



ST. MARY'S COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2020



Farewell from the Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On Friday, January 10th, I informed the Board of Management and the Deputy Principals Sally, Marion and Paul of my intention to resign as Principal of St. Mary's College, to take on a school leadership role with CEIST, our Trustees.

I have thanked God so often for the privilege of working in St. Mary's College and for getting to know the wonderful staff, students and parents in this school. We are all very fortunate to work in a respectful environment and having worked in 5 other schools, I have never taken this for granted!

I have cherished my time here in St. Mary's College. I hope that our students will continue to come to a school that is committed to creating a happy, respectful, caring, safe, supportive, positive learning environment, rooted in the Christian tradition and having as its aim the holistic education of all, encouraging each one to develop her full potential.

I want to thank all the staff in this school:

The Deputy Principals Ms. Barton, Ms. Moloney and Mr. Campbell who are, and always have been, a Dream Senior Leadership Team to work with.

I sincerely appreciate the work of Sr. Brigid who runs the Library and assists with the day to day running of the school on a daily basis. It has been a privilege to have Sr. Brigid assist us and guide us in promoting the Mercy Ethos with our students. Sr. Brigid has also assisted Mr. Dillon in setting up the Mercy Leaders. Many other staff have now joined in and we are now aware that this initiative is spreading to other schools.

I appreciate the hard work of all our teachers, our SNAs Marie and Eleana, the Administration Staff Annette, Edel, Claire, Mary and Nora, the Caretaking and Hospitality Team Walter, Tony and Josie, Tracey and her Cleaning Team and all who continue to work so incredibly hard to ensure that St. Mary's College is such a wonderful place to work.

The staff in St. Mary's College have always been hugely committed and on a voluntarily basis provide a huge range of extra-curricular activities. I am sincerely grateful to all staff who give so generously of their time and who engage in so many projects and leadership teams, all with the objective of enhancing the educational experience of our students and the working life of colleagues.

Thanks to you, the parents, for your kindness, your positivity and your continued support. I would

particularly like to mention my appreciation of the role that The Parents' Council plays. Marie O' Reilly as Chairperson and her team do a huge amount of work for the betterment of the school. Their time and energy is greatly appreciated. I also appreciate the work of the Past Pupils Union who have been organising fundraising activities and the Debs Ball for over the last 20 years.

I would also like to thank the current and past members of the Board of Management.

In particular, I would like to thank and acknowledge the work of our past Chairpersons of the BOM i.e. Dr. Moling Ryan, Mr. John Clancy and also to Ms. Sharon McGrath, our current Chairperson, for their expertise, guidance, professionalism and extensive work on behalf of the school. Their interest in this school, including their time and expertise, has guided and continues to promote this school as a model of excellence in the wider community.

I would like to especially thank all the Naas second level Principals for their support and friendship: Mr. Ben Travers (Principal CBS), Mr. Colm O'Connor (retired Principal Piper's Hill), Ms. Caroline Herity, (Principal Piper's Hill), Mr. Ciarán Keegan (Principal Naas CC), Ms. Amanda Ní Dhuibhir (Principal Gael Coláiste) and Mr. Conor Ó Mathúna (Acting Principal Gael Coláiste).

Thank you to Ms. Jacqueline O'Reilly, Principal Convent Primary School, Naas and all the other Primary School Principals in our catchment area who continue to recommend our school to their students and parents.

As you know we have a very large staff (80 +), 1042 students and in excess of 2000 + parents/guardians. I believe that together, we worked in an environment where accountability , honesty , openness, and transparency were the hallmarks of our professional discussions with all the partners in education.

Many different perspectives were appreciated, listened to, reflected on, clarifications sought and discussed to ensure everyone was listened to and accommodated, ensuring compromises were part resolutions to any challenges we faced together as a community.

So I thank you all for your wide-ranging and extensive contribution to the life of St Mary's College during my time as Principal.

I hope the enthusiasm you show for your daughter's education continues to grow and that it never fades.

As I now will move on to work with CEIST, I want to thank each and everyone of you for the respect that you showed me over the past 8 years since I started in August 2012 and for making my time here as Principal such a happy one.

I hope that I will be able to share what I have learned here in St. Mary's College with the schools that I will work with as a School Leadership Officer with CEIST.

I will always look back on my 8 years in St. Mary's College as a time of great happiness, I have made wonderful, long-lasting, genuine friendships for life, with staff and parents alike. I have special memories that I will treasure and along with the challenges that every Principal must face, I can honestly say that I have had great support, I have had tremendous fun, I will treasure my memories and I will keep in touch regularly.

I take up my new role as School Leader with Ceist on February 24th, 2020. The position of Principal is advertised presently and I will do my utmost to support the new Principal in order to ensure St. Mary's College continues to be the school of choice in the area.

I will miss all the girls, I want you to know that I loved being your Principal. I wish you well in your future studies and career paths but most of all I hope that you will always be happy and healthy.

This Newsletter has been emailed to all parents/guardians in colour.

As Gandhi once said 'There are no goodbyes for us. Wherever you are, you will always be in my heart.'
Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

Rita McCabe,

Principal 2012-2020

A Prayer for 2020

Lord, Whether I leave behind
A year of joy or of trials and difficulties,
I pause to *give thanks*.

Thank you for being with me, Every day of every year.

Thank you for making all things *new*

And for giving me the grace of Fresh starts, And *new beginnings*.

Remind me of your presence in the days to come.
Even when I feel pushed and rushed by busyness

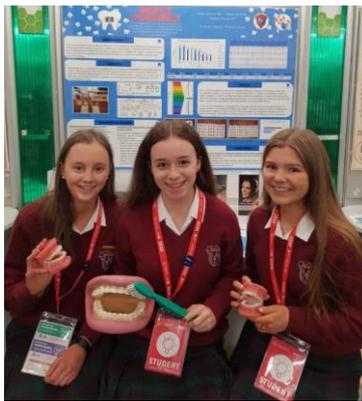
Be glorified in my life this year

Amen

The BT Young Scientist

This year we have five groups.

Emma Culhane, Sophie Naughton and Ellen Sievwright (4th Year) with their project at BTYS “Brace Yourself! – An investigation into how the presence of orthodontic treatment influences the acidity or alkalinity of saliva”.



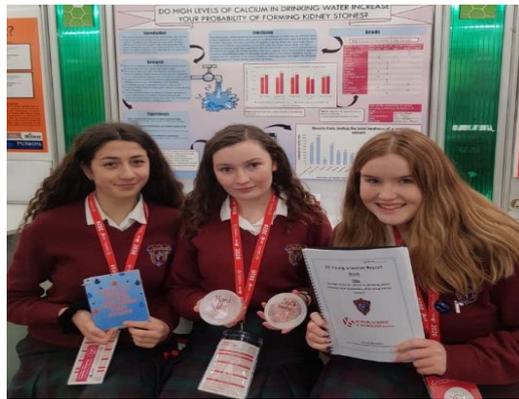
Grace Moloney, Eimear Freely and Aisling Hughes (4th Year) with their project at BTYS. “An investigation into the effects of micro plastics, larger low density polythene pellets and biodegradable plastic on the growth of Thale cress”. The girls investigated the affect each material had on the rate of root and shoot growth in cress and whether the plastic embeds in the plant tissue.



Anna Shaw and Sinéad Jacob (4th Year) at BTYS with their project “What actions can Ireland take to combat climate change”?. A statistical analysis of the current knowledge of Irish teens on Climate Change and what actions we are willing to take to combat it.



Do high levels of Calcium in drinking water increase the probability of kidney stones?



1st Year Project is our Environment DYEing?'. This project analysing pigments in different dyes, including locally sourced dyes, those sourced from outside of Ireland and synthetic dyes.



The Mercy Ethos

Mercy Leaders

On Monday, 23rd November, the Mercy Leaders were delighted to have their good work acknowledged when they received the Principal's Choice Award from Ms. McCabe in the Killashee Hotel. The awards were also presented to them by Dr. Marie Griffin of CEIST. The girls also distributed the free gift of Divine Mercy images and rosary beads on the night, which were very well received by all present.

In the run up to Christmas the leaders are excitedly preparing for a carol service in the assembly hall, which is intended to be a whole school event, with all students and staff welcome. On top of all this, the leaders are working alongside the Student Council in promoting the *Decorate a Door* competition and collecting the funds from it. The funds raised will be going to a very worthy charity called Mary's Meals,

a charity who feed over a million children across the world in their schools. It is a simple idea, but one that makes a huge difference to the lives of so many children in the underdeveloped world. All students in the school learned about the fantastic work of this charity in their religion classes in recent weeks. The Mercy Leaders are looking forward to presenting the funds raised to a representative of Mary's Meals on Thursday, 19th December, and also hearing about how the money will be put to good use. Well done to all involved. The Mercy Leaders are looking forward to continuing their great work in 2020 and new students are always welcome.



Team Hope

On Thursday, November 7, 2019, the charity, **Team Hope**, were delighted to collect 175 decorated and present-filled gift-boxes, generously donated by so many of our students. This is an increase of 40 boxes more on last year's gifts, so well done to everyone who contributed! Many thanks to Ms. Irwin and Ms. Farrell who organised the event.



November Remembrance



Recognising that 'In November we Remember', the reception area of the school was decorated with a poster bearing these words. In the Prayer Room, a tree of remembrance was adorned with the names of deceased loved ones, written on multi-coloured leaf and cross-shapes, celebrating the lives of those gone before us. Special thanks to Ms. O. Ramsey for organising posters and a lovely prayer service for the month of the Holy Souls.



Retreats

The fifth years enjoyed a full-day retreat given by 'An Tobar Nua', on Thursday, October 24 and sixth years had their retreat with the same team on Tuesday, November 12. These were two well-spent days in which our senior students could take a welcome pause from their studies, reflect on and be supported in their faith, and all the while have lots of fun! Our Transition Years also went to the Emmaus Retreat Centre in Swords for a few well deserved days of relaxation and meditation.

St. Vincent De Paul Food Drive in December 2019

Recently, many students contributed very generously to the **St. Vincent de Paul Food Drive**. Many families in Naas and the surrounding areas will benefit enormously because of your kindness. 3A packed all donations into separate boxes, many thanks, girls! All contributors were entered into a raffle for Boots vouchers. Well done to the winners; Sophie Weir in 1C and Danielle Behan in 4K.



Advent

As we moved into the month of December, Ms. Devenney's 2L RE class decorated the reception area with an **Advent wreath and our school crib**. Beautifully crafted posters urging us to remember that Advent is time for 'prayer', 'reflection', 'for everything that puts us in tune with Jesus and his ways', gave many of us reason to pause and consider this special time of the Church year. A **Jesse tree** in the Prayer Room, complete with symbols and accompanying explanations on a poster, recalled Christianity's Jewish roots and the shared wisdom and heritage of these two world religions. Ms. Dowling worked with 4J, 4K and 2K to create five wonderful posters, which depict images traditionally associated with Christmas; Our Lady and the infant Jesus, stars, candles and the Three Wise men, for instance. These were placed on the glass windows on the way to the Prayer Room, for all to see and enjoy.



Christmas Mass

Our Christmas Mass was celebrated on 19th December by Fr. Liam Morgan and what an occasion it was. Signifying the start of the Christmas period for staff and students alike, this beautiful celebration did not disappoint. Many thanks to Ms. Mannion and Mr. Lanigan and their musicians for the Heavenly music and to the Religion Department for all their work in preparing the Mass and of course to Fr. Liam for

making it such a special occasion as always.



Carol Service

Well done to everyone who participated in our lunchtime Christmas Carol Service. Thanks to Mr. Dillon for organising this lovely event.



Our student leaders are vital to the continued success of school life in St. Mary's College. Congratulations to all those pupils who have been elected as Tutor Assistants or selected as General Assistants. Your example and enthusiasm help to encourage and motivate others and is very much valued within our school community.



Student Council

On the morning of Friday the 6th members of the Student Council decorated the Christmas tree in preparation for the festive season. Lots of festive activities will be taking place over the month of December with the girls organising a 'Christmas Jumper' day on the 20th in aid of Crumlin Children's Hospital.

Students from 4J, 4M and 2K worked hard on creating decorative pieces for the front windows of the school. The moments depicted capture the celebration of faith during this time of the year. The posters are created entirely out of recycled materials. Well done to all involved.



We had a new addition to the Senior Leadership (Alpaca) Team on the last day of term. Thanks to all staff, students and their families who supported so generously all the fundraising efforts of the St Marys Student Council and the Mercy leaders over the past couple of weeks. In total 2,700 euro was raised for Crumlin Children's hospital, Mary's meals and the Surgeon Noonan project. Well done everyone.



The Meitheal and Cairdeas Programmes

The **Meitheal leaders** have been very busy with their first years. A Hallowe'en Party was held in the Assembly Hall on Thursday, Oct 24, supported by Meitheal Leaders from the C.B.S. In addition, a disco was held in Naas C.B.S. on Friday, November 15, 2019. A lot of hard work, organisation and care was involved, well done to everyone on the very dedicated Meitheal teams in St. Mary's College and the C.B.S!



The **Cairdeas leaders** have also recently been very busy with second years. In addition to weekly visits to classrooms, a quiz and lunch time pizza party, the leaders organized a Movie night on Wednesday, December 4, 2019. From 5-6.30 p.m., the leaders prepared snacks and treats and set up films and classrooms. Well done to all leaders, second years really appreciate all your hard work and commitment to them.



Lighthouse Leaders

Well done to the **Lighthouse Leaders** for their very successful organising of **Inclusivity Week**, which was held between Monday and Friday, Dec 2-6, 2019. The reception area was decorated with brightly-coloured posters, focusing on the importance of inclusivity and of celebrating diversity. Events such as face-painting, distributing multi-coloured lollipops and having lunchtime karaoke, were held throughout the week and were thoroughly enjoyed by all. A poetry, rap and poster competition very well responded to by our students. Intercom notices, read daily by Carrington Thompson in 5M, focused on the following five areas - Interculturalism - Additional needs - Family units - Faith, religion and spirituality - Gender and Sexuality.

The week concluded with a welcome 'True Colours' Day, in which staff and students wore clothes and colours they're most comfortable in. Many thanks to Ms. Curry for all her hard work with our Lighthouse Leaders; a wonderfully committed and truly inclusive group in St. Mary's College.



Awards Night

St. Mary's College held their Awards Night on the 27th November in the Killashee House Hotel. It was a fantastic night which celebrated our past pupils who continue to amaze us with their achievements. We have always been and will continue proud of each and every one of them. On this night we also celebrated some very special people who have contributed so much to the life and success of the school on so many levels. A special thank you to Mr. John Clancy, Dr. Moling Ryan, Ms. Sharon McGrath and Mr. O' Sullivan for your years of dedicated service to St. Mary's College. Many thanks also the Parent' Association for your help with regards to this event and indeed for your continued support throughout the year.



*L-R John Clancy, Rita McCabe,
Tony O'Sullivan, Dr. Moling Ryan*



*John Clancy, Joe Clancy, Sharon McGrath
(Chairperson BOM), Dr. Moling Ryan*



Staff Retirements

We wish Ms. Kathleen Elliott, Ms. Ann Egan and Mr. Donal Mullally the very best as they move on to the next phase of their lives. Ms. Elliott, Ms. Egan and Mr. Mullally gave a huge contribution to the personal, social and academic development of all our students. They were valued staff members and will be missed by parents, students, teachers and all the staff in St. Mary's College.

Commendation Boards First Term

Congratulations to all students who were listed this term on the commendation boards. Well done to our 20 lucky winners who received awards today kindly sponsored by the St Mary's College Parents Council.



Amazing Achievements

Book Publishing

Always Be Kind is a children's book made by a TY mini company, teaching kids to interact and include other kids with intellectual disabilities. We decided to write this book because we wanted to make a product in which we could make a difference for a good cause. The book follows a boy named Ben as he learned to interact with Zoe who has an intellectual disability. The book costs only €5 and is available to preorder on Instagram @kidsbooksmcn.



Always be Kind

I told my mum about this girl and I asked her how I could talk to her. She told me that sometimes people learn in different ways to me.

Mum said the girl speaks differently because she finds it harder than me to learn. She told me to talk slowly and calmly, give her time to understand and to always be kind.

Speaker of the Debate – Junior Debating

Junior debating this year began with a debate against Piper's Hill College. Despite a great performance by Aoife King, Sarah Byrne and Gillian Dempsey, the team were narrowly defeated. Sarah Byrne did however seal the '**Speaker of the Debate**' accolade. Well done to all of them and a special thanks to Fiona McShane, TY who co-adjudicated the debate. We are looking forward to meeting the CBS for our next debate.



ISTA National Finals Science Quiz

Congratulations to our Sixth Year science students Alana Lacey, Sally Murphy and Isabelle O'Dwyer who represented St Mary's so well in Trinity on November 23rd. The girls had qualified from the regional finals held in Maynooth college during science week. The top 138 students from the thousands who took part in the regionals were invited to the national finals of the annual ISTA science quiz in the biomedical institute. Quizmaster for the day was Mark Langtry of RTE junior and Explorium fame. In what was a very competitive final, the girls came in only seven points behind the winners from St. Andrew's college in Booterstown. As the Quizmaster said, all students who reached the final were winners!



Transition Year

TY German Trip

Our German Exchange Experience – by Ciara Finn

11 St. Marys Students and 5 students from CBS set off on in the early hours of Dec 3rd on our trip to Aulendorf with Ms Shanahan and Ms Lonergan. We flew to Munich and spent some time at the Christmas Markets before travelling to Aulendorf by bus where we all met our host families. We all felt very welcomed by our host families.

On Wednesday we went to school with our Exchange Partners. The school in Aulendorf was even bigger than St. Marys and our first class was Politics! After school we had a walk around Aulendorf and had dinner out as a group.

Thursday, we had a break from school and went to visit the city of Ulm, which was lovely. The Christmas Markets were even nicer than Munich! We saw the highest Church tower in the world, The Ulmer Munster. It was a bit foggy that day so we couldn't make the climb. We all went back to our host family where we ate traditional German food and chatted at the dinner table.

Back to school on Friday at 7.30am! We had English, Science and German. We played an International Soccer Match against the students from Aulendorf – and let's just say the Aulendorf students were the better team!

At the weekend we went Bowling and Ice Skating and had lots of fun with our Exchange Partners and fellow Naas students.

On Monday we all took a trip to Bregenz in Austria and took the Pfanderbahn up the mountains to the foot of the Alps. The views were great – but we were surprised by not seeing any snow! We also saw the biggest lake in Europe – Lake Constanze.

On Tuesday we said goodbye to our Exchange Partners and host families and returned home to Naas.

We had a great few days together where we learnt a lot about German Culture, saw some lovely sites and managed to improve our conversation in German by living with our host families. Thanks to Ms Shanahan for bringing us and to Ms McAssey for organising the great trip.



TY Mini-Company Christmas Fair

What a great afternoon was had today with the TY mini-company Christmas fair. It was great to see such entrepreneurship. Lots of novel ideas were on display and available to buy including everything from personalised sports bags to children's books and eco-friendly toothbrushes! Well done girls. Many thanks to Mr. Brennan, Mr. Wallace and Ms. Quinn for all their work organising the fair.



Transition Year Debating

Three of our TY Students Fiona McShane, Lucy Johnson and Amy Divney took part in the Liam O'Connell Schools Debate at the beginning of December. The debate took place in the Council Chambers in Aras Chill Dara. The debate was chaired by Judge Desmond Zaidan and provided a unique opportunity for the girls to compete against seven Kildare schools in the local seat of democracy.



Sport in St. Mary's

Camogie



Senior Camogie Semi-Final

Well done to the Senior Camogie team today on their win over a strong Colaiste Iosogain side in the Dublin Senior Semi Final. St Mary's started off strong and some excellent support play allowed Aoife McDermot, Allie McGrath, Sophie Browne, Sive Byrne and Anna Kennedy to rack up a big score for St Mary's. Excellent defensive play from Laura Friel, Hannah Goodfellow and Eva Lynch meant that the first half ended with St Mary's leading 15 points to 4. Colaiste Iosogain came out fighting in the second half and Anna Burke made a crucial block near the St Mary's goal but soon after Roisin Roche scored a fantastic goal to settle the St Mary's players. St Mary's fought hard against a strong wind in the second half but Sarah Carroll did massive work around the midfield and the game ended on a scoreline of 2.18 to 1.8. The girls are now looking forward to the final on January 17th. Best of Luck!



Hockey



This has been a very busy term for hockey with all 9 of our teams playing matches.

Our First Year teams had their first games in the St. Mary's colours against Newpark College, where we won one game and lost one game. There is a lot of talent and enthusiasm in first year and all girls and coaches are looking forward to their next games in January against Mount Anville and St. Raphaela's.

All other teams have had a very enjoyable term of hockey and are going into the Christmas break in positive positions in their league tables. In January many of our team have key games that will decide if they progress to a quarter or semi-final in their Leinster leagues. Keep an eye out on the school website and Facebook page for updates.





Soccer

Well done to the U-17 soccer team who maintained their 100% record in the league with an 9-0 victory in the Leinster League V GC Cill Dara. There were some excellent all round performances and all 18 players played a huge part in the victory. Goalscorers were Leah Fleming (2), Orlagh Fitzpatrick (2), Alannah Prizeman, Ella Tobin, Hannah Dunne, Mikeala Nash and Loreno Di Stefano. Leah Mooney and Gillian Reilly were excellent in keeping the opposition out. The girls will next play Alexandra College in the Leinster A Cup with results to follow.

Best of luck girls!



Badminton

Well done to the u16 B Badminton team who beat Holyfaith Clontarf today by 6 games to 0. Team: Amy Lewis, Eve McGettrick, Lucy Johnston and Sarah Byrne

Hard luck to the u16C team who lost to Holyfaith Clontarf A team by 5 games to 1. Well done to Lily Grace and Leanne Daly who did extremely well to win their doubles match by one ace. This was a great result considering the girls were playing against the A team. Many thanks to Chloe Glennon who subbed in for Lucy Hodgins after she sustained an injury. Team: Niamh Gibbons, Lucy Hodgins, Lily Grace and Leanne Daly.

Hard luck to the u16 D team who put in huge effort against a very strong Holy Faith Clontarf team.. Team: Chloe Glennon, Nandana Arun, Recharmae Villaforte and Lauren Kavanagh

Hard luck to the u19 C team who were beaten by Holy Faith Clontarf C. The girls gave it 100% and did extremely well against a strong team. Well done in particular to Aisling Phillips who was very unlucky to lose her singles game by one ace. Team: Emma Culhane, Aisling Phillips, Aisling MacHugh and Anna Shaw. Many thanks to Ellen Murphy who was score keeper and a great motivator for the girls on the day.



Volleyball

Cadette A Volleyball

Congratulations to the Cadette A team who won two of their three matches in the second round of the All Ireland championship. They beat Rockford Manor 1 and 2; 2 sets to love and narrowly lost out to Newbridge. Onwards to our last round on December 3rd at home. Thanks to Amy and Ellen also who were a great help in refereeing and score keeping.



Sports Star of the Month

Congratulations to 6th year Laoise Lenehan who was selected as the St Mary's College November Sports Star of the month. Well done Laoise!



Senior Cycle Options meeting – 7pm – 8.30pm
First Year Retreat
HSE Vaccinations for 1st years
CBS Guest Speaker Evening – John Lonergan
-all parents invited to CBS
Mock Exams
Junior Cert. Home Ec. Practicals
Mid-term break
Parents' Association Table Quiz – Naas GAA – 8pm
Transition Year Musical
School Holiday
Easter Holidays

Wednesday 29th January 2020
Friday 31st January 2020
Thursday 27th & Friday 28th February 2020
Tuesday 3rd March 2020

Monday 3rd – Friday 14th February
Monday 23rd March – Friday 2nd April 2020
Monday 17th – Friday 21st February 2020
Friday 28th February, 2020
Wednesday 4th – Friday 6th March 2020
Monday 16th & Tuesday 17th March 2020
Monday 6th – Friday 17th April 2020

Rita McCabe

**Rita McCabe,
Principal.**