

# AMPLEFORTH COLLEGE PRIZE GIVING 2024

My first word is a word of genuine thanks.

I am personally deeply grateful to the Headmaster, Peter Roberts, for inviting me to attend and give out the prizes at this Exhibition. This will be the first time that the Abbot of Ampleforth has done so since 2016 and it reflects the sense of collaboration and commitment to our common mission. It is impossible to imagine the College without the Abbey next door. The monastic community have been intrinsically involved in the life and development of this College since its inception and we are still committed to supporting a vibrant Catholic education that witnesses to the importance of faith.

Circumstances have dictated and made necessary the separation of Abbey and College into two independent Trusts with separate governance and finances. The demographics of the monastic community would have inevitably led to the reduction in the number of monks who are involved in the life of the College. This shift has happened gradually over a period of time, but it was predictable. The separation and reduced monastic presence should not be interpreted however as a loss of interest or commitment. The recent Ofsted inspection and that of the Catholic Schools Inspectorate both recognised, and rightly so, the high quality of the work of the Chaplaincy and the life of faith within the daily structure of the College. To have attained such top grades is something to give thanks for.

Yet at the same time the fragility of this offering cannot be underestimated, and it should keep us fresh, creative, and humble – this is the work of God and a work carried out for God. Monks may not be present in the large numbers as in times past, but this College was built on and stands as neighbour to a community of faith, who are enthusiastic to share the good news of the Gospel. Our praying presence is the first and most valuable service we give to our world and to the students, parents and Staff of this College.

I am so very grateful to my own brethren who serve as chaplains, confessors and celebrants at Mass because in these ways we nourish and nurture the gift of faith – we make God known and loved. In this way we contribute to the evangelisation of our nation, the transformation of our society and the revitalisation of our Catholic Church.

I would, therefore, in conclusion like to take this opportunity to assure parents, Staff, and students that the partnership of Abbey and College is here to stay. The Benedictine influence and values will be passed on to future generations as long as there are monks in this valley and as long as we can provide a spiritual resource. It is my hope and my expectation that together we will be able to ensure that future generations of Amplefordians will continue to be deeply imbued by the Benedictine understanding of the Gospel – imbued in such a way that they will be able to live the Gospel in the rest of their lives and make a significant contribution in our world.

Thank you for the opportunity to share in the joy of this exhibition experience. Be assured you are all held in prayer.

Abbot Robert Igo, OSB  
25 May 2024