



## 40 Acts of Mercy

We are now fully immersed in this season of Lent, the time we spend offering up prayer, good deeds and going without something of our choice to help prepare us for the celebration of Jesus' resurrection at Easter.

This year this season of Lent is given special significance due to Pope Francis' call for a 'Year of Mercy', asking us to pay special attention to doing good deeds to others and showing them the mercy and the love of Christ that we are all called to share. As part of this and during assemblies this past week, we have been asking all of our students to walk through 'the door of faith' and take part in '40 Acts of Mercy' this Lent.

40 different acts of giving back, doing good and living generously will be made available and all form groups will choose **ONE** from the list. All that has to be done is find some time over the season of Lent and before Easter and as a form to complete that act of mercy. Each act is only a small one and is designed to bring us together as a school community and truly walk through the door of faith into the Year of Mercy. *Luke Turner*

## Year of Mercy Door

During assemblies this week Luke has introduced students to the door that we have set up in the hall as part of our observance of the Year of Mercy. This began on 8 December and has been called by Pope Francis so that we can all focus on forgiving others. One of the ways we can participate is to walk through Holy Doors which have been opened in cathedrals and churches around the world, beginning with St Peter's in Rome. We have had a door built of our own which is portable and can be used in various ways until the Holy Year ends on 20 November, the Feast of Christ the King and the final day of the church year.

## Sacrament of Reconciliation

As part of our observance of Lent, Reconciliation Services will be held on Thursday morning next week, 3 March. Students who wish to will be able to speak to a priest between break and lunchtime, with practising Catholics receiving the Sacrament.

## Pre-Public Exams (PPEs)

Years 11-13 PPEs have been running this week and continue on Monday and Tuesday. Year 11 are reminded that there is no longer a second RE exam: this had been scheduled for Monday next. Parents' Evening for these three year groups will take place on Tuesday 15 March from 2.30 to 6.30 pm. Other students will be dismissed at 2 pm that afternoon.

## Rock Pop Choir to sing at Wembley

This coming Wednesday our Rock Pop Choir will be travelling to Wembley to sing with almost 6500 other singers as part of the Voice in a Million event. This event highlights the plight of children in care around the world and has the aim of eventually involving a million voices – hence the name. This is the first time that we have taken part and it should be a memorable experience for the students involved. Further details can be found at <http://www.voiceinamillion.com>

## Year 9 Options

Students are reminded that the deadline for return of your forms is this Monday 29 February. We will then start planning next year's timetable, basing our decisions on the forms that we have received. Any students that return theirs late will be fitted into classes where space is available *after* the others have been processed.

*Sean Hayes*

## World Book Day Friday 6 March

We will be having a dress-up in aid of World Book Day on Friday 4 March. Come to school dressed as your favourite book character for the day. There will be prizes for the best dressed male and female members of staff and students. For further details please see Mrs Stevens in the Library.

## Little Shop of Horrors

During the week before half term we had this year's school production of 'Little Shop of Horrors', which in Mr Reilly's words was 'blooming marvellous'. The impressive and dedicated cast, house band and back stage crew delivered a highly polished and professional performance. Mr Burgess said after the show that *'this has been the most challenging production so far but easily the best'*. Thank you to everyone who came and supported the show and we look forward to seeing you next year! If you would like to see photographs of the production please go to the gallery section on the school website.



## Visit to Greece : 10 – 14 February 2016

A group of sleepy staff and excited students left at 3.15 am in order to get an early flight from Heathrow to Athens. We arrived in Athens just after lunch and after checking into our hotel decided to go and explore. Having braved the metro we reached Akropoli station and got our first close up view of the Acropolis and the Parthenon. We went on the first of many long walks to take in some of the classical sights and soak up the atmosphere of a modern, vibrant, bustling capital city. Students were encouraged to forgo McDonalds in order to experience the delights of café culture. The selfie-stick also made the first of many appearances.

Our first full day was spent in the centre of Athens again. The weather was gloriously sunny as we began in the ancient Theatre of Dionysus, some helpful revision for GCSE and A level Classicists.

Students took the first of many photographs, although Euridice and Amanda seemed to misinterpret the concept of Greek gods and took a number of photographs of friendly, young, male, Greek students! We then climbed up to the Acropolis, taking in the splendid view of Athens and being overawed by the sheer scale and impressiveness of the temples and other buildings that remain. After a talk students were given the opportunity to spend time on their own and they all made the most of the chance to look at the buildings and soak up the atmosphere; some also drew sketches for their Art portfolios. After a lunch of gyros – real Greek fast food – we continued on to the Agora followed by the Acropolis museum. As



it was our last day in Athens we returned into the centre after dinner, to eat ice cream and go shopping in Plaka – the old, tourist district.

The next day saw us transfer to the Peloponnese and the south coast of the Greek mainland via the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion. This was impressively located on the very southern tip of Attica and was a popular stopping point for sailors in the classical world, who would go and leave offerings for the sea god before they embarked on their voyage. It also reminded us of the reach and the power of the classical city of Athens, whose domination of the seas stretched as far west as Sicily and as far east as the Black Sea.



We stopped again en route to view the Corinth Canal, which as a feat of engineering is quite amazing – the sheer scale is unimaginable until one stands on the bridge and looks down. We arrived at the seaside resort of Tolon and then had a pleasant couple of hours to walk along the beach, look at the shops and sit in the beach cafes. We managed to acquire a motley crew of assorted stray dogs to the delight and disgust of various members of the group.

Saturday brought a morning visit to Mycenae. After the attention of the group had been re-focused from more

stray dogs to 3,000 year old ruins, we explored the ancient citadel, which was supposedly the kingdom of Agamemnon, the most powerful king of the Greeks and the leader of the expedition against the Trojans. Students were very interested in the myths and the archaeological discoveries, and these were brought to life by a very knowledgeable guide

- Sofia - who had joined us for the day. Following Mycenae we travelled to Epidavros, site of a spectacular ancient theatre and a sanctuary to the Greek god of healing, Asklepios. We spent a lot of time in the theatre, testing the acoustics, climbing up the very steep

steps to the top and taking in the wonderful views. This brought our sightseeing to a close and we returned to Tolon for a final evening at leisure, with some rushed souvenir shopping and final opportunities to spend time with friends, old and new.

The flight home was uneventful and much quieter than the outbound journey. We returned to school on time and with everyone still on speaking terms. Thank you to all students who went on the visit and also to Mr Mannion, who was patient, kind and very good at checking we hadn't lost anyone.

Anyone for Pompeii in 2018?

Ms Wilson