

19th December 2024

Dear All,

How fitting that once again the end of the longest term of the academic year falls in the 3rd week of Advent, the theme of which is, "rejoice". I suspect that this is pretty apt given how many of us will be feeling as the end of term draws near.

Everything we do at Xavier is focused on people. Our mission, which is in part, *to inspire, nurture and fulfil the calling of every person we encounter*, informs all that we do and these people we serve, children, staff and families are our number one priority. With that in mind, I wanted to start by mentioning some of them.

Whilst it has once again been a term of many exhilarating highs, there have also been some crushing lows. Nothing shakes our trust community like the unexpected death of a member of the Xavier family and I would ask you all to remember in your prayers Joseph Sandri Durban and Freddie Driessen, along with their families, friends and the school communities at Salesian, Holy Family and Cardinal Newman, where they were so well known and loved. We give thanks for all that they blessed us with during their lifetimes and pray that for those who knew them, their memory will provide the inspiration to push on to achieve ever more for the greater good, in. May they rest in peace.

We also give thanks this week for those members of staff who are moving on at the end of this term. Particular thanks go to Pam Lennox for her remarkable stint of 37 years dedicated service as a teaching and premises assistant at St. Edmund's in Godalming; and to Steve Tindall who is stepping down as Headteacher at Holy Family, Addlestone after 35 years of service to Catholic education. Many reading this will already be familiar with the huge impact that Steve's leadership has made at Holy Family over the last 10 years and before that, as Deputy Head at Cardinal Newman. For those who don't know Steve, his kindness, dedication and commitment to excellence have ensured that hundreds of children and families have benefitted from a great Catholic education and have been supported and nurtured to live life to the full as a result of the excellent foundations laid down by both the provision at Holy Family and the well-being charity, *Bee-lieve*, which Steve founded. For all those we say farewell to this term, we offer our appreciation and prayers for everything they have blessed us with and for their ongoing success and happiness.

One of the reasons that this has felt like such a long term is the sheer amount that everyone has packed in! Once again children and students have not only enjoyed and benefited from 15 weeks of academic learning, they have also taken part in countless extra-curricular activities, fixtures, performances, events and trips. All this has culminated in recent days with some beautiful nativity plays, carol concerts and Advent services. These have all, in their own unique way, shared the true message of Christmas, that God so loved each and every one of us that he sent his son Jesus Christ to save us from the darkness. This ultimate act of humility, of becoming completely vulnerable in a broken world, in order to spread a message promoting peace and justice, speaks to the essence of everything our schools are called to do. Everyone who learns, works or supports our mission, provides a point of light in the darkness, and coming together as a whole Trust provides a very bright light indeed. Thank you for the part you have played in that again this term.

Anyone wanting to take further practical action to spread that light at Christmas, might want to consider buying a [CAFOD](#) world gift or, for those wanting to do something closer to home, donating to the [Catholic Children's Society Christmas Crisis Fund](#).

Thank you again for being part of all this. With all best wishes for a happy, holy and peaceful Christmas.

God bless,

James Kibble
CEO