St Mary's RE News

Autumn Term 2025

This year we are aiming to achieve our School of Sanctuary status and be part of a growing network of more than one thousand primary and secondary schools, nurseries and sixth forms all committed to creating a culture of welcome, understanding and belonging for those forced to flee.
Driven by teachers, school staff, parents, governors and community groups, this network supports the thousands of children and young people seeking sanctuary in the UK, raises awareness of the experiences of people seeking safety, and plays a key role in building a culture of kindness and compassion.

Schools are the heart of our communities and are central to building a better, fairer and kinder society – for everyone and at St Mary's we are making a difference!
Here are just a few photos of what we've been up to, more information is available on our school website - https://st-marys-catholic.secure-primarysite.net/school-of-sanctuary/





We will keep you updated with our progress and hope it be successful in being recognised by the City of Sanctuary as a School of Sanctuary. We'd love to hear from you in how, as a school community, if you joined us from another school, town, city or country how St Mary's has help you, made you and your family welcome and what that's meant to you.

Harvest

Our St. Mary's family celebrated Harvest Mass and made a significant donation to the food bank in Fleetwood. Our head girl and head boy, their deputies and Mrs Kowalska went to deliver our donation. Whilst they were there, they learnt about the need for the food bank and how they support the community.

Thank you for your donations.



Praying the Rosary

We joined Aid to the Church in Need's worldwide campaign, "One Million Children Praying the Rosary." This special initiative unites children across the globe in praying for peace and unity.

Gathered together in our Peace and Prayer Garden, in front of the beautiful statue of Mary, our pupils prayed the Rosary with faith and love. The Rosary is a powerful prayer that helps us reflect on the life of Jesus through the eyes of His mother, Mary. As we move through each decade, we say the Hail Mary and Our Father prayers while thinking about the special moments (called "mysteries") from Jesus' life.

By joining this global prayer, our children became part of a worldwide family of faith, praying for peace in our world and for all who are suffering. It was a wonderful reminder that even the smallest prayers, said with love, can help make a big difference.

"When a million children pray the Rosary, the world will change." — Saint Padre Pio






Child-Led Worship



Our children are brilliant and love taking an active role in their class worships. Depending on the year group, their involvement varies, but as they progress through the school, they are encouraged to take more responsibility. By the upper years, children have the opportunity to choose a theme, plan, and lead their own worship, guiding their classmates through gathering, reading, responding, and sending everyone off with an inspiring message. It's wonderful to see their confidence, creativity, and faith grow through this experience.

Faith in Action at the Heart of our Curriculum

This year we have rewritten our school curriculum so that Catholic Social Teaching (CST) sits at its core. Each half term is linked to one of the seven CST principles, which also align with our Religious Education units. These themes then flow naturally into other curriculum areas, including PSHE and the texts the children study in English, helping pupils see how faith can guide real-life choices, relationships, and actions.

A much-loved part of our week is the Key Stage liturgy, led by Mrs Kowalska or Mrs Bottomley. Each liturgy focuses on a Gospel reading and a message that supports the CST theme for the half term. This helps the children to deepen their understanding of how we can live out the Gospel values in our school and community.

So far this year, we have explored:

- Care for Creation – learning how we can respect and protect God's world.
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable – reflecting on how we can show compassion, fairness, and support for those in need.

We look forward to continuing our Faith in Action journey throughout the rest of the year, helping the children grow in empathy, responsibility, and a sense of global community.





The Compassion Project

Viktoriia and Darcus came in from Lancaster County Council to deliver the Compassion Project with each class in school. The children learnt about what it means to be a refugee and the circumstances leading up to them being one. Viktoriia spoke about her own experiences in the Ukraine and the life that she's built in England over the last three years.



Jacob's confirmation

We are so proud of Jacob as he takes the next important step in his faith journey by receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation is a special sacrament in the Catholic Church where a person chooses to strengthen their relationship with God and deepen their commitment to living as a follower of Jesus. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the person is strengthened with courage, wisdom, and faith to live out God's love in the world.

Jacob's decision to be confirmed is a wonderful example of faith in action. As a school community, we congratulate him and pray that the Holy Spirit continues to guide and inspire him throughout his life.



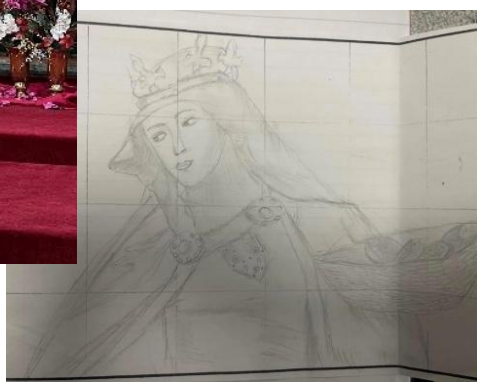
Feast of All Saints

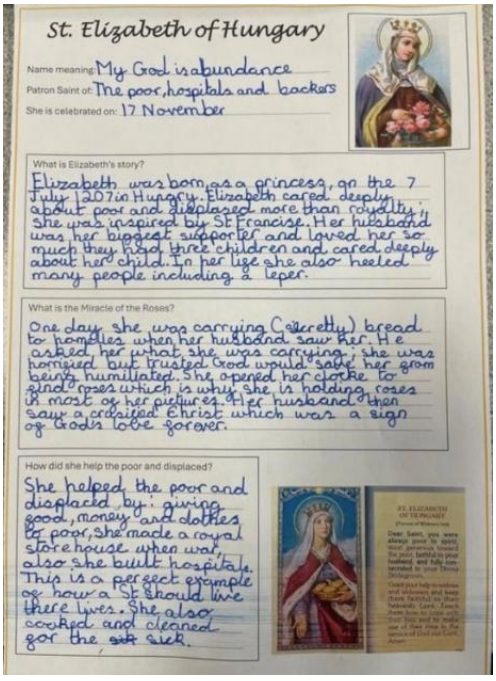


To mark this important feast, our children attended Mass together as a school community. During the celebration, we gave thanks for the saints and prayed that we too can grow in holiness and follow their example. The children took part reverently and joyfully, joining in with prayers, responses, and hymns that remind us of our call to be saints in today's world.

Back in their classrooms, the children learned about their class patron saint for the year. They enjoyed researching, creating artwork, and taking part in activities to discover more about the life and example of their saint. Each class saint has been carefully chosen to reflect our identity as a School of Sanctuary — every saint either experienced the need to seek refuge themselves or showed compassion and support for those who did. Through this learning, the children were inspired to think about how they too can show welcome, kindness, and courage in their daily lives.







#Red Wednesday









As part of #RedWednesday, our school joined the global campaign led by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) to stand in solidarity with people around the world who suffer persecution because of their faith. As a School of Sanctuary, we are committed to creating a community where everyone feels safe, valued, and respected. Wearing an item of red clothing became not only a visible sign of support and remembrance, but also a reminder of our shared responsibility to offer welcome, compassion, and understanding to all who face injustice.

During our worship, we lit a red candle as a symbol of hope and prayer for those who experience hardship, discrimination, or violence for practising their beliefs. Through this act of unity and prayer, we helped raise awareness of the importance of religious freedom and reaffirmed our commitment to supporting those who cannot worship freely. By standing together, we continue to live out our mission as a School of Sanctuary—extending solidarity, promoting peace, and shining a light for those who need it most.

BYSW – Blackpool Youth School Workers



We are so fortunate to have worked with BYSW for a number of years. They continue to offer their wonderful services and share their passion for teaching and celebrating the Christian faith with our children.

So far this year, Year 1 have enjoyed singing songs about Jesus; Years 4 and 5 have explored the journey of the Old Testament; and Years 5 and 6 have delved into the New Testament through role play and retelling key stories, learning about significant figures in the Bible. Year 2 also had a special experience, with the hall transformed to take them on an immersive 'journey' through the Christmas story. And there's still more to come from BYSW in the new year — we can't wait!





RE work

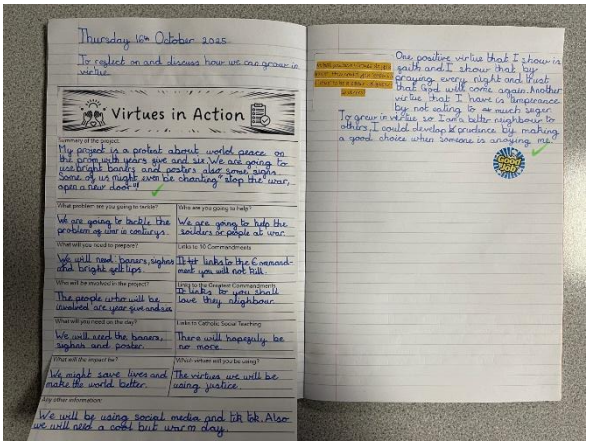
This term our school is exploring Prophecy and Promise, rooted in the RED themes of Revelation, Church, Celebration and Life in Christ. Pupils are learning how God spoke through key figures in the Bible—such as Elijah, Isaiah, Samuel, and King David—who helped prepare God's people for the coming of the Messiah.

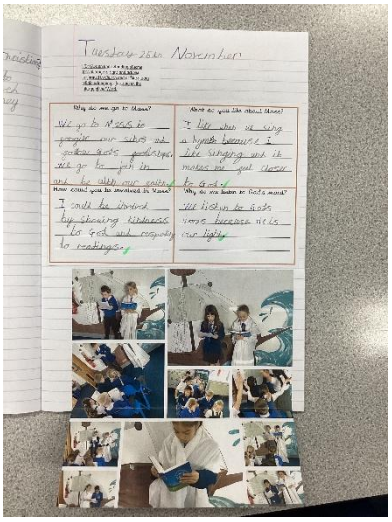


Linked closely to Advent, children reflect on the theme of preparation: how the prophets pointed towards Jesus and how we too prepare our hearts to welcome Christ. Through Scripture, prayer and class worship, pupils learn that God's promises are fulfilled in Jesus and continue to guide us today. They explore how they can live out these promises by bringing hope, kindness and justice to others throughout this season and beyond.

Here is some of the great work the children have engaged with in their lessons. More can be found on our school website: https://st-marys-catholic.secure-primarysite.net/curriculum-re/







Mini Vinnies – Footsteps with God Award

The Footsteps with God award continues this academic year. Each week during our Star of the Week assembly, one child is announced as the winner for the whole school – someone who has stood out for showing that the way the conduct themselves, their attitude to their faith and work is showing they are following in God's footsteps, living their life the way God wants them to. Here are some of the winners we've had so far this academic year – congratulations to all of those children who have been recognised.



Here is a photo of Lucas receiveing his award from Sasha, one of our Mini Vinnies.

Advent



To begin the season of Advent, our Mini Vinnies led the school in a thoughtful liturgy focused on preparing our hearts for the coming of Jesus. As part of the celebration, we gathered around the Advent wreath and lit the first candle, which symbolises hope. The children explained that this candle reminds us to look forward with trust and expectation — just as people waited in hope for the birth of Jesus.

They also linked the message of hope to our ongoing journey as a School of Sanctuary, encouraging us to be a community that welcomes, supports, and brings hope to others. It was a reflective and meaningful start to Advent for the whole school.

Care Home visit from the choir



The choir visited a local care home to drop off homemade Christmas cards and sing for the residents – what a lovely way to celebrate and spread some Christmas joy.

Nazareth Class visit Emmanuel Church

Nazareth Class (Year 4/5) thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Emmanuel Church to partcipate in a lovely craft event where they made their own Christingle and even got the chance to speak to a shepherd...









Advent Liturgy Workshops

It has been wonderful to welcome parents and carers into school this Advent to join their child's class for liturgy and activities. Together, we celebrated the true meaning of Advent as we remembered the coming of Jesus as a baby and reflected on the theme of Hope in this Year of Pilgrims of Hope. The children also explored how the Holy Family were welcomed as refugees, helping us connect Advent's message of hope and welcome to our own school community.











Posada Boxes

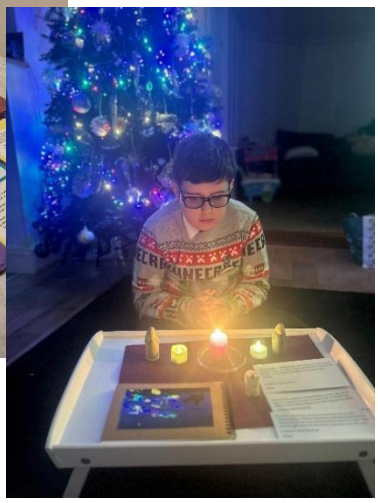
During Advent, each class takes part in the Posada tradition. A Posada box contains figures of Mary and Joseph, reminding us of their journey as they searched for shelter before the birth of Jesus. Each night, the Posada box visits a different home within the class community. Families are invited to welcome Mary and Joseph, spend time in prayer or reflection, and think about how they can show kindness, generosity and care for others during this special season.



This tradition reflects key principles of Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the dignity of every human person and solidarity. By welcoming Mary and Joseph, children are encouraged to think about those in our world who may feel excluded, vulnerable or without a home, and to consider how they can respond with compassion and hospitality.

Through the Posada, we are reminded of the importance of opening our hearts to others and making room for Jesus by living out our faith through loving action.









KS1 Nativity – Whoops-a-Daisy Angel

EYFS and KS1 worked hard to put together their Nativity, congratulations to all involved. We had lots of parents and family members in attendance – we hope you enjoyed the children's hardwork.











KS2 Carol Service – Jesus, our Hope

Our Christmas Carol Service is a special time for our school community to come together in prayer, song and reflection. This year, as we celebrate during the Year of Pilgrims of Hope, we are invited to think about journeys — our own journeys through life, and the journeys made by people around the world, whether in joy or in difficulty.

As a School of Sanctuary, our service reflects our commitment to being a place of welcome, kindness and safety for all. Through traditional carols, readings and prayers, the children will help us reflect on the true meaning of Christmas and the importance of compassion and hope.

At the heart of our celebration is the greatest sign of hope: the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. We remember Him as the light of the world, guiding us to walk with love, courage and faith.





Thank you for all of your support so far this academic year; it's been a busy and productive term in many ways. The children have thoroughly engaged with the Catholic Life of our school and we hope that you've enjoyed being part of any activities.

Fr Stephen welcomes all of our families at St. Mary's to attend to church this Christmas as part of your Christmas celebrations. Mass dates for St Mary's over Christmas are as follows:

Christmas Eve:

- St Mary's and St Wulstan's 6pm Carols followed by Mass at 6:30pm
- St Wulstan's early midnight mass 8pm Carols followed by Mass at 8:30pm.

Christmas Day: 10:00am morning Mass at St Mary's

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year. We look forward to welcoming the children back January 5th, , after hopefully a busy, exciting and restful Christmas break.