



St Mary's

ISSUE 10 - JUNE/JULY 2025

NEWSLETTER

St Mary's Celebrates Jubilee Day with Bishop Stephen

On Friday 27th June, we were honoured to be visited by the Bishop of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, Bishop Stephen Wright, who joined with us as we celebrated Jubilee Day, and reflected on the Jubilee theme of Pilgrims of Hope. Bishop Stephen led students in a question and answer session where representatives from our Student Leadership Team asked him about his career in law and his journey to becoming a Bishop. He then visited lessons and spiritual retreats which were being held in school, as students continued to reflect on the theme of Pilgrims of Hope, gathering stickers for their "Pilgrim Passports". Finally, Bishop Stephen celebrated Mass in the Atrium with all of Year 7 and representatives from the Spirituality Teams in other year groups. In his homily, he explained the significance of his Bishop's mitre and crozier, and called upon the young people of our school to "be on fire" and share their God-given gifts and talents. A truly memorable visit for St Mary's community (more info on visit on Page 3).

Headteacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the final St Mary's newsletter of the school year. We have had a fantastic 2024-2025 and our students have continued to flourish in lessons and more widely, making the most of their God-given gifts and talents. So many activities and events have taken place this year, including over the last few weeks, as you can tell by this bumper issue!

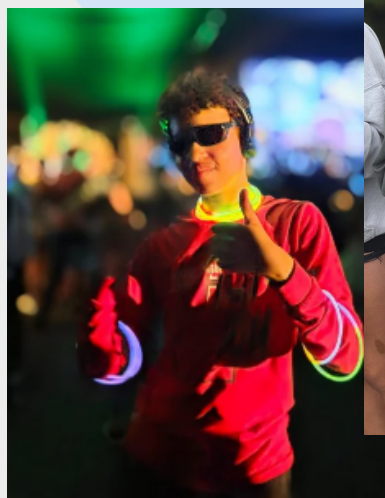
It was a pleasure for us to welcome Bishop Stephen to St Mary's and 'Jubilee Day' was a wonderful celebration of this important year for the Catholic Church. We have also had joyous celebration assemblies this week, with students commended for their amazing achievements, both personally and academically. Next week, we have further lovely events with Sports Day and our Activity/Cinema Day!

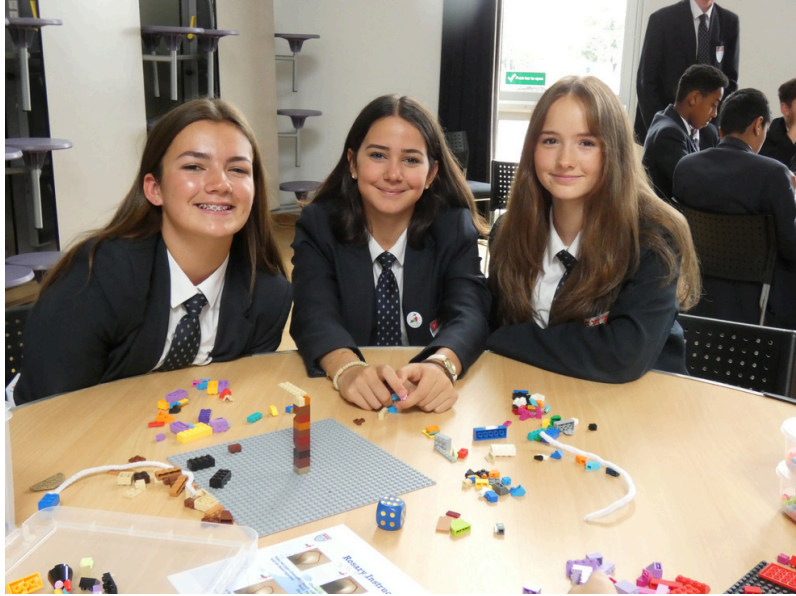
Thank you so much for your excellent support this year, we really appreciate this, and I wish you and your families an absolutely wonderful summer break.

Best wishes, Miss Patterson, Headteacher.

Summer Festival 2025

Recently, 75 students attended the Summer Festival at the Emmaus Youth Village. Students had the opportunity to take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation or have a reflective chat, and threw themselves into all the festival activities – with karaoke being a particular highlight! They listened attentively to powerful testimonies of faith, joined in concert performances with energy and enthusiasm, and danced the night away at the silent disco. All the schools joined together in a beautiful and moving Rosary Procession – a truly special and spiritual moment that we will all carry with us. Well done!





A Special Day

Students were truly inspired by the opportunity to meet Bishop Stephen and to celebrate Mass with him. It was a joyful day in school, made especially memorable with extra touches such as artwork and bunting in the atrium and our new stained glass windows in the Chapel, a permanent reminder of this special occasion.

Two students, Emilia Siemens in Year 9 and Liam Korriku in Year 7, presented Bishop Stephen with special gifts on behalf of our whole school community, a special painting of St Mary by Emilia, and a prayer book featuring beautiful prayers written by our students. What a day!



Orbyts 2025

A group of Year 10 students have been working with researchers Kendra Gilmore and Emily Grant from Northumbria University since January this year as part of the 'Orbyts 2025' project. Recently, they presented their findings at a conference at Northumbria University.

The project involved exploring Earth's outer radiation belt and electrons trapped there due to the magnetic field and, in particular, the statistical nature of the electron number density and the ratio of electron plasma frequency to the electron gyrofrequency. This causes a type of wave called chorus waves which can change the energy and speed of electrons which can cause damage to spacecraft and harm astronauts in space. Being able to predict the properties of the plasma can help us prepare and protect humans in space and the hardware we rely on. The group also explained their project to other students and academics and got to visit the Space labs and learn more about the development revolutionary space communication systems using lasers.



Year 6 Transition Days

It has been wonderful to welcome our new Year 7 to school this week. The students have taken part in a range of activities including a Celebration of the Word, lesson taster sessions, sports activities and a tour of the school. We know they are going to be a fantastic year group and we look forward to welcoming them in September!

A visit to The Great North Museum

On Monday 30th June, a group of Year 7 students took part in a visit to The Great North Museum. This visit allowed students to develop their life skills by planning their visit on the metro and considering how to keep themselves safe when travelling. Once at the museum, students took part in a series of activities to learn more about our local area and its past.

Explore Philosophy Day

Year 12 Philosophy and Ethics students recently attended a taster day at Newcastle University. There were two lectures which students thoroughly enjoyed. One was an introduction to Existentialism by Dr Adam Potts discussing the work of such pre-eminent philosophers and how it relates to the world around us. St Mary's students asked many pertinent and relevant questions showing a real aptitude for tertiary education. Our students also attended a talk by a recent Newcastle University graduate informing them of student life and the variety of experiences on offer. Our students also had a tour of the Newcastle University central city campus. They were impressed by the facilities, particularly the new Stephenson building, and enjoyed meeting and talking to current students about their experiences of University.



Diocesan Signs of Hope Competition

Cellina Guan



Diocesan Signs of Hope Competition

We were delighted to welcome Michelle Ross, the RE and Catholic Ethos Adviser for the Diocese, to present Cellina Guan in Year 12 with her award for winning the KS4/KS5 category of the Signs of Hope Competition.

Michelle visited St Mary's and spoke to Year 12 students in their assembly. Cellina took the photo one evening when she was leaving school. Well done Cellina!

Year 12 Student Shortlisted for Prestigious Art Prize

We are thrilled to celebrate the success of Mico Manso in Year 12, who has been shortlisted for the Northern School of Art Foundation Art Prize. Out of hundreds of entries from across the North East, only 15 were selected, making this a remarkable achievement.

Mico's stunning oil painting was chosen to be part of the university's Summer Exhibition, which opened on Wednesday 12 June. The artwork will remain on display as part of the exhibition, showcasing the incredible talent of young artists in the region.

This recognition is a testament to Mico's creativity, dedication and artistic skill. Well done, Mico. We are incredibly proud of you.



Geology Enrichment Session

Dr Sammie Buzzard from the Department of Geography at Northumbria University was in school this term to wow the students on glaciology. An expert in her field, Dr Sammie discussed sampling method and techniques and her adventures in Svalbard, Iceland, Greenland and more recently, Antarctica. A fantastic experience for our Geography students but also for those Geographers from St Benet Biscop, who joined the session!



Junior Kangaroo Success

We are proud to share the fantastic news that 8 students from our school qualified for the Junior Kangaroo, the follow-on round of the UKMT Junior Mathematical Challenge. This round is only open to the highest-scoring students in the country. A special congratulations goes to Jiatong Wu, who achieved a perfect score (100%) with no marks lost. This outstanding performance earned Jiatong a Gold award and the title of Best in School.

The other 7 qualifiers also performed brilliantly, with many earning Bronze awards and showing excellent problem-solving skills. A special mention goes to Oliver Quinn as the top scorer in Year 7. We are very proud of all eight students for their hard work, determination, and enthusiasm for mathematics.



Data Science Techniques

Over the last 6 months, some Year 12 students have been working independently on an additional qualification outside of their taught curriculum looking at data science techniques and their uses in analysing real-world problems. The students joined online webinars and completed a range of tasks, including submitting a practical assignment using real data to determine which guests are most likely to cancel a hotel reservation, and a written exam. All students who sat the exam passed, some with merit and they have all said they found this a valuable learning experience and really enjoyed taking part.



Maths Inspiration Show

Students from Years 9 and 10 attended the Maths Inspiration show "Much Ado About Numbers", hosted by award-winning author Rob Eastaway at the Northern Stage theatre in Newcastle. The show was centred around the surprising mathematical connections between Shakespeare and the world he lived in. We learned how Tudors multiplied, made connections between mathematics, music and magic, and learned some strategy games favoured by Tudor royalty. The students really enjoyed the show, and we had several volunteers up on-stage joining in.

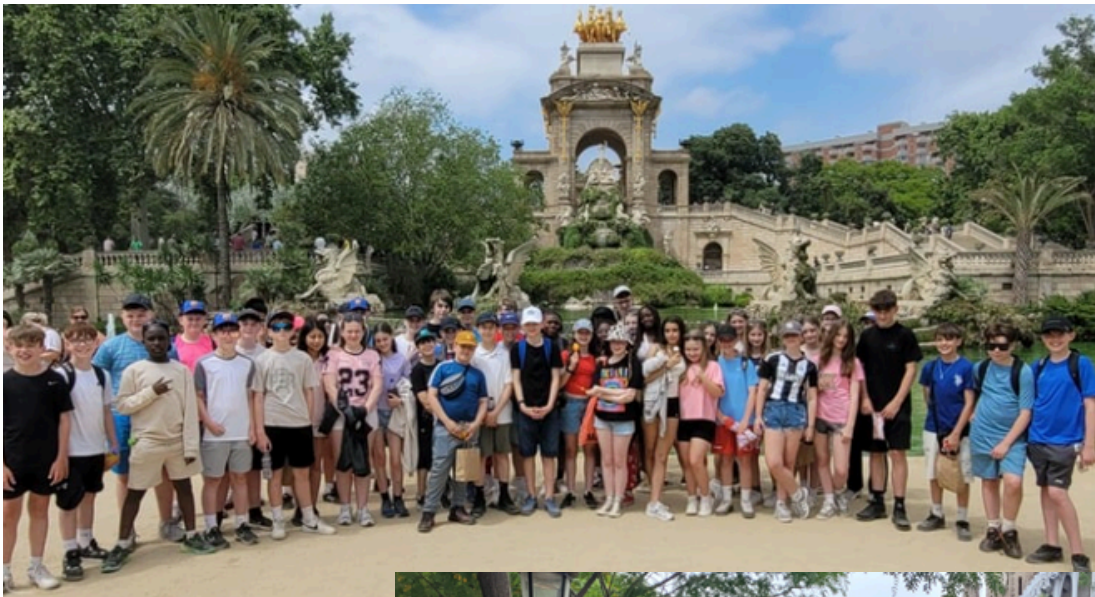


Barcelona 2025

Excitement was in the air in June as Year 8 students embarked on an unforgettable trip to Barcelona. After a smooth flight and a warm welcome at their scenic campsite, the group settled in for a week packed with culture, language, and fun.

Students toured La Sagrada Familia, explored the historic Born and Gothic quarters on foot, caught a glimpse of iconic sights like the Nou Camp and visited the Cosmo Caixa Science Museum and the vibrant Boquería Market where they practiced their Spanish. Students also visited the town of Vilanova and the Costa Caribe Water Park.

On the final day students explored Montjuic and the Olympic Stadium followed by a visit to Las Arenas, a former bullring turned shopping centre. With souvenirs in hand and memories made, they headed to the airport for their journey home. The trip was a wonderful opportunity for students to grow in confidence, hone their Spanish, and bond with friends. We were also delighted that the tour company recognised the exceptional conduct of our students whilst on the trip and wrote a lovely letter praising students and commending them on their superb behaviour and positive attitude throughout. ¡Nos disfrutamos mucho en Barcelona!



City Athletics Championships

In late June, Year 7 and 8 students enjoyed a fantastic afternoon at the Newcastle Schools City Athletics Championships, which took place at Gateshead Stadium. Competing against several local schools, all the students performed brilliantly and were outstanding ambassadors for St Mary's. There were some notable achievements during the event, including Florence Brown (1500 metres), Ella Harwood (800 metres), Wiktorja Leska (Discus), Jack McManus (800 metres), Isaac Conway (800 metres), Adrian Coman (800 metres), Charlie Elliot (Discus) and Jake Richardson (shot). Well done to everyone. A tremendous achievement!



Year 13 Prom

Recently, we had a truly unforgettable evening at the Year 13 Prom, held at the stunning Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. It was an evening of joy, celebration and shared memories as we marked the end of our students remarkable journey. We wish our Year 13 students every possible success and happiness for the future!



Year 12 Biology and Geography Trip

Year 12 Biology and Geography students have returned from a highly successful fieldtrip to Keswick, where they engaged in a range of hands-on activities linking classroom learning to the natural world. From river surveys and microclimate studies to investigating flood defences and attending a talk at Keswick Museum, students explored both ecological and human geography in depth. Highlights included stunning walks, data collection in diverse environments, and a Q&A session with a local councillor about sustainability and planning. Throughout the trip, students showed maturity, curiosity, and teamwork, representing the school with enthusiasm and pride.



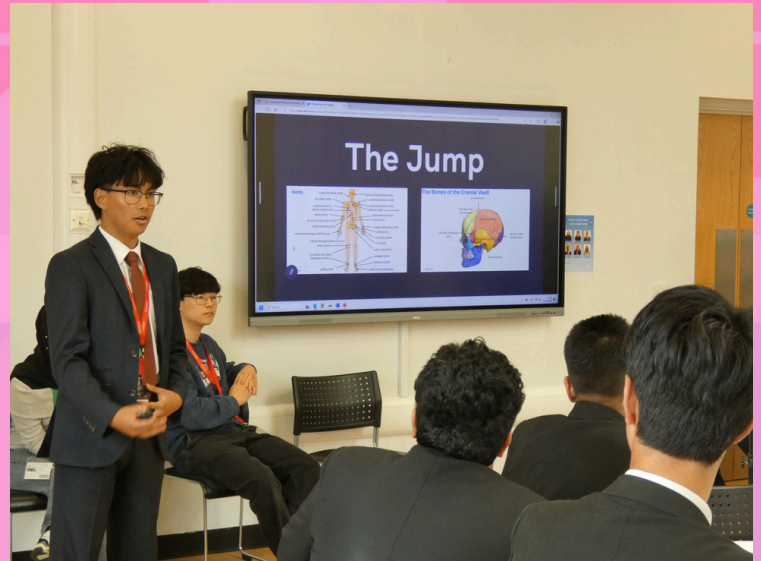
Sixth Form Transition Day

Our recent Sixth Form Transition Day gave Year 11 students an exciting introduction to life in the Sixth Form. They took part in a series of engaging subject taster sessions, helping them explore potential A Level pathways. A highlight of the day was the student-led subject fair, where current Sixth Formers shared their experiences and offered advice. We're already looking forward to welcoming these students into our Sixth Form community next year.



BBCET Applying to Medicine and Dentistry Conference

Students from across our Trust attended a Medicine and Dentistry Applications Conference, hosted at St Mary's, designed to support Year 12 students applying for competitive healthcare courses. The day featured expert talks from Dr Meachery, a leading physician in the North East, and medical students, alongside practical workshops on UCAT preparation, MMI interviews, and the new personal statement format. Students left the event inspired, better informed, and more confident about the application process ahead. It was also so pleasing to have former students, Jinwoo and Paul, return to give our current students hints and tips on how to apply successfully.



University of Sunderland Campus Tour

Year 12 students recently visited Sunderland University for an engaging and insightful campus experience. They enjoyed a guided tour of the facilities and took part in taster sessions across Psychology, Health and Social Care, and Sociology. During the sessions, students explored topics such as cognitive development, ethical dilemmas in care, and the impact of social structures on behaviour. The visit also gave students a valuable glimpse into university life and the opportunities that higher education can offer.



Geography Field Trip to the Beach

In early July, all Year 10 Geography students visited South Beach, Blyth and Tynemouth Longsands. At Blyth, they measured the sand height around the groynes, the low barriers spaced at regular intervals going out into the sea. Using ranging poles and clinometers, the students identified how effective these methods of engineering are at preventing longshore drift. They also looked at plant diversity in the dunes using quadrats. At Longsands, the students completed sketches capturing examples of erosion and depositing. The weather was great and the students really enjoyed seeing how concepts learned in the classroom can be applied to real-world settings.

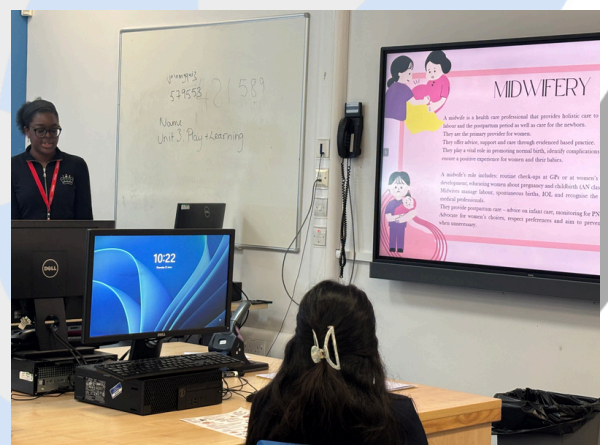


Celebrating Success in SEND

On Wednesday 2nd July the SEND department held a celebration event attended by teachers and LSAs to highlight some of the wonderful achievements of our students who receive SEND support in school. It was a great opportunity to reflect on the progress of these students who, at times, have to work that bit harder than others to reach their goals. There was lots of discussion around the independence and resilience shown by lots of our students with SEND, of whom we are very proud. Students have received certificates to recognise their achievements. Thank you to LSAs and teachers for all the support provided to make this possible.

Alumni Sessions

We were delighted to welcome one of our former students Qestia, who led a session with our Year 12 students looking at her experiences training as a midwife. The students looked at the different career paths that this can lead down.



Celebration Assemblies

On Tuesday 8th July, our Year 7–Year 10 students enjoyed a very special day as every student received a set of awards for their amazing contributions to our school across this academic year. Each Year Group had their own Celebration Assembly where students received a range of subject awards and pastoral awards. The assemblies included musical performances as well as a video montage that brought together some very special moments and memories from this school year. A huge well done to all of our students for the exceptional contributions they have made to school this year!



Year 11: Leavers' Celebrations and Prom

Our Year 11 students celebrated their final day of Year 11 with a wonderful Celebration of the Word and final assembly. Students reflected on their 5 years in the school, with input from their Form Tutors and Head of Year. Student achievements were celebrated and it was such a special occasion where our wonderful Year 11 students celebrated their incredible hard work and efforts across this academic year, whilst also showing immense gratitude towards each other and the staff who have supported them so brilliantly throughout their time in the Main School. In the evening, our Year 11 Prom took place at the Crowne Plaza, Newcastle. Students enjoyed a wonderful meal, before dancing the night away! The atmosphere was so special throughout the night – testimony to our amazing students. We really hope our students loved this very special day. Thank you Year 11 for being a brilliant year group. We are all very proud of you!



Faith in Action Workshop

Our Year 12 students attended a talk given by Felicity Penny, a Prison Chaplain at HMP Durham. Felicity shared her experiences working within the prison system. She talked about what worship in prison looks like and shared that over two thirds of prisoners identify as religious. One of the key messages from the talk was that Felicity challenged everyone in the room to be less judgemental in an attempt to see "the face of God" in others. It was a challenging and informative talk, and our Year 12 students were a credit to St Mary's, as always.



Climate Friendly Schools Conference

The 6th Form Environmental Team attended the Climate Friendly Schools Conference at the Civic Centre which was organised by OASES. They met with other schools and shared ideas of how to continue being climate friendly. The students also spoke with various outside agencies identifying opportunities for outside speakers to come into school and raise awareness.



Support for a Local Parish

On Friday 27th June, some of our students supported Sacred Heart Church in the parish of North Gosforth by contributing to their feast day celebrations.

Parishioners were very impressed by Jenny Whittaker (Year 11) and Jiatong Wu (Year 8) who both played the piano and Emily Moore (Year 11) who shared her vocal talents. We were also able to present a painting (pictured) by Emilia Siemens (Year 9) to commemorate this special occasion.



Upcoming dates and events ...

Friday 18th July: Last day of school before the summer break.

Thursday 14th August: A Level Results Day.

Thursday 21st August: GCSE Results Day.

Tuesday 2nd September: Year 7 and Year 12 return to school.

Wednesday 3rd September: Years 8-11 and Year 13 return to school.