various worthy causes that we support from time to time. Thank you.

I would also like to stress that although this is traditionally a Year 7 and 8 initiative, older students are welcome to contribute and contributions are welcomed from anyone connected with the school.

Best wishes

J F Woodcock
Head of Year 8

THE MANNA DAY CENTRE
6 MELIOR STREET, LONDON SE1 3QP
Tel: 020 7357 9363
www.mannasociety.org.uk



St Columba's Catholic Boys' School

Halcot Avenue, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7QB

Inspection dates 23-24 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most boys make good progress from average starting points. They achieve examination results in Year 11 similar to those in other schools in most subjects. GCSE results in English, mathematics and science are above average and improving steadily.
- The headteacher, leaders and governors are passionate about raising aspirations across the school. They are determined that every boy is supported to reach his full potential. They are regularly seen around the school and build positive relationships with staff and students.
- Teaching across the school is good. Effective management of teachers' performance and focused professional development opportunities help teachers improve.
- Boys take great pride in their school. They behave exceptionally well and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They are respectful and courteous towards visitors, staff and each other.
- Attendance is very high because boys enjoy being at school. They value the support they are given which helps them to achieve well. They expect a lot of themselves and work hard to reach their goals.
- Boys are kept extremely safe. Bullying incidents are uncommon. School leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding of students is of a high standard.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Most boys make good or better progress but there is still some variability across subjects, for example design and technology and modern foreign languages.
- Not all teachers provide high-quality marking and feedback to ensure that boys know how to improve and make better progress.
- Achievement targets, set by teachers and leaders, are not always based on accurate information. Targets are sometimes not challenging enough. This slows the pace of improvement.

Extra-Curricular Programme 2014-15

Activity	Dept	Audience	Day	Time	Staff	Location
Basketball Team Training	PE	Year 7	Tuesday		HMN	
	PE	Year 8	Tuesday		HMN	
	PE	Year 9	Thursday		HMN	
	PE	Year 10	Monday Thursday		HMN	
	PE	Year 11	Monday Thursday		HMN	
GCSE Revision Sessions	PE	Year 11	Monday		RDY	
Rugby Training	PE	Years 9,10,11	Tuesday		FUY	
	PE	Years 7,8	Thursday		FUY	
Interhouse Competitions (Rotation)	PE	Years 7,8,9,10	Wednesday		HMN	
Football Team Training	PE	Years 8,9	Wednesday		AJN DSN	
Rowing Club	PE	All Years	Wednesday		DHK	
Fitness / Rowing Club	PE	All Years	Wednesday		REE DHK	
Badminton	PE	All Years	Friday		RDY	
Art Club	Art	Years 7,8,9	Wednesday		CMN DAR	
	Art	Years 10,11	Thursday		DAR	

Extra-Curricular Programme 2014-15

Activity	Dept	Audience	Day	Time	Staff	Location
KS3 Club	Design Technology	Year 7 Year 8 Year 9	Wednesday	2.30-3.30	Yr11 Mentors NCS lead	DT2
KS4 Sessions	Design Technology	Year 10 Year 11	Wednesday	2.30-4.00	LBY NCS CBE	All Workshops

Please note: Workshops will be open Tuesday and Thursdays for Year 11 pupils on request by invitation

Guitar Club	Music	All abilities welcome	Tuesday	2.30-3.30	ADR	MU1 MU2
GCSE ensembles	Music	Year 10 / 11 timetabled	Tuesday	2.30-3.30	DSY AAD	MU2 Practice Rooms
Urban Music Workshops	Music	First come, first served	Wednesday	2.30-3.30	AAD ArtsTrain	MU1
GCSE ensembles	Music	Year 10 / 11 timetabled	Thursday	2.30-3.30	DSY AAD	MU2 Practice Rooms
Music Boosters	Music	Targeted groups	Selected dates: Monday or Thursday	2.30-3.30	AAD	MU1
Singing and Keyboard	Music	All abilities welcome	Thursday	2.30-3.30	Ollie Jerreat	MU1

Drama Club	Drama	All students	Wednesday	2.45-3.45	GDE	Theatre
	Drama	All students	Tuesday	2.30	GDE	ENS
Additional Rehearsal	Drama	All students	Wednesday	2.45-3.45	GDE	Theatre

ECDL Provision	Computing	Year 11	Wednesday	2.30-4.00	LWS	IT 1
Computing Club	Computing	Years 7,8,9	Thursday	2.30-4.00	LWS	IT 1

Extra-Curricular Programme 2014-15

Activity	Dept	Audience	Day	Time	Staff	Location
School Report Journalist Club	English	Years 7,8	Thursday	2.30-3.30	LGN	EN7
Debating Society	English	Years 9,10,11	Tuesday	2.30-3.30	NFN	EN4
GCSE English Targeted intervention	English	Year 11	Wednesday	2.30-3.30	ACN CKY LGN NFN	EN7
Home Learning Support (A maths specialist is available every day to support you with your home learning)	Maths	All years	Monday	2.30-3.00	Please refer to the maths department noticeboard for daily locations	
	Maths	All years	Tuesday	2.30-3.00		
	Maths	All years	Wednesday	2.30-3.00		
	Maths	All years	Thursday	2.30-3.00		
	Maths	All years	Friday	2.30-3.00		
Year 11 Targeted Learning	Maths	Specific Year 11 students (by invitation only)	Tuesday	2.30-3.30	All Staff	Maths Dept Please refer to the maths noticeboard for daily locations
Rubik's Club (Learn to solve a Rubik's cube plus other Rubik's equipment)	Maths	Years 7,8	Friday	2.30-3.30	Mrs Turner	MA1
Maths Club (Enriching maths activities)	Maths	Year 7	Wednesday	2.30-3.30	Mrs Turner	MA1
RE Homework Club	RE	Years 7,8,9	Tuesday	2.30-3.15	SSE, JFE, DSY	RE 1
Film Club	RE	Years 7,8,9,10	Thursday	2.30-4.30	SSE	IT 1
Targeted GCSE boosters (6wk revolving programme)	RE	Years 10,11	Thursday	2.30-3.15	JFE SSE	IT 1

Head Teacher
N.Fisher MA, BA(Hons), PGCE, NPQH

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September 2014

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to inform you that we will be using the SIMS Learning Gateway (SLG) again this year. SIMS is the Management Information software used by many schools and the SLG is a very useful tool that allows us to share information more readily with you as parents and carers of students at St Columba's Catholic Boys' School.

We will be increasing the amount of information that is given out via the SLG and you are advised to regularly check for new messages.

To access the SLG you will need a username and password. These were given to existing students last academic year and remain the same.

For new students starting with us this year, or for those who have forgotten the username or password, simply email slg@st-columbas.bexley.sch.uk with your son's name and form class and a username and password will be emailed back to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Fisher', is written over a light blue horizontal line.





Encountering Christ
*Prayerfully preparing for the
Sunday Mass and praying in
particular for our school families*



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 14th December 2014 - The 3rd Sunday in Advent

1 **Relax & Remember**

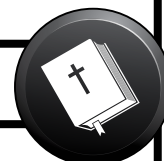
Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



2 **Read**

Taken from the Gospel for Sunday 14th December 2014 (John 1:6-8. 19-28): A Voice Crying in the Desert

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then, 'they asked, 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not,' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: "A voice that cries in the wilderness: make a straight way for the Lord."' Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the Prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you - unknown to you - the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.



3 **Reflect**

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

So, John the Baptist came as a witness to the light. In today's gospel reading he seems rather to refuse witness. He is quite negative, answering with a stalwart and repeated 'No!'. He witnesses only that 'There is one standing among you whom you do not know'. It is not always easy to find Jesus. All the way through the Gospel of John there are misunderstandings about Jesus; people fail to recognise him for what he is: there's the Samaritan at the well, Nicodemus in the night, Mary Magdalene beside the empty tomb, even Peter and the disciples as they fish on the Lake. We can easily become so wrapped up in our own troubles and worries that we fail to recognise the one figure who can provide the solution to them, although he is standing among us, the one who 'has the words of eternal life'. He may come to us in a way we do not like, as a corrective - blocking or diverting the way we have chosen. He may come as suffering, disappointment, failure or bereavement. All of these may be acts of God's love, to show us the way, though we cannot see it at the time. It is just like John the Baptist, saying steadily 'No!', until eventually we turn around and see Christ as our true light.

How can I find Jesus in the crowded events of my busy life? He often comes in unexpected ways. Is he in the quiet voice of a friend? Is he in the anger of someone I have annoyed? Is he in the rebuke of someone who knows me better than I know myself? Is he in my failures and frustrations?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

4 **Respond & Request**

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 14th December 2014



First Reading: *Good News for the Poor*

Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11

The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. 'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels. For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.'

The Book of Isaiah reflects the thoughts and prayers of Israel over at least two hundred years. The original prophet Isaiah was speaking in Jerusalem in 740 BC. Further prophecies were added during the Babylonian Exile in the 6th century BC, and still more after the return from Exile. Through them all runs the promise that God will send his Spirit upon his Chosen One. In the first part there is the wonderful promise of a sevenfold Spirit which we always associate with Confirmation. In the dark days of the Exile came the prophecy of 'my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have sent my Spirit upon him', which is echoed at Jesus' baptism. Now, after the return from Exile, we are presented with this prophecy in today's reading of the Anointed One to whom the Spirit has been given so that he may heal. All these promises are fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus also gives his Spirit to his followers, and it is our task, as we live by the Spirit, to heal, to bring good news to the poor and to bind up hearts that are broken.

What does it mean to you to "live by the Spirit"?

Second Reading: *Joy in the Lord*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus. Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything - hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil. May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

“We do know that the whole universe is focused on God.”

Writing to the Thessalonians, Paul gives his final blessing, asking that they may be kept safe for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are now waiting for the coming of Christ at Christmas. Paul was waiting in a very different sense. He was waiting for the coming of Christ at the end of the world, a triumphal procession in which we would join Christ 'in the clouds' as he presented the whole universe to his Father as God's completed kingdom. We don't always see things in such dramatic, pictorial terms, but we do know that the whole universe is focused on God, and will reach its fulfilment only when his sovereignty is complete, when the world has been transformed by God's divine life in Christ.

What am I planning to do this Christmas to bring God's love and healing just one step closer?

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*

w: www.wednesdayword.org

e: info@wednesdayword.org