

For God's Sake

By Laura McNamara

We in St. Louis CS decided to put together a Chaplaincy Team at the beginning of Lent this year. Our team members were picked randomly from all those who volunteered from First Year. 16 of us were chosen. From this year on, all students coming in to First Year will get the chance to join the Chaplaincy Team, so eventually all years will be a part of the team.

The team have done a number of projects since the beginning of Lent. For example our school had two statues – one of Our Lady and the other of Bernadette from a long time ago when the school was a convent. Members of the team together with two TY students painted a suitable background for the statues and added painted rocks and flowers so that it would be similar to the grotto in Lourdes. The project took a few weeks to complete and on May 1st we invited the local parish priest Fr. Paddy Kilcoyne to bless our new sacred space. We decided to have the blessing at break time so that whoever wanted to be there could. Many people came for the blessing including our principal and lots of staff and students. After the blessing we got some photos taken with all the Chaplaincy Team there. These were then put on the school website and Facebook page and in our local paper.

Another project we took on was over Lent. We decided to prepare a Lenten Garden in the School Chapel. It included items we brought from our own homes. For example, purple cloths, thorny branches, plants and butterflies. We also gathered up some stones to help create the space and in the centre surrounded by candles and the cross we placed a Trócaire Box. The theme of the garden was to remind us of scarcity, difficulty and gratitude. Also it was hoped that we would also be reminded of all we have and in so doing help those who are not as fortunate as us.

Now that it is time for exams we are organising a prayer service for Junior Cert exam students as it will be the last time they will be together as a year group. We have written our own prayers for the service and carved out a dove – a symbol of the Holy Spirit for the occasion.

Our final project for this year is to keep in touch with people associated with our school community who are sick or who have been bereaved. We hope to do this by sending them a card from the Chaplaincy Team on behalf of the school community.

I really have enjoyed being on the Chaplaincy Team so far and have learned a lot from the experience. I would really recommend this team to other students as it's a great way to experience your faith and reflect on what it really means to be a person of faith.

Laura McNamara

First Year Student