



Collegium Sancti Laurentii

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From the Headmaster's Study

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Dear Parents,

It's been an action-packed Lent term. It has been really encouraging to see our pupils embrace what I asked of them at the start of term – **to do good**. They have studied hard both in the classroom and out, taken on board the advice from their invaluable teachers, taken good care both of themselves and their surroundings, and shown genuine acts of charity. I am proud to be the Head leading this inspirational and transformational school and I thank pupils and staff for their commitment – our strength comes from working together and appreciating everyone's talents and I have certainly seen that this term.



Some highlights have been the energy of the Inter-House Cross Country and Swimming Competition at the start of term, welcoming Year 12 students Georgia and Jett from Rosebank College, Sydney as part of the International Benedictine Schools Exchange Programme (pictured with me below), the many guest speakers we have been fortunate to hear from including Maj Gen Nick Perry (E91), former Assistant Chief of the General Staff, who spoke about decision making and leadership, Anthony Glaister (J71) on his peace-making work in Palestine, Tom Turner (T88) about his career in the world of cyber-security, Dr Ella Simpson about her work in prisons and rehabilitation, Lord Deben who made a compelling case for Climate Action, Sir Julian Brazier about being a Catholic in the world of politics, and a fascinating evening with Prof Stephen Blackmore, His Majesty's Botanist. Marie and I also attended the annual Catholic Independent Schools Conference and shared our vision of Benedictine scholarship with the other schools in attendance.



Our musicians have continued to impress with a stunning Vigil Mass to a full congregation at Westminster Cathedral, a joint Choral Evensong at Ripon Cathedral with their Cathedral Choir, the spectacular Schola 50th Anniversary concert where the Schola joined forces with past members for a memorable performance of Mozart's Requiem, and this week's Lent Meditation, with reflection, prayer, beautiful music and readings for the season. In addition we've enjoyed outstanding performances in the musical, *Little Shop of Horrors*, which had the audiences chuckling and received standing ovations every evening, and the House Singing Competition, a wonderful way to involve every pupil in the school as the Houses battled to impress the judges – congratulations to St Margaret's for scooping first place in the Group category and to Agnes Richardson (A Year 12) for her Solo on the saxophone and Oliver Grace (CT Year 12), who won in the Open Class category.



In sport, netball and boys' hockey have taken centre stage. The U14 hockey boys had a really successful season with a strong win against Sedbergh and reaching the semi-finals of the T2 Yorkshire and North-East Finals, whilst the U18s were runners-up in the Yorkshire and North-East Cup. The 1st and 2nd XI have also been victorious against St Peter's this term. The girls really impressed in their netball fixtures with some top-quality play, especially against Sedbergh, who put out their strongest teams but were beaten by our U15A and U13A teams. The OA Sport Weekend was a great success with almost 100 OAs returning to the valley for a high-energy weekend of sport. I am very proud that our students won overall taking the top spot in girls' hockey, netball, football and cross country.



Marie and I have been moved by the level of service activity again this term. Pupils have gone above and beyond, giving of themselves and their time to do good and serve others. Through both a sponsored run and a sleep in in the bitter cold, Year 12 pupils have raised money for St George's Crypt and St Pio's Friary who support the homeless in Leeds and Bradford. Thanks to the Year 11 boys in St John's and St Cuthbert's & St Thomas', who organised an art exhibition of female pupils' work, much needed funds were raised in support of women's rights in Afghanistan. Such acts embody what makes Amplefordians compassionate, thoughtful people who learn to place the needs of others first.



We have continued to extend our hospitality to many people this term. We welcomed almost 300 students, staff and parents for the U13 Rugby Sevens and Netball Tournaments, and more than 600 for the U18 and U15 Invitational Rugby and U18 Netball Tournaments. We welcomed prospective families for Open Morning, Assessment and Scholarship Days, and Sixth Form Taster lessons.

We hosted the ever-popular Higher Education Conference when over 200 pupils from local secondary schools and delegates from universities, businesses and other organisations joined our Year 12 pupils and parents to learn more about future opportunities available to them. More recently we welcomed pupils from 8 schools all over the UK for the Da Vinci Decathlon, a multi-disciplinary academic competition designed to challenge and stimulate the minds of young people.

As we have moved through Lent, we have embraced weekly 'disconnect to reconnect' days giving the whole school community the opportunity to have time away from mobile phones and computers and instead spend time together in meaningful ways.

Looking ahead to the Summer Term, the broad and rich curriculum that Ampleforth offers continues but with a focus on supporting academic excellence in this crucial period of external and internal exams. Our beautiful valley will be a place of peace and stability with a purposeful atmosphere for study in every year group – a positive thing for us to enjoy being uninterrupted in the College for Benedictine scholarship and to support the holistic education we provide. This is a team effort, with the whole school community supporting each other, and particularly Year 11 and Year 13 as they embark on public exams. We wish them the very best.

All best wishes,

Peter



Midde Sixth Formers with me before leaving to go and work in the soup kitchen in St George's Crypt

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