

Spiritual Life at Mayfield School

May all possess that peace which is God's own gift. Cornelia Connelly

Our Catholic ethos is at the heart of all we do here at Mayfield. As a diverse and welcoming community, we aim to support every member of the Mayfield community in their journey to become *'all that God wants them to be'* (Cornelia Connelly).

Immersed in the charism of Blessed Cornelia Connelly, and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, we help prepare girls to be ready to respond to the needs of the age, while endeavouring to constantly provide opportunities for encounter with God throughout the school day. We strive to engage students with the spiritual aspects of themselves, so that they are spiritually aware and able to make their own choices and form their own beliefs.

Proudly Catholic, we embrace the *'catholic'*, or *'universal'*, element of our school, where girls are welcomed, supported and included, regardless of their faith background or journey. Absolute mutual respect is expected among staff and students. Our charism, our universality and our welcome all combine to make Mayfield a safe and nurturing environment for every young woman who joins our special family.

The Chaplaincy at Mayfield School

Let us love one another and pray.

Let us love one another and be faithful.

Let us love one another and be humble.

Let us love one another and be filled with the charity of God.

Let us love one another with God, in God and for God, and we shall thus be one with him for all eternity.

Cornelia Connelly

The chaplaincy sits at the heart of spiritual life at Mayfield. It exists to provide relevant spiritual and pastoral support to all girls and staff in the school community. While remaining true to the Catholic identity of the school, and drawing heavily from the example of Blessed Cornelia Connelly, our Foundress, the Chaplaincy is committed to offering an experience which will take into account the lived experience and faith needs of all the members of the Mayfield community, students and staff alike, whether they are those:

- who are regularly practicing Catholics;
- for whom Mayfield might be their first and only experience of Church;
- from other Christian denominations;
- from other faith backgrounds, or none.

The Chaplaincy strives to engage students with the spiritual aspects of themselves, no matter what their experience of faith or Church, so that they are spiritually aware and able to make their own choices and form their own beliefs.

The Chaplaincy serves a number of functions:

- To offer pastoral support to girls, staff and the wider school community.
- To provide opportunities for prayer, worship and the Sacraments, especially the celebration of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation to girls, staff and parents.
- To ensure a planned series of opportunities and events to strengthen spiritual and personal development.
- To facilitate the whole school involvement in community service and charity fundraising.

The Chaplaincy Team

The Chaplaincy Team comprises the Lay Chaplain, Deputy Head Pastoral, Head of RS, and Chaplaincy Prefect. It also includes Chaplaincy Ambassadors, taken from each year group in the school, whose role is to promote Chaplaincy activities and faith opportunities in the school, while representing the students' views to the Chaplain.

The team is supported by several members of staff - the Chaplaincy Support Group - who meet once per half-term to advise the chaplaincy team, and feedback on issues or concerns.

The Chapel

Built in the early 14th Century, we are incredibly lucky to have Mayfield School Chapel on site. Morning prayer, Mass, liturgy and choir practice all take place in the chapel, as does the annual Live Crib Nativity performance. The Chapel is a place of life, and is open to all, whether you wish to say a prayer, light a candle, or simply take advantage of a quiet place to sit and think. We endeavour to have the Blessed Sacrament reposed in the tabernacle at all times while the school is open.

Baptisms, Weddings, Memorial Services and Funerals

For those with close links to the school, such as Old Cornelians and members of the Mayfield community, it may be possible to hold Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals or Memorial services in the School Chapel. Permission to use the School Chapel is generally limited to events that would take place outside of the school term. The Lay Chaplain is the primary contact for more information.

Communal Worship

'I most ardently desire to see you closely united to God in prayer and in all your actions.' –Cornelia Connelly

Liturgy

Each girl participates in one liturgy each week, with Years 7 to 10 having Liturgy on Tuesday mornings, and Years 11 to 13 having Liturgy on Wednesday mornings. The liturgies provide a regular time of reflection and are an act of communal worship for all girls. Students and staff are encouraged to play a role in delivering Liturgy, whether that is suggesting themes or topics, picking hymns, or writing or delivering the liturgies. The girls are encouraged to participate fully and to give regular feedback to ensure the liturgies remain engaging and prayerful.

Eucharist

“The Eucharist is the Source and Summit of our Christian Life.” (CCC 1324).

It is integral to the faith life of Mayfield School. During term time, we endeavour to offer a minimum of two Masses per week in the School Chapel, one of which fulfils the Sunday obligation.

Boarders are expected to attend and participate in Sunday Mass. Mass in the school is also open to all members of the community who wish to attend. Wherever possible, students will fill the service roles of the Mass, for example: ushering, serving altar, reading, leading singing and, where appropriate, distributing Holy Communion.

The school endeavours to ensure sufficient members of staff are trained to lead a Service of Word and Communion in the event of a genuine emergency. However, a Service of Word and Communion can never replace the Holy Sacrifice of Mass.

Whole School Masses

For special school events and for Holy Days of Obligation that fall during term time, the school will have a Whole School Mass that is held during the school day. Mass will normally be celebrated twice on these occasions, so the entire student body can attend. In most years the following whole school masses are held:

- Early September (Welcome Mass)
- 15th October (Foundation Day)
- 8th December (Feast of the Immaculate Conception)
- 15th January (Cornelia Connelly’s Birthday)
- Ash Wednesday
- Ascension Day
- 29th June (Feast of Saints Peter and Paul)

Prayer

“Prayer is the great source from whence the graces of God flow into the soul. Apart from prayer there are no graces; without graces, no virtues nor any means of acquiring them.” Cornelia Connelly

Prayer is integral to life here at Mayfield School. Our prayer life follows the rhythm of the school day, as our liturgical practices follow the rhythm of the Church calendar.

It is our duty to offer reverent, diverse and appropriate prayer experiences, and to ensure enough time is devoted to prayer and worship in the timetable, to impress on everyone the importance of prayer.

The prayer life of the school should, as much as possible, reflect the liturgical life of the Church. Care should be taken to highlight and explain the various seasons, and to offer appropriate liturgies; for example, access should be offered to the Stations of the Cross regularly during Lent. Throughout the year, common forms of prayer and devotion are made available to the students, to enable them to experience different ways of praying.

Prayer is offered in a number of ways:

- **Daily Morning Prayer**

Starting the day with a morning prayer is important to the school community and students are expected to begin each day with prayer. This will either be done in tutor time, assembly or through Liturgy.

Tutors are given a range of resources to lead morning prayer with their tutor groups and students are encouraged to actively participate in this part of tutor time. One resource is a School Prayer Book, based on the shorter form of the Liturgy of the Hours.

For any staff, students or other members of the school community who wish to join, morning prayer is also said in the Chapel at 8.10 each morning.

- **Grace Before Meals**

Students are encouraged to be thankful for the food they eat, and in all dining rooms in the school, Grace is shown prominently.

- **Daily Evening Prayer**

Prayer is said in the boarding houses each evening and the boarding houses are provided with a range of resources to facilitate evening prayer.

- **Staff Briefing and Meetings**

Staff briefing and whole school staff meetings begin with a time of prayer or reflection. This is led by staff members.

Sacraments

Mayfield School is committed to making all appropriate Sacraments available to our students and Rosary and Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament are offered regularly throughout the year.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to all boarders once per term and is usually available before or after Sunday or Whole School Masses. A visiting priest will hear confessions at least once per term for day pupils and staff.

Confirmation

Confirmation is offered annually to students in Year 9 and above. Depending on the pastoral circumstances, this might be offered alongside the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist as RCIC provision.

The Confirmation preparation programme begins in September and continues throughout the school year. The Sacrament of Confirmation is usually celebrated in June. We believe the programme teaches young people to take ownership of their faith through various activities, conversations, but above all, prayer.

Young people from parishes in the local Deanery are invited to join the Confirmation programme, to prepare for and receive the Sacrament together with our students.

It may also be appropriate to offer Confirmation preparation to girls from a Church of England background. This should be agreed with the girl, her parents and her vicar.

Retreats

In Christian tradition, retreats are an important part of spiritual formation. Going on retreat allows you to separate yourself from your normal routine and responsibilities so you can be open and ready to listen to God. Every member of the school community is offered a retreat experience at least once per year.

Days of Recollection

Each year group has a Day of Recollection, which takes place off-site. The theme of the day tends to be based on the year group's Cornelian Principle:

Joy: We find joy in all we do

Compassion: We cultivate empathy

Integrity: We develop strong moral values

Generosity: We nurture a spirit of charitable giving and kindness for all

Gratitude: We are thankful

Respect: Through our actions we show that we value all

Courage: We have the confidence and resilience to make the right choices.

We are currently partnering with a new project at Ashburnham Place, called Closer to the Land. The purpose of this initiative is to help our students 'see God in all things' - in Creation, in their relationships, in the stillness of their own hearts. Our Days of Recollection focus on encounter, experience, and creation.

Staff Retreat

At the end of the Spring Term, all staff members are invited to a staff retreat day. This day helps build a sense of community between all the different departments within the school. It is a day to promote wellbeing, mindfulness, contemplation, as well as faith based activities and fun.

Catholic Social Teaching

'Generosity, generosity, generosity must be the beginning and ending of our life.' Cornelia Connelly

Catholic Social Teaching forms the foundation of everything we do at Mayfield, so it is natural that our charitable fundraising and outreach efforts fall under the Chaplaincy banner.

Fundraising

Each year, the Chaplain and the Charities Prefect select a suitable Whole School Charity, towards which all funds raised in that year will go. With some small exceptions, all funds raised by the various efforts throughout the school will go towards said charity.

Our priority, when choosing charities to support, is to focus on smaller, grass roots charities, preferably with some sort of link to the school. While the charity does not have to be Catholic or Christian in name, it must not have any aims or goals contrary to Catholic Teaching.

Outreach

The school motto is "Actions not Words". Here at Mayfield, it's more than a motto. The Actions not Words programme enables and empowers our students and staff to reach out and to serve the local community. Engagement with local primary schools is very important - whether that is sending students to the schools regularly, as mentors or reading buddies, or hosting primary schools on our campus for retreat days, sports coaching or science, maths, or language workshops.

Actions not Words, while lived out throughout the school, is formalised in Year 12, with students committing a minimum of an hour per week to a recognised Actions not Words programme. Current Actions not Words programmes include mentoring in local primary and pre-schools, and Team Green, committed to care for Creation.