



# St. Clare's Newsletter

December 2023



## Principal's Message

Yes we have made it to the end of the first term 2023. It doesn't seem that long ago since we returned from the summer break but since that time, we have packed a lot of activities into the term. The school has opened its first ever Social and Communication class in the Infinity room. We are so pleased to report that all the pupils are settling well and the staff are being expertly guided by Ms Lees.

It has been strange these past couple of months not having Mr Birt around but he is recovering well from his injury. We are looking forward to seeing him back at his post sometime in the new year. Of course we are only so glad that Fr Devlin has continued his recovery from his illness and it is wonderful to see him in the school and in the church helping us prepare for the Christmas celebrations.

As this is the last Newsletter of the year, it would be so remiss of me not to thank my wonderful staff both teaching and non-teaching. This school is a very special place, a place of safety and happiness where every child is appreciated and encouraged to rise to their full potential. That is only achieved by the dedication of the staff. We are all most fortunate to have them at St Clare's. So on behalf of myself and Mr Birt, we want to acknowledge them all for all that they do and we hope that Christmas 2023 brings them all good cheer, health and happiness.

To my Board of Governors I also extend my grateful thanks for your time and efforts throughout this year.

On behalf of all the staff, we wish you our parents and guardians a wonderful Christmas Time and we look forward to seeing you and your children all in the New Year (On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January for all pupils).  
Mr O'D.

## Nativity Plays

It's the most wonderful time of the year and nothing says Christmas more than the annual Nativity Plays. This year all the younger classes tread the boards at various times in the coming weeks. Up first are the Nursery Children this coming Friday at 9.30am in the nursery. We are expecting a full house and please feel free to bring along your cameras to catch those unforgettable moments.

Next up will be the P1 and P2 classes who will be presenting their nativity story in the primary school assembly hall on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 9.45am. Get there early to grab your set.

The P3/P4 classes will present their Nativity tableau in St Paul's Church on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December at 11.00am. This is a retelling of the nativity in action and song and it will also be broadcast live on Church Services tv. This will be recorded so you can download the performance for all those who have not been able to attend in person. The great news is all these performances are free of charge. We hope as many of our parents as possible can attend these very special performances. Everyone in the family are most welcome to attend each of these performances.

## School Choir

We are so proud of our various choirs in the school. Earlier in November our chamber choir performed at the prestigious SVP concert in Clonard with international singing sensations Margaret Keys, Fr Martin O'Hagan and Malachi Cush. The Christmas choirs continued their busy programme with a magnificent performance at the Lansdown Hotel last week. Many of our parents will want to come along to the choir performing at the St George's Market at 12.30pm on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December and at the Kennedy Centre at 1.30pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December. The choirs will also perform in various local folds in the next week.



School finishes for all pupils for Christmas on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December at 11.00am. Classes resume for all on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

## Sporting Sponsorship

Players representing our various sporting teams will look better than ever this year thanks to the sponsorship of the new school kits. Our first sponsor is thanks to Stephen Brennan from rtd (Realtime Digital). Stephen has helped promote the school in the past with the virtual tours of the school he produced for our website during covid. With a name like Brennan you have probably guessed that he is related to our lovely Mrs Brennan and Jim our caretaker. Indeed, he is their son and his most generous sponsorship is appreciated by us all.

Alongside Stephen's contribution is that of City Council representative Paul Doherty. Paul is the inspiration behind Foodstock in Andersonstown. No-one needs reminding of the charitable work that goes on there which assists all parts of our community. Paul is a very generous human being and we will wear the Foodstock logo proudly on our shirts in order to highlight the tremendous challenges that society faces at present. Thank you so much to both men for this tremendous donation. They have also pleased our dedicated coaches no end too : Mr Mrs Brennan Soccer, Mr McAteer and Miss Welsh Gaelic Football and Mrs Cushman Hurling and Camogie. A big shout out also to Michael and all the coaches at Davitts GAC who loyally support our school every week with their coaching.



**Our Teams with Paul Doherty**



**Our Teams with Stephen Brennan**

# December Picture Board



**P1 Rehearsing for the Nativity Play**



**Adam McKee Goalkeeper of the Month Donegal Celtic**



**P1 Just Love Christmastime**



**St Clare's  
PS and  
Springfield  
PS joint  
Christmas  
Carol  
Procession  
at Lanark  
Way**



**St Clare's Choir performing for  
Clonard Residents**

**December Award Winners**



### P7 Confirmation

It was with great regret that the retreat for the P7 pupils preparing for Confirmation was postponed at the last minute. This was due to illness for those presenting. This however did-not stop the beautiful ceremony of the Service of Light taking place on 5<sup>th</sup> December in St Paul's Church. Thank you to all the parents who attended making this a very special occasion.

The retreat will take place at a future date.

The sacrament of confirmation will take place in the church on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 11.00am. All pupils are asked to be in their seats no later than 10.40am this day. The sacrament will be celebrated by Fr Devlin and a special picture filled souvenir will be produced for the occasion.

### P7 Transfer

Many congratulations to our P7 pupils who took part in the SEAG transfer tests in November. Without exception, every pupil put their best effort in and we applaud their endeavor in this respect. Mr O'Doherty will be interviewing all P7 parents in January to discuss their options for post Primary School and times and dates will be distributed when we return in January.

### Nursery and P1 Enrolment

The EA portals will open for registering parental selection for Nursery and Primary 1 places for September 2024 on 12 January 2024 (See below for guidance). It is vitally important especially for Nursery placements that these are completed within the time frame set by the Education Authority. If any parent is having trouble with the ED portal for registering a school choice in September, please see either Ms Shaw at the Nursery or Mr O'Doherty at the Primary School.

### Open Nights for Year 8

We strongly advise all our parents and pupils who are moving to post primary school next September to attend all the various open nights that will be available in the coming weeks. Minds can change when you get the chance to see how schools operate and what they have to offer. It will really enhance your knowledge of the schools when making the big decision.

### Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve

One of the most special celebrations of the mass takes place at the vigil mass on Christmas Eve. All pupils from P4-P7 are asked to attend this mass on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December at 6.00pm. There will be a special practice for all those pupils who wish to sing in the choir on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December from 4.00pm-4.45pm. Only those pupils who attend the rehearsal should form part of the choir. This is a joint venture with St Paul's PS. Every year we have a great turn out of our pupils, and we are looking forward to celebrating the nativity of our Lord with a joyous sound of singing.

### Christmas Dinners

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December was Mr O'Doherty's favourite day of the year. Why? It was Christmas Dinner Day!!! Every morning Long before many of us are awake, Dolores and her team are in the kitchens preparing first rate meals. We know we have the best Kitchens in Belfast Schools and we want to thank all the ladies behind the hatch for everything they have done for us this year.



**Nollaig Shona Daoibh, guimid gach rath agus séan oraibh san athbhliain.**