

# Lay-Chaplain's Report. Twitter: @CchaplainNc

**End of Term:** What a busy end to the last academic year, my first year at Newman. The decision to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the Westminster Cathedral was being discussed. It was decided that Blessed John Henry Newman's Feast day would be the appropriate day – Newman Day. After discussions with the Cathedral's Precentor (Fr Andrew Gallagher) it was decided that the 10<sup>th</sup> of October would be the next possible day. It was then the work of finding a cardinal or a bishop to celebrate the Mass. A Mass that the entire college including staff past and present. The invites were printed and dispatched to all in various modes of delivery. It was felt that celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the college (both as Hinsley and now as Newman) would be a time to praise God for all the pupils and all staff that have and are making a Catholic presence in Harlesden.

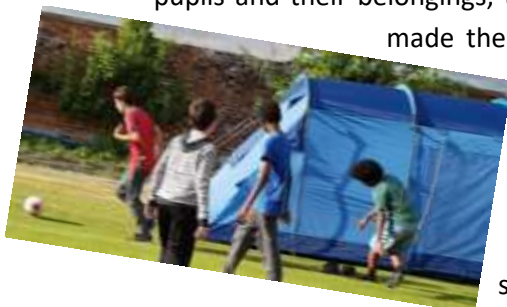
The Right Rev Bishop John Wilson (Aux Bishop of Westminster) agreed to lead the celebration of the Mass at 14:15 on 10/10/2018. We had a celebrant, a place, now the organising upped the pace.

**New Bench:** To mark the anniversary it was decided to commission the wooden bench with the college's logo and the dates 1958-2018 carved into it. I found a company that would be able to make something different, something special to mark this milestone in the life of the school. Once the new bench arrived it was being used. Placed before the entrance, parents and school visitors as well as pupils and staff sat and used it. It became a place to rest in the heat of the summer sun.

**New Flags:** Recognising the need to promote the school and to make a Newman presence in the Cathedral 4, 3metre feather flags, were designed by me, approved by SLT were commissioned. The college motto "Heart speaks onto heart" appears in Latin and in English on either side. These flags will advertise Newman Catholic College in years to come. They were ready for open day so that the new prospective pupils and parents would notice the new colourful front with potted plants, flowers, bench and flags, a first glimpse at the potential secondary school for their son.

**Camping at Alma Grove,** Oxfordshire, 17th - 19th July 2018. A group of Yr8 boys travelled from Newman Catholic College to Alma Grove with Messrs Roche and Molokwu. Their excitement was palpable as they gathered in the College chapel before leaving. Bags packed and the minibus loaded we travelled out of London to the leafy shires - the open spaces of the countryside contrasting with the urban living. After parking and offloading pupils and their belongings, the boys picked up their sleeping bags, sleeping mats and made their way to the accommodation for the next few days and nights – the tent, which was already pitched so the campers went exploring the interior. "I'm sleeping here!" as a mat, sleeping bag and backpack were placed on the desired spot like gold prospectors staking their claim to a gold mine. Then slowly the realisation dawned that the tent was to share and a pairing up system began. Sorting themselves out finished, it was time for snacks and drinks. The full report will appear in the next Newman.

**End of Year Mass:** The last Mass of the summer was celebrated by Fr Albert with the Y7 & Y8. The Mass was offered as a thanksgiving for the past year. The prayers of the faithful were asking for God protection over the summer holiday break and thanks for all that was achieved during the year coming to a close. Lord, may everyone return safely in September. Amen.



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**September:** A new academic year starts with a warm Newman welcome new staff as they arrive for the 1<sup>st</sup> staff Inset day of the year and a heartfelt welcome back to all returning staff. With fresh smiling faces and a cuppa, staff exchanged stories and adventures of their summer holiday before the official day started. Official welcome from Mr Coyle, I lead the staff in a silent time of reflection about the image of the lighthouse, the links between the staff of Newman College and the pupils in our care. Then in our prayer service we prayed, "God of All Light, we pray that your light will shine ever more brightly in our lives. Help us, Lord, at the beginning of our school year. Help us in our work and in our personal life and friendships. Amen"



We offer the year ahead to the care of Almighty God, asking Him for guidance and wisdom as we set about the task of educating and forming the minds and mentality of the leaders of the future.

A school without pupils is like a forest without trees, so what a pleasure it was to see the start of the Y7s arriving for the next big step in their lives. As they gathered in the assembly hall for prayer and to introduce their Head of Year and meet their form tutors young minds are gleaming information. An exciting change and challenge for many a Y7 pupil. The year had started as the dispersed to their first lesson.

Having the day to themselves the Y7 were joined by the returning students. The school was back in gear and moving onward. The hum and jovial buzz drifted in the air filling the basketball courts, football pitches and the corridors. Staff happy to see pupils back and find out how each and everyone got on over the summer break. Now it's back to the business of learning, learning in Newman Catholic College.

**Mass & links with the Parish:** The first Mass of the year was with the Y 11. The Mass was offered for the work ahead for this year as they prepare for their GCSEs next summer. We ask and offer to God the holistic pupil: the worries, the joys, the work and the adults involved in their young lives. The pupils, as always, are volunteering to read and to serve at Mass. The focus continues to be on hymns and the responses to Mass but especially to the prayerfulness and catholicity of the Mass. Each year group have the chance to attend Mass during the half term, starting with Y7 & 8 up to the 6<sup>th</sup> formers. It is heartening to see pupils from all backgrounds and creeds coming forward to take an active part in the Mass and the living and loving of life and of those around us with a catholic ethos.



**Wednesday Masses:** We continue to take individual classes, starting with Y8 and later Y7, to the Our lady of Willesden Shrine for the 10:00 parish mass with either Fr Stephen or Fr Vincent.



**Processions:** The procession of Our Lady of Willesden was held on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Oct at 19:00 hrs. The school was represented with staff and pupils attending the service and walking the procession with the many other parishioners. The statues of Our Lady of Willesden travelled

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the streets of Harlesden on a wet and autumnal evening.



**Think Pink:** The 19<sup>th</sup> Oct, a day when green changed to blushing pink. Pupils and staff wore pink of varying hues to work, to raise the awareness and funding of breast cancer treatment and research. The Mass on that Friday took up the challenge and Fr Albert wore the rose chasuble (pink vestments – normally worn in Advent or Lent). This unusual event reminds us that breast cancer has or will touch each of us through our mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts, etc. and not forgetting the boys and men that are also affected by breast cancer.



**“Hurray for Harvest”:** As this hymn echoes that we should stop and think; think about the food that we enjoy - “Our daily bread”. Where does it come from? The worrying disconnect between the field and fork is growing. The college continues to support the local Food Banks (Sufra and the Harlesden Food bank). Every week certain year groups (linked to the year Mass) are asked to bring food or items that could be supplied to the Banks. It is great to pray for those suffering from hunger etc. but as the chaplain motto suggests “Faith in action” reflecting Pope Francis’ call for personal faith to be put into action.



The response is heartening as the tins and packages come in week by week. During October, the chapel displayed a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, representing the success of this year’s harvest from land and sea leading up to Harvest Sunday (CAFOD Fast day). The school too had a successful harvest in spite of the summer heat. The 6<sup>th</sup> Formers dug up the potatoes, planted back in March. These were washed and pupils and staff were able to take them home. The discussions around the crops were enlightening and somewhat worrying, a learning curve for many. Cabbages and onions were also part of the school’s harvest. The gardening club has expanded its members and areas for development. The ground dug, the weeds removed and the creation of more planting boxes are all moving forward. The school’s gardens are getting ready for winter, getting ready to rest and to regenerate itself for spring. Bulbs were planted with care in the hope that they pop up in Spring full of colour.



**Prayer groups:** Every Friday morning during registration, starting with Y8, I lead the form in prayers, reflection and meditation. The class sit in the chapel and listening to reflective music such as Taize or Gregorian chant, etc. There they listen to a passage from the Bible, reflect upon it quietly or given short directed reflections etc. The session concludes with the school prayer and another prayer before going to their first lesson. Staff are always welcome to join us. This is something new for the current academic year.

**Stations of the Cross:** Newman College has purchased a set of images telling the story of the Passion of Our Lord – The Stations of the Cross. These are a Peruvian design engraved onto wood. Fr Vincent blessed them during one of our Friday Masses. The fifteenth station is in the chapel while the first is in the More building on the RE staircase. This allows the Newman Community to walk, meditate and pray the Stations





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as they travel through the buildings. These stations will have a focused usage during Lent. I would encourage all to "walk the walk" and reflect on the meaning behind the image.

**Altar Servers, Readers and Eucharistic Ministers:** The first few weeks of the half term was



mainly focused on the 10<sup>th</sup> Oct celebrations. To have an event worthy to remember and fitting for the school I recruited and needed the Newman family to step up to the plate. "The Lord will provide". Stepping up they did. Pupils were approaching me daily sometimes hourly to see if any vacancies had popped up. My

original ambition was to have 12 altar servers the final number was 18. Trying to find tasks for all was a challenge at the start but in the Cathedral, the vastness of the cathedral tasks rehearsed in the playground of in the school hall were falling into place. Every year group was represented by altar servers. A big thanks is needed for St Patrick's Neasden for the majority of the hooded cassock albs and to Our Lady's Harlesden for the black and the red cassocks cottas & surplices.



The readers required certain skills and a level of confidence to speak clearly in front of the entire school, past pupils and staff plus



the visitors from outside the school family. The Prayers of the Faithful were read in 9 different languages,

each speaking in their own tongue. Huge thanks goes to the drama dept and Mrs Beire-Francis for their help in preparing the readers for public speaking. The manoeuvres and timings were practices

alongside projection and pronunciation. The quality, tone and pace of the readers in the Cathedral were excellent. After communion, a number of 6<sup>th</sup> Formers spoke about their experiences and religious acceptance in Newman after arriving from war-torn lands. They spoke about how they feel safe and part of the Newman family, that their religious views were used to their credit and that they were able to find God in NCC. These statements were very emotional and heartfelt.



As part of the Cathedral celebrations, we had to have at least dozen Eucharistic Ministers. The emails sent and the requests made to the staff and to anyone who was a practicing catholic and had made their confirmation. So it was open to students as well as staff. I provided the catechesis and training. Again the staff and pupils of Newman presented themselves as Eucharistic Ministers. The college already had a core number of

Eucharistic ministers who came forward. But there were a large number of people who wanted to learn more and then train to be Eucharistic Ministers. This involved reading, catechesis and training after the working day. Sixteen Eucharistic ministers (two 6<sup>th</sup> Formers) were trained, commissioned and available for the 10<sup>th</sup>, however when we got there the number required were reduced due to the number of clergy present. Being a Eucharistic minister in the cathedral is different than in our local parishes. The Cathedral precentor (Fr. Andrew) ran through the procedures and possessions for each. Thanks to all those who were called albeit fewer were chosen.

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**Newman Day:** The BIG Day Arrived. Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> Oct – Newman Day and the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the college providing a Catholic Education in Harlesden for boys from all backgrounds, creeds and races. Newman, previously Hinsley, has made an impact on the lives of many a person, directly and indirectly. It has stood on Harlesden Rd for 60 years opening its doors of learning to the young minds that pass through. The Newman family has like many families had its ups and its downs, its sorrows and its joys. But like all families the family pulls together in times of celebrations and anniversaries. Where better to celebrate this momentous occasion than in the Cathedral where Cardinal Arthur Hinsley is entombed and where Blessed John Henry Newman was cardinal and preached. He of course is buried in Birmingham but his mosaic adorns the wall of Westminster. What a blessed day it was. The sun shone and the cathedral was filled with the pupils from Newman. Military like manoeuvres took place to smoothly move Newman in Harlesden to become Newman in Westminster. Couches, tubes and the odd taxi were called upon.



Those involved in the serving, the music (steel bands) and the readings were the first to leave. A couch full with enthusiasm and excitement made its way through the streets of London to arrive early for final, onsite run-throughs. The Cathedral was decorated with the new Flags and the servers processed into the sacristy where they met the cathedral's MCs for the day. Dressed, informed and ready the altar servers to put into practice all that they had heard and rehearsed in school. The steel band set up at the great door welcoming visitors and guests alongside the ushers from Y9 and Y10. When all was in place and the entire cathedral was ready to start, Mr Coyle addressed the congregation and invited the college to pray the school prayer. This was followed by the entrance hymn "Praise to the holiest", penned by Cardinal Newman himself. As the cathedral organ played and the congregation sang the entrance processed from the side chapel up the nave. Mass had begun. Servers beaming, turifer incensing and clergy reverently approached the sanctuary. Reader proclaimed their readings.



The homily by Bishop John was direct. He called upon those present to "Dear Friends please continue to be living witnesses to the Gospel through the work of love that is Catholic education. Continue to respect each person, especially the weakest and the poorest. And continue to support every student in fulfilling holistically their potential, their purpose, for which God created them." He ended by asking the college and especially the youth to remember that "God has created you to do Him some definite service. You have a part to play in His great work. He calls you to be great."



The prayers of the faithful, read in 9 languages, followed. Everyone could read the English translation in their booklets. During the offertory procession, gifts were brought forward to represent the College; the banner, sports gear, books, art work, the school prayer, the Bible and of course the bread and wine. Each item being symbolic of the people present, we offer to God every bit of ourselves, the good, the sad and the parts we would like to amend. We offer them up to the Lord during the Mass, when Jesus becomes physically present in the Body and Blood of Christ.



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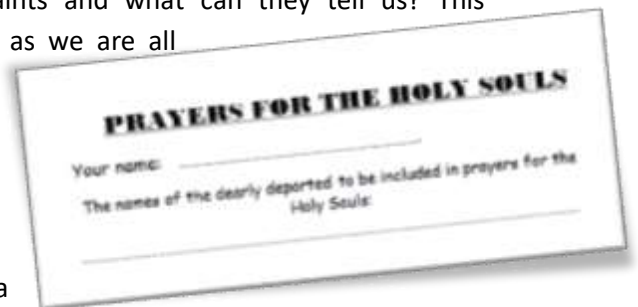
Following the Mass, it was time to tidy up and to get everyone and everything back to the college. Again the military like manoeuvres were kicked into place. The pupils and staff knew exactly what was happening and where they were to assemble. The coaches pulled up and one by one Cathedral Piazza emptied. The celebrations continued for the rest of the week. The buzz around the school was amazing.

**Feast Days and Holy Days:** With the Oct half term approaching, staff and students were

provided with the November lists sheets. November, a month of remembering those who we have loved and have passed away, started with All Saints and All Souls. All Saints' Day (also known as All Hallows' Day/Hallowmas) is the day after All Hallows' Eve (Hallowe'en). It is a feast day celebrated on 1st November by Catholics everywhere. Who are the Saints and what can they tell us? This question is one to be explored further as we are all

saints (Eph2:19-20) and part of God's household. School masses allowed the pupils and staff to fulfil their obligation and celebrate with the school community. Well done to the Newman

community for a very special and holy experience, creating a reflective and prayerful atmosphere during the Mass.



The school filled in the names of friends and relations who had died. Teachers helped their forms to contemplate the concept of praying for those who had died. These lists lie in the chapel before the altar with a special candle lit. Prayer time and the welcoming chapel are made available during the month for people who wish to spend time praying and remembering the Holy Souls before Jesus present in the tabernacle. Bidding prayers in all masses recall those named in the November lists.

**Remembrance:** Remembrance Day was on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> this year. The college held the 2 minutes' silence on Friday during the Y10 mass. Pupils read the reading and lay a wreath of poppies at the foot of the cross. The Bidding prayers included prayers for those who had suffered, died as a result of war as well as those who were affected by the wars both past and current. Great Respect and reverence were shown. We are encouraged the prayer of St Francis and by the words of Pope Francis "God is peace: let us ask him to help us to be peacemakers each day, in our life, in our families, in our cities and nations, in the whole world. Let us allow ourselves to be moved by God's goodness." "At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them," Robert L Binyon.



On Thursday, the 8<sup>th</sup> of Nov, I drove the bus to the cemetery a group of pupils went to the local war graves and recalled the 100 anniversary of the RAF. We were joined by the Head boy and deputy plus the Head Girl and deputy (18 pupils in total). The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was the air force of the British Army before and during the First World War, until it merged with the Royal Naval Air Service on 1 April 1918 to form the Royal Air Force (RAF). It is the oldest independent air force in the world. At the end of WW1 it was the largest air force in the world. We remember the young men and women that flew in the Great Wars and who died. A 2-minute silence was



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observed by all and Mr Playford played the last post on the trumpet. The sound of which resounded around the entire graveyard. A wreath of flowers in red, white and blue was laid on behalf of the school community by one of the group. The Head Boy (Prahlad) read a poem and then the Deputy Head Girl (Marusha) lay a wreath of flowers by the remembrance wall. The Head girl (Atitla) then read Flanders Fields followed by other pupils laying their crosses around the central cross. Pupils were then able to read the names on the memorial wall and look at the details. Following that we moved to the war graves and the memorial wall there. For this we were joined by some of the staff from Willesden Cemetery. crosses were placed by the memorial wall.

**Advent & Christmas:** Advent: "Happy New Year." With the Liturgical year ending in November and the start of the new Liturgical year is just around the corner. Advent is a time for reflecting and as the purple candles countdown to Christmas we are reminded the P is for purple. It is also P for Prayer, Preparation and Penance. We have 4 weeks to get ourselves ready for the coming of God among us. Are we ready? The supermarkets and the shops have been ready since September. Yet we, our spiritual selves, are we ready? The true meaning of Christmas is that LOVE lives with us. God is Love and like a loving parent he wants the best for us. He wants us to be reconciled with him for the things that we have done and have failed to do. What have I failed to do? If I haven't done it how can that be wrong? The pupils of Newman and the staff are also preparing for a big event: The Christmas holidays. But before the unwrapping of the presents and the pulling of the Christmas cracker, the carols and the family time, we must remember the true meaning of Christmas. We must put CHRIST back into Xmas. The Advent wreath is an old Germanic tradition of counting down to the event. Candles are used a lot in the church and in homes. They were once the source of light before electricity and gas but they now add emotion to an occasion. Candles burn to relax us, to comfort us, the romantic moments, meals in posh restaurants and to celebrate those birthdays. They remind us that Christ is the way, the truth and the light.



So to prepare ourselves to celebrate Christmas the best we can, the pupils will have Masses during Advent and special hymns sung to remind us to get ready. The chapel will be available as usual during Advent. Assemblies and carols services are there to aid our journey into the new liturgical year. The school is organising a time for reconciliation for staff and pupils leading up to the Christmas holidays.

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**Shoebboxes:** The college continues to collect for the Samaritan Purse Project (the shoebox

appeal) where the pupils complete a shoebox packed with toys, toiletries etc. to go whizzing around the world to children who would otherwise not receive a Christmas present this Christmas. Whenever possible we aim to link faith with action (Mt 22:36-40). Then before they get delivered by Santa Claus they are blessed during the school mass. Last year we hit 170 boxes. What will the total be this year? The boxes are

piling up in the chapel as we move closer to the deadline. Thanks to all



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who helped with the packing moving and wrapping. Much appreciated.

## Rome 2019: Letters were handed out to the current Y9



asking for those who would like to travel to Rome for a Roman Pilgrimage and an educational trip. The trip will be a year from now. It will be an opportunity for the Y10 pupils to experience first-hand that which they are studying. The chaplain organised the RE department staff to travel to Rome one weekend in



December to carry out a reconnaissance and to see how the trip could be best utilised for the education of our pupils. It will be a trip that brings to life the catholic history of the school and the catholic ethos. It will also be a chance to see famous art and to visit the Vatican, possibly see the Pope himself. The Vatican is the place where St Peter was crucified upside down. It is where he is believed to be buried. Don't miss out.

## The Garden: The Project pupils have joined the chaplaincy group to tackle the



gardens in Newman. The grounds are planted with bulbs in the hope of bring blossom. As winter closes in and the demands of the Advent season the "gardeners" are advised to study. The ground sleeps and awaits the warming sun of spring when the land will need greater maintenance. New areas are being cleared, the wilderness being made ready. Listening to each other, learning together, hard work and comradeship can be a great combination.



Reconciliation: Thanks to Fr Vincent and Fr Adam SJ we were able to offer the sacrament of reconciliation to our catholic pupils. A chance to renew our relationship with the Almighty. A time to hear that God forgives you and that he continues to love you. An examination of conscious was carried out in the chapel with Mr Roche leading the boys. Staff were invited to avail of the opportunity should they wish, quite a few did. This was something new for the pupils and so some were unsure of the process. The two priests were great at putting them at ease. "I feel great" "I feel like I could fly as the weight was lifted off my shoulders" were some of the comments that could be heard when they came out of confession/reconciliation. Another opportunity will be offered before Easter.

