



Dear Ampleforth students,

Thank you for listening 'with the ear of your heart' (from the Prologue of the Rule of St Benedict) during the Assembly in our beautiful Abbey Church yesterday morning. Here, if you could give two more minutes to read this, please, are the main themes of what I said, so that we can all add to 2023 (the year when we **were good**) to **doing good** (our theme for 2024).

- (i) The context of your **studies, your subjects** (important to St Benedict). You have amazing teachers who also give their time generously outside the lesson time to help you grow in your subjects. You can **do good** by giving more of your own time to your studies and by actively and respectfully making more of a contribution during your classes.
- (ii) The context of your wonderful boarding **houses** and your attitude to your **appearance, possessions, and tools** to accomplish your studies. Again, St Benedict emphasises the importance of looking after your space, making good-your bed, your desk where you study, and your clothes and appearance, to be a witness to Christ). **Do good** by looking after your rooms/personal spaces in the houses (and the communal areas like house kitchens): our wonderful domestic staff are there to help and encourage you, but they are **not** there to do what you should learn to do yourselves. **Do good** by ordering your books, files, I pads, pencil cases and notebooks and bringing them to **all** the lessons in a sequence before break, or from break to lunch. Also, as Chapter 32 of the Rule of St Benedict explains, look after the tools, clothes, and goods you need for your life at the College.
- (iii) The context of hospitality and **doing good** by developing friendships and partnerships with other schools, as well as acts of genuine charity, respecting the dignity of others. The Rule of St Benedict says in Chapter 53 'All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ.' I am not sure if we are yet good at this with visiting sports teams and their parents (after Ampleforth has won the match, of course!). The good work of many of you helping at St Benedict's Primary School during Advent showed us all how to approach our contribution to partnerships with maintained sector schools (supporting Mr Mitson). Our contribution to charity fund-raising, supporting Mr Davison, is also important if we are to **do good** in a meaningful way.

That's it folks! I wish you well, my pupils, for the New Year ahead, as you aim to build upon the good base of your Christmas reports,

ABW

The Headman