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Prayer and Liturgy page

Prayer and Liturgy at Holy Trinity Catholic School

“Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God” - St. John Damascene

Collective worship at Holy Trinity is concerned with the prayer and liturgy that is at the core of Roman Catholic tradition. Prayer and Liturgy both celebrate God's gifts and His presence in our lives. The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly defines prayer as a "vital and personal relationship with the living and true God" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2558). Whereas liturgy refers to public worship, the work of Christ and that of the Church; the Body of Christ.

As stated in our Mission Jesus Christ is at the centre of our community and all we do. This is especially true in our prayer and liturgy. It is focussed on giving praise and glory to God and is our response to his love and grace.

At Holy Trinity, our primary concern is the holistic and personal development of our pupils, this includes their spiritual development. Therefore, prayer and liturgies are accessible to everyone in our school community and are inclusive of all. Pupils of different faith traditions are supported to pray in fidelity to their own commitments. Those who have no faith affiliation are encouraged to engage spiritually and in solidarity with and as part of, the whole school community.

The pattern of prayer

Holy Trinity has a thriving programme of prayer and liturgy which fully complies with all expectations set out in Canon Law, the Bishops Conference of England and Wales and the prayer and liturgy directory; “To love You more dearly”. Holy Trinity has an embedded pattern of daily prayer, facilitating at least one opportunity for worship each day in school at 08:50. Prayer and liturgies are planned to offer engaging experiences that reflect the richness of Catholic tradition with each day being different. Each week in their tutor groups pupils will reflect upon the Sunday Gospel, on a weekly theme which is linked to the liturgical calendar and faithfully reflects the rhythm and prayer life of the Church, they will also compose their own prayers and reflections delivering these to their peers, form tutors also lead prayer once a week and finally there is a weekly assembly of which prayer is an important part.

The school is fully committed to pupils planning and leading worship. Pupils are keen to do so and provide a wonderful contribution to the prayer life of school. Strong evidence of this is seen in our Student Chaplaincy Team, a wonderful and growing school choir and the eagerness with which pupils volunteer to carry out ministries and participate in mass and other liturgies. Although percentages of Catholic pupils are small, all acts of worship are participated in reverently, respectfully and beautifully by the whole school community. Seeing this respect and participation is a sight to behold and a great living example of Christ's unifying presence active in Holy Trinity.

In addition to daily prayer, all formal exams start with a prayer. Celebration of the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are a regular part of school life. Each year group will celebrate Mass in honour of their Year Group Patron Saint. This Mass is usually on the feast day or as close to it as

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possible. Whole school Masses take place at times including Advent, near Trinity Sunday, the end of the year and on other holy days of obligation. There are special voluntary services in November for the deceased and during the month of the Rosary, there is an emphasis on having this special prayer a fabric of school life. Penitential services take place during Advent and Lent. Special liturgies take place on Ash Wednesday and before the school breaks for Easter.

As stated, Holy Trinity provides all pupils with opportunities to develop spiritually. The school celebrates shared understanding of faith and supports all pupils and staff in their journey to find God. Prayer facilities and other resources are provided for our large group of Muslim pupils and staff who pray daily and more devotedly each Friday. There is a special focus to support Muslim pupils in prayer during the blessed month of Ramadan. Holy Trinity is a remarkable example of community cohesion with Christians, Muslims, and people of other faiths and no faiths, working alongside each other to fully develop in shared a vision of love, peace, tolerance and respect.

Since last year the school has restarted its an active programme of retreats for pupils which had been effected by COVID-19, this had in the past been a part of the core offering of prayer and liturgy at Holy Trinity for a large number of years and we are glad to be offering this again.

As role models and guardians of the Catholic faith, staff prayer is an integral part of school life. Different staff lead briefing prayers on a Monday, Tuesday and Friday. Prayers will either be formulaic in line with themes of the week or extempore based upon a personal situation or devotion to God. Voluntary staff prayer takes place in the chapel every Friday before school and again this is led by different staff. All meetings in school begin with a prayer or reflection. Opportunities for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, The Rosary and Stations of the Cross are also provided for staff during the year. Each department has its own prayer in school and it provides staff with the inspiration to fulfil Christ's mission in their work.

Holy Trinity's highly effective Chaplaincy Team ensures that prayer and worship is at the heart of the school practice and improvement. The team is supported strategically by an active link governor who supports with regular quality assurance. Quality assurance of provision features consistently in school practice with all information and areas to develop communicated to governors. Governors have started to complete an audit of provision annually and have found this to be a valuable reflective exercise in ensuring improvement. Pupil, parent and staff voice take place throughout the year with tutor time and assembly provision also evaluated formally during the academic year. It is this practice that led to our provision being judged as 'Outstanding' in our last Section 48 inspection in 2020.

"Collective Worship is one the many outstanding strengths at Holy Trinity. All acts of worship are respectful, inclusive, spiritual and sincere. Pupils display great reverence during worship, which further adds to the spirituality of prayer." - Section 48 inspection report 2020.

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“There are ample opportunities for pupils and staff to pray during their free time, and responses to such invitations are always strong. Voluntary prayer is offered regularly in the morning, before the start of school, and at lunchtime. All stakeholders value these opportunities and believe they contribute significantly to the dignified climate for learning that the school has established. The quality of the voluntary acts of Collective Worship observed by the inspectors was very impressive.” -
Section 48 inspection report 2020.