

Catholic distinctiveness

St Anthony's is a Catholic school in the heart of Sunderland. We seek to follow the mission of Christ to *'go and make disciples of all nations.'* Our school is also a proud Mercy School. In Sunderland we can date this back to when the Sisters of Mercy first established a presence in our city in 1843 and when our school was first opened in 1902. Our Mercy Ethos permeates every element of our school community and we take pride in our history and Mercy traditions. The key facets to our Mercy Ethos are:

- Christ-centered
- Faith-enlightened
- Build communities
- Show concern for the poor, especially women and girls
- Pursue excellence

We have a very visible presence around our Mercy Tradition with artwork and quotes from their founder Catherine McAuley and current Sisters of Mercy displayed all across our buildings. We celebrate key events in our Mercy History for example: Good Cup of Tea Day and Mercy Day, when we gather as a staff body and reflect on our roles as, *"shining lamps, giving light to all around us."* **Catherine McAuley**

At the commencement of lessons and form time we say a prayer together. This is often led by staff, but students are welcomed to offer any needs, people or events in prayer. We receive a weekly prayer PowerPoint from our chaplain Mr Harrison with prayers for each day alongside Sunday's Gospel passage for use that week. This gives us an opportunity to reflect on our own lives and what we can do to support those in need in light of the Gospel message and the example set by the Sisters of Mercy.

In addition, students and staff are placed on a rota for Mass in the Chapel on a Friday morning. We welcome members of our local clergy to celebrate Mass with us. This is prepared during the preceding week and is student-led. Form classes also engage with Chapel Time once in a calendar year where they can gather as a form and pray for their particular needs.

We are very lucky to have our own Pupil Chaplaincy Team who work tirelessly throughout our School community organising events, for example: Remembrance Day, Holocaust Memorial Day and Ash Wednesday service. The Pupil Chaplaincy Team consists of students from every Year Group in school including our mixed Sixth Form. They aim to engage their peers with the Catholic Life of the School and signpost key events in our calendar for example: preparing Christmas Assemblies.

We hold many enrichment activities outside of school that give students a chance to grow in their own faith journey; such as: annual pilgrimages to the Youth Village on retreat, attending Flame: The Youth Catholic conference at Wembley Arena and The Source at Newcastle Cathedral for a monthly gathering of Catholic youth. Also, all Year 7 students in their first term at St Anthony's are given a guided tour of Oaklea Convent which is where the Sisters of Mercy live and work.

Our school community is diverse and we are very proud of our inclusive nature for members of all faiths. In our RE Curriculum we cover all the Abrahamic Faiths and in Sixth Form during our General RE lessons, we investigate and learn about other World Religions. We hold very close links with one of our partner schools in Rajkot, India with whom we participate in a cross-continent Faith Information Exchange annually. Every year we hold a Faith Festival where local Faith Leaders are welcomed into our school to talk about their own religion, students relish the chance to direct questions to our visitors and is a very popular enrichment activity.

As a central facet to our Mercy Ethos we support faith in action projects, particularly those for women and girls as it is paramount to our work as Catholics to see the face of Christ in everyone we meet.. We take part in numerous charity initiatives including: CAFOD, Missio, Teenage Cancer Trust, The Bradley Lowery Foundation and St Benedict's Hospice. We are truly living out the message of our founder Catherine McAuley when she says, *"A community in which this universal charity reigns, is capable of surmounting all difficulties."* **Catherine McAuley**

St Anthony's is a place where your child can nurture their own distinct faith journey and be prepared for life outside of school where they may grow in the light of our Mercy Tradition.