St John Fisher News

1 February 2013 No. 169

Katharine of Aragon Mass

Each year Mass is said in Peterborough Cathedral to mark the anniversary of Katharine of Aragon, who was the first wife of Henry VIII. She was laid to rest in what was then Peterborough Abbey, now the Cathedral, on 29 January 1536. Her story and Henry's played a key part in the Reformation in England and the way in which Christian teaching and worship evolved in this country.

Katharine of Aragon died at Kimbolton Castle on 7 January 1536. At a splendid funeral on 29 January, attended by four bishops, six abbots and approximately two hundred mourners, one thousand candles were lit for her as she was buried in the north presbytery aisle in what was then Peterborough Abbey. She had been revered by many for her piety and dignity.

Her original tomb was of black marble with gilded letters and decoration but this was heavily damaged when Oliver Cromwell's soldiers sacked the cathedral in 1643. It was not until the late 19th century that a wife of one of the Cathedral canons, Katharine Clayton, began a public appeal asking all the Katharines of England to donate to the replacement marble slab which can be seen today.

I was able to attend this year's Mass on Wednesday morning, at the start of an annual celebration of Katharine's life. For further information about this event please visit the cathedral website http://www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk

Thank You

This week I received a very nice letter from the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT) thanking the students for their contributions to the charity's work. This was from this year's advent fundraising. I continue to be impressed by the generosity of our students despite the current economic conditions. It is always better to give than to receive, but to be thanked like this is very welcome.

Year 9 Options Evening

The postponed evening took place on Tuesday. I do hope that students and parents alike found it useful. There are so many changes in education at the moment, and future ones being announced almost weekly, that it can be confusing. We endeavour with events like these to ensure that parents have the correct information and are able to ask questions. If there are any further questions please ask Mrs Pereira in the first instance.

Catholic Headteachers' Conference

Last week I attended this annual national conference. There was some very valuable time spent together praying and exploring our faith, including Mass on Thursday evening in Westminster Cathedral. We had some informative speakers updating us on developments in Catholic education and it was partly reassuring to know that other schools are facing the same challenges as we are.

One of the speakers was the former education minister, Nick Gibb. He was given rather a rough ride about the refusal to recognise RE in the performance tables, which were published the day he spoke, and the latest proposals to reform A levels were also the subject of much criticism. Last minute changes to the performance tables for A levels meant that some subjects are given more weight than others and yet again RE is not one of them. The effect of these changes in non-faith schools is already well-known, with far fewer students choosing to study RE and a consequent fall in the number of RE teachers. Although these points were made quite strongly to the ex-minister he refused to accept them.

Reminder of Dates

Already we find ourselves approaching half term – this is a very short term. I would remind you that school is closed for half-term break from Monday 11 to Friday 15 February. We are also closed to students on Monday 18 February for our staff training day. **Students return to school on Tuesday 19 February** which is Week 1 of the timetable.

Year 11 will already be counting down to their next exam: most of them are taking Maths GCSE on Thursday 28 February, so much revision over half term please.

Sean Hayes

Music Taster Sessions

Is your son or daughter interested in learning to play the piano or keyboard?

Mr Hansel will be running taster sessions on Friday lunchtimes from 1.30 to 2.00 pm in the Music practice room. Sessions will run on 1 and 8 February.

There is no need to book, just turn up and have a go.

Miss Bird, Subject Leader, Music.

ESOL Parents / Carers School Support Course

This course is aimed at parents / carers for whom English is not their first language but who have a level of basic literacy. The course will run for 8 weeks from **Monday 25 February to Monday 29 April** from **16.00** to **18.30.** Meet in School Reception on Monday 25 February at 4 pm.

Parents / carers will:

- learn about the UK education system
- find out more about what their child does in school
- improve their English for communicating with their child's school
- gain confidence in supporting their child's learning
- support their children to make good progress with their education
- find out about how they can carry on with their own learning

To enrol, or to find out more, phone 01733 343646 ext 523, or email eal@stjohnfisherschool.org.uk, or call in to the school.

Year 9 History Visit Imperial War Museum – Duxford Thursday 14 March 2013

During the focus day on Thursday 14 March the history department has organised a visit to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. During the visit students will take part in a session, delivered by staff from the Imperial War Museum, on the Battle of Britain. There will also be an opportunity to look at the numerous displays and exhibitions in the museum including a 1940s operation room, the Battle of Britain exhibition and the land warfare exhibition. This will be a very enjoyable and informative day.

Students have been issued with letters about the trip. If they need another copy they should ask their teacher or Mr Barwise. The cost of the trip is £10.

Students should return the reply slip and payment to Student Services as soon as possible. *Mr Barwise*

News from Westminster House

Westminster students are maintaining high standards in lessons with merits continuing to roll in. The students with the highest number of merits for each form are:

Joanna Galus [W9], Amy Opie [W8], Carmo Soriano [W7], Stephen Noronha [W6], Lauren Gibson [W5], Barnabas Brunner [W4], Tristan Earl [W3], Safaa Moradi [W2] and Afifa Zaman [W1].

And fame and fortune beckons for Ana Gabriela Marques, star of the latest KFC advert. Congratulations! *Mr Clifford, Head of House*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHVx7NNB7X8

Holocaust Memorial Day

As a representative of St John Fisher Catholic High School I had the opportunity to participate in a prestigious event held in Cathedral Square, Peterborough, where I had the privilege of meeting Major George Simons and honouring the victims of the Second World War. The aim of Holocaust Memorial Day is to raise awareness and understanding of the events of the Holocaust as a continuing issue of fundamental importance for all humanity, as well as reflect on recent atrocities that raise similar issues. This was achieved by representatives of various cultures, starting from the Muslim community and concluding with the Roma community. The person who had the most influence on me was Elisabeth Walker whose poem was very touching as the audience felt empathy towards the victims of the Holocaust, and her family who grieved after the Holocaust as they lost a member of their family. Elisabeth is an exceptional role model for me, therefore meeting her in person was an incredible accomplishment.

My role in this event involved announcing and greeting remarkable people who devote themselves to enhancing our City. These included Dan Vajzovic, the Cambridgeshire Police Divisional Commander for Peterborough. Participating in this great event I had the chance to discover more about their lives and receive valuable advice for my future. As Head Girl I was delighted to represent our school in front of such influential people and address them on behalf of our school.

St John Fisher had a major part in this key event. Therefore, I would like to thank Stephanie Beara and Siobhan Kelly, as well as all the actors, on behalf of the school for putting so much effort into the performance and representing our school with pride.

Ewelina Strug, Head Girl

Changes to Stagecoach Timetables

If you use Stagecoach buses to travel to school, please make sure you are aware of the new schedule when we return after half term.

Further details are available from the Stagecoach website www.stagecoachbus.com and a copy of the new timetables is available at school reception.

Mr Berry

House Update	House Points	Attendance %
Beverley	6950	92.7
Cambridge	5875	94.0
Rochester	7850	92.5
Westminster	9350	93.9

@sjfpeterborough