

St Michael's School

Society of St Pius X

Burghclere - Summer 2023



The new Fr Liogier de Sereys with Fr Summers, former headmaster, and his classmates, including Fr Jeindl. (Ecône, 30th June)



2022-23

Deo Gratias!

Dear Parents, Friends and Benefactors,

We are grateful to Divine Providence for having steered us through another successful school year. Pupils have progressed in knowledge, learning and, we hope, virtue, thanks to the unfailing dedication of our teachers and staff and the workings of God's divine grace.

The number of our pupils will increase in September, thanks to a large cohort entering year 1 and several other pupils coming on board in both the primary and secondary phases of the school. The boarding house is full. If we had more priests we could welcome more boarders, but priests are God's gift and they come in God's good time.

Another ex-Michaelian was ordained to the sacred priesthood this past June. Fr. Jean-Baptiste Liogier de Sereys spent four years at St Michael's, leaving in 2013. He becomes the sixth priest the school has produced. Would that there were more, but, then, every priest is a miracle and miracles are rare!

Katrina Sudlow, a former pupil who returned as a teaching assistant from 2012-14, will make her final vows as a teaching Dominican sister in Fanjeaux, France. Her name in religion is Sr Antoine Joseph.

Between those who consecrate their lives to God in religion, and those who, having married, now send their children to St Michael's, we are very blessed. St Michael's seeks above all to keep the flame of faith alive. It is no easy task in a world convulsed by hedonism and sin. Excessive pressure is laid upon the young to conform to ideals and behaviours that bring them anxiety and sorrow.

It is a grace of unfathomable worth to have a school where the children are safe in mind, body and soul. A good school is one where the child's soul has space and scope to blossom and this, in turn, requires access to the sacraments and to subject-learning that is guided and inspired by the wisdom of God's Word.

And then there is our new church! No words can adequately describe the pride and joy St Michael's feels as we prepare to move into the new building (end of September). The new building will bring to pupils, parents and the wider community a deeper understanding of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It will also anchor in the children's minds the great duty we have of reverence, worship and adoration. These form the essence and purpose of all education. They alone bring happiness and contentment.

Fr John Brucciani, Headmaster

Annual Prizes & Colours

PRIMARY SCHOOL	Best Effort	Best Progress
Infants	Beatrix Di Napoli	Emilia Cullen
Junior 1	Aurelia Kelly	John Malliff
Junior 2	Helena Turner	Nicholas Alford
ANGEL AWARD	Francesca Alford	



Physical (Full)
Andrew Millar
 Newbury Rugby 1st Team, u.16's
Amelia Jirgens
 Ballet - Grade 6 Completion
Nicholas McInnes
Peter Little
 Creative Arts (Drama) - ½ Colours

SECONDARY SCHOOL	KS3	KS4
Excellence RK	Marie-Clare Morris	Ralph Morley
Excellence Humanities	Marie-Clare Morris	Ralph Morley (<i>Warwick Prize</i>)
Excellence Sciences	Jack Williams	Jude Rexworthy (<i>O'Connor Prize</i>)
Most Improved RK	Thomas Finch	Eduardo Navarro
Most Improved Humanities	Elisabeth Pearce	Wolfgang Robinson
Most Improved Sciences	Thomas Finch	Francis Morris
Best Physical Education	Arthur Mills	Marcus Sherry
Most Progress Physical Ed.	Joseph Marshall	Paul Murphy
Highest Annual Merit Tally	Marie-Clare Morris	
BEST MICHALEAN	Noah Ollerenshaw	

Conduct (Full colours)
A Blatchford, P. Little, T. Malliff, R. Morley, E. Navarro
 Day to day example to younger students

Academic (Full Colours)
Marie Claire Morris
 200 academic merits attained

Spiritual (Full Colours)
Philip Jones
 2nd Chartres Pilgrimage

Spiritual (½ Colours)
Wolfgang Robinson
 Frequent Mass Attendance



SECONDARY SCHOOL COMPETITIONS	
BEST SPORTSMAN	Jude Rexworthy
BEST IN GOAL	Wolfgang Robinson
TOP SCORER (FOOTBALL)	Andrew Millar
TABLE TENNIS	Nicholas McInnes
POOL CHAMPION	Thomas Malliff
CHESS WINNER	Ralph Morley



Father blessing his father on his ordination day!

P prize giving offered the perfect opportunity to congratulate Fr Brucciani for his Priestly Silver Anniversary! Father was ordained on 29th June 1998. Xavier Morley delivered a speech and the primary and senior staff and pupils presented Father with a magnificent spiritual bouquet. **Deo gratias!**

Coming and going!



Our grateful thanks to Mr Eric Friar for his six years of teaching the sciences in secondary school. He has been an invaluable part of the science department. During his time at St Michael's, Mr Friar was able to obtain qualifications as Special Educational Needs Coordinator. He now moves on to the Clear School, five minutes away, as a new addition to the Science Department.

Mr Friar will be replaced by Mrs Florence Alford, (*MS Physics, PGCE*), an experienced teacher who is familiar with the school. We are very happy and proud to have her on board!

During the Easter term STEM Club pupils first looked into **the science of weaponry** with Mr Friar making small ballistas and crossbows, before tackling the construction of a larger ballista in groups from which they could fire ping pong balls and squash balls.



The latter half of the spring term STEM club saw **Bletchley Park** come to St Michael's. Over the 5 weeks, pupils learnt to decipher Morse Code and decode increasingly difficult cyphers through frequency analysis.



We then moved on to using "pringle-can" Enigma machines before the final message was decoded using an online Enigma machine. There were communist spies lurking

around every corner and it was touch and go whether the vital resources would be discovered before they fell into enemy hands. As you can see, the Nutella was discovered just in time by Gerard Marshall!



Mr Jackson, who himself had once worked at Bletchley Park, came in and talked to us about his time there. You could have heard a pin drop during his 40 min talk about listening in to the Russians and discovering his very own communist spies. The year 10s were a great help in supporting the new recruits and this in turn helped them clock up some Duke of Edinburgh volunteering hours.

If you fancy making your own Enigma machine out of a pringle can then here is the website for instructions. http://wiki.franklinheath.co.uk/index.php/Enigma/Paper_Enigma

If Bletchley Park were recruiting today, they would surely use the UKMT to help find the best maths minds of the day. The UKMT intermediate challenge in February saw **Ralph Morley** qualify in the top 4% for the next round. Around six million from around the world compete in the follow-on round with the top 25% being awarded a merit. Ralph was awarded a merit. Congratulations, Ralph!

The UKMT junior challenge was held at the end of April. **Miriam Czerwonka** came top in year 8 and won a bronze award. **Talal Dziurska** was top in year 7.

Year 9 pupils headed out to The Chase in Woolton Hill to complete the first of two required pieces of Geography fieldwork. Their task was to look at how a tributary of the River Enborne, which runs through this piece of National Trust land, changes as it flows downstream.

Pupils collected data including: the cross profile of the river channel; the velocity of the river discharge; and observation of any river landforms. This data, along with secondary data, was then used to decide how the tributary changes.



Fieldwork gives pupils a chance to see natural examples of the theories and concepts that they have studied, as well as giving them a chance to master practical skills. Information from fieldwork is needed to answer some of the questions in paper 3 of the Geography GCSE.



Biology Challenge In May every year the Royal Society of Biology runs a school competition for year groups 9 and 10. It consists of two 25 minute papers which cover school biology content and biological general knowledge. This year over 43,000 pupils in 621 schools took part. These pupils from St Michael's earned special merit in this year's competition:

Silver level: *Jude Rexworthy, Conrad Szarowicz*

Bronze level: *Francis Morris, David Lord, Xavier Morley*

Commended: *Francesco Debiasi, Andrew Millar*



Last March, years 10 and 11 went to Bayer at Green Park in Reading to have a session at Baylab. This is a laboratory funded and run by Bayer which holds sessions for schools. The pupils get a chance to use equipment and carry out techniques that are not generally used in schools. It also gives these older pupils an insight into the world of work in a big global company. The session that they took part in was 'Marvellous Mutations' and one of the things that they were able to do was to extract their own DNA.



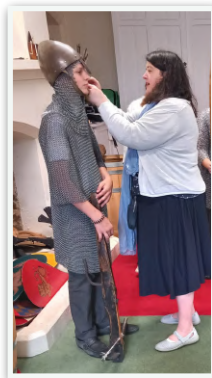
In February Years 7, 8 and 9 went to **The Living Rainforest**, just north of Newbury. They enjoyed an informative talk about the climate of the rainforest and the adaptations of animals and plants that live there. They also had plenty of time to explore the areas within the Living Rainforest. This trip supports the learning of

the Interdependence and Variety of Life topics in Science and the Wider World and Living World topics in Geography.

Arundel



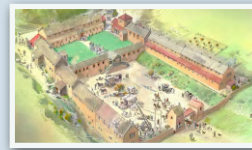
Years 7 and 9 recently visited Arundel Castle where a charming guide steered them through several periods of British history in a deceptively simple and engaging manner. There was more to see and handle than we could possibly manage in a brief visit, but some highlights included dressing in surprisingly heavy chain mail and handling some weapons of the medieval period. Mr Malliff successfully primed and set a crossbow - these operations are so much more difficult than they appear!



The castle and its grounds form a lively tapestry of human events, both tragic and joyful. The Castle remains the seat of the Duke of Norfolk - particularly interesting for Year 9, who had realised something of the power and status of the Duchy of Norfolk in their study of *A Man for All Seasons*. The immense proportions of the castle set on high ground are impressive. Inside, it is the majestic simplicity which captures the visitor's attention. The bedchamber of the unfortunate Queen Matilda was a reminder of the relative austerity of royal life in medieval times. We felt a moment's envy at the simplicity of the domestic arrangements: rolling out a bed mat has its merits in terms of easy hospitality!

Having descended the narrow spiral staircases (which we can definitely confirm would have posed an obstacle to a swift invasion, and to the discreet exit of a disgruntled guest to boot), and having viewed the impressive crime deterrent that was a medieval dungeon, appropriately termed the Oubliette, we moved to the Fitzalan Chapel, sadly damaged in the Civil War. The most eye-catching

To what extent are myths based on reality, and how do they evolve over time? Year 8 asked themselves these questions as they enjoyed an end-of-year trip to the **Ashmolean museum in Oxford** in early July. The mesmerising Labyrinth exhibition as well as the elegant Greek and Roman galleries provided much food for thought for students, who also took the opportunity to visit some other famous sights in Oxford: a great day out!



As part of our Classical Civilisation studies, Year 7 visited **Chedworth Roman Villa** in the Cotswolds. This is believed to have been one of

the grandest villas in Roman Britain and was lived in until the 5th century. Chedworth hosts a beautiful array of well-preserved mosaics, which the pupils enjoyed before being invited to make their own! This trip connected well with our topic on Roman living, which is part of the syllabus for Latin up to GCSE.

element among the tiny chantry chapels is the magnificent stained glass window depicting the efficacy of the Mass for the souls in purgatory. Among the dignified and suffering souls, framed by the *De Profundis*, are golden and laurel crowns symbolising King and Emperor - a salutary warning to the powerful which the owners of the castle took seriously, as evidenced by the rich history of recusancy and Arundel's famous martyr, St Philip Howard, 13th Earl of Arundel (depicted above).



The grounds were full of hidden jewels, including a pretty feat of engineering: a tiny fountain which holds suspended a spinning crown in front of Our Lady's image. History aficionados can note that this area of the castle was first opened as a performance area by Henry, Prince of Wales, son of James the First. And the lively tradition of performance endures, with Shakespearean dramas being performed regularly in the summer. Our next trip?



We have written previously about how St. Michael's produces students each year who achieve exam results that far exceed national averages, and how those students, with the support of excellent and dedicated teaching staff, coupled with their own commitment, outperform target and challenge grades (baseline expectations according to ability). What not all parents, friends or benefactors of the school may know, however, is how much more challenging this achievement has become for the school in recent years.

Current Complexity

There is a tendency to believe that, because class sizes are smaller at St. Michael's, it's easier to teach at the school and easier for students to learn. This is true in some respects; we certainly do not have the ill-discipline and lack of respect that most state schools encounter daily. However, our size is also a disadvantage in that we do not have the luxury of sets or streams according to ability. Our teachers, therefore, are teaching a very wide range of ability levels in the same class – something that any trained teacher will know requires skill. The examples below will hopefully provide some context for readers to appreciate more fully how complex a school curriculum now is.

Preparation

The days of a teacher turning up to class with chalk in hand, armed with just his interest and intellect, are long gone. It has become necessary for teachers to be thoroughly well-prepared for class if they are going to meet the range of needs in the class before them. Not only are there statutory obligations imposed by the inspectorate, but there is also the need for teachers to understand the restraints and many requirements of the exam board for their subject(s). It's still not uncommon in schools for less experienced teachers to teach the wrong syllabus or fail to cover part of it.

Special Educational Needs

Furthermore, to help all students achieve their particular potential, teachers need to be clear on the individual needs of students. The school is now encountering students with formal diagnoses of dyslexia, ADHD and dyspraxia, as well as students who have degrees of these assessments without a formal diagnosis. Lesson plans and schemes of work now have to accommodate ways to support these students alongside those who have no particular need, but whose abilities may range from Level 3 on the GCSE scale up to Level 9.

Exam Selection and Support

Support also doesn't end in the classroom. Coordination of effort to ensure students with additional need obtain extra time in exams requires a very competent exams officer to ensure all students are both entered for the right exam, and that applications for students who are entitled to extra time in exams are made in a timely manner, and that evidence is in place to justify the applications. And whilst this will surprise no-one, the different regulations that cover such situations (yes, there are more than one!) are not explicit in how schools fulfil their obligations, so additional time and thought is needed to ensure the school has a clear approach in place that meets the demands of the inspectorate. Just recently, the school was required to adjust its approach to students needing extra time in order to better meet requirements outlined by the yearly inspection from the JCQ (who oversee the different exam boards).

Identifying benchmarks

And how do we know what needs students have in the first place? This is a combination of baseline testing – the reason students in Years 7 to 9 take CATs (Cognitive Ability Tests) and SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) each year to establish levels of potential and progress – and teacher assessment. Teachers need to have clear programmes in place that will measure the progress of each student, in light of baselines, established through formative assessment (ongoing assessment such as weekly homework, projects, half termly tests, end of term tests and annual exams). None of this is possible without a clear scheme of work and lessons suitable to cover the content of the schemes that also meet individual student needs.

The challenge of EAL

And what if students are not progressing as expected, despite all of these safeguards? That's when the school needs to make particular interventions. The Student Support and Progress Policy, developed last academic year, covers every scenario (that we are currently aware of, at least!) It is designed to ensure support is in place so that no student falls through a gap. That policy covers EAL (English as an Additional Language). Any student with regular access to a language other than English may need additional support in this area. EAL support is not restricted to overseas students. All students who meet this particular criterion will be tested in the first half term of each academic year, and test results will determine whether they need additional support. If so, the EAL Coordinator will provide one to one sessions for them.

Supporting Additional Needs

Students with a formal diagnosis of SEN, in addition to classroom adjustments – we have students now working full time on a laptop to support their literacy and presentation – will also receive support from the Resource Teacher, a post created to provide one to one sessions with students to support their overall progress. Students without a formal diagnosis, but whom may need help with organisation, numeracy, literacy or other basic areas, will also have these sessions. Where students are simply not meeting their potential for other reasons, effort, attitude, etc., we have an Academic Action Plan in place to identify key targets for students to get them back on track within a school term. All the while, of course, we are keen not to forget the most able students and seek to continue developing the curriculum so that students have access to as many

opportunities as possible. The most able students are now leaving St. Michael's with 11 or 12 GCSEs, well-above the national average of 7.5 GCSEs.

All the while, our school ethos puts Catholicism and Our Lord at the centre of what we do. We are keen to avoid labels and to give the impression that students are not defined by this or that need, but rather that they are children of God, made in the Imago Dei (Gen. 1:27), equal in dignity and worth, if not abilities. Ultimately, St. Michael's is able to balance all of these demands because we have the three essential elements that a good Catholic school requires: parental support, Catholic teachers, and the presence of clergy. May God's Providence maintain all three elements to keep the Faith, despite all other restrictions and adjustments, central to what the school seeks to do.

R. Malliff, Head of Secondary



Boarders outings



Corpus Christi

Christ is carried through the school grounds.



Pool Champions 2023!



Rugby Champions 2023!



The Cadet Force gained a healthy number of young recruits in September. Thanks to the dedication of Sergeants Christian Brucciani, David Seeber and Philip Kane, the Force was able to parade with prestige and satisfaction at the Summer Fair, to the delight of the crowd.

Our kind Cadet and Band Patron paid for the (expensive) servicing and repairs of our collection of fifes. The pipers now pipe in tune!



Whilst developing general ICT skills, including familiarisation with the Google suite, email, word processing and presentations, General Studies is also an excellent opportunity to examine those topics not otherwise covered in the rest of the curriculum. Topics covered include basic economics, such as What is money? What do we mean by inflation? How do interest rates and mortgages work? How do I create a budget? These have led to some really interesting discussion and insightful questions about our current economic situation. We've looked at the political spectrum and what we mean by terms such as Left Wing and Right Wing, and where faithful Catholics tend to sit, or should sit, on the political spectrum. We have covered aspects of the political system, as well as basics of the legal system in this country. Some lessons have focused on aspects of geography, such as counties, regions and dialects of England, whilst others have looked at what we mean by logic and the various logical fallacies that we tend to face today. Skills have been developed in presenting and researching information and in identifying bias and outright propaganda in day to day life. Students have clearly enjoyed the opportunity to discuss these topical issues and have the opportunity to ask questions and understand the world around them a little better.

To bring the year to a close, and to use some of the research and analytical skills developed during the course, the last few lessons of the year, in between exams and trips and other important interruptions, have focused on law in the UK. Understanding the basics of how law comes into existence, and the process of proposing bills and parliamentary scrutiny, students had to work in small groups to propose their own law. The task was to make a proposal for a new law, or amendment to an existing law, develop an argument for their proposal and to consider possible counter-arguments that they might face during scrutiny. Year 7 certainly rose to the challenge, and after initial thought, each group had a proposal that they went away to research and develop arguments for. In the next lesson, groups were asked to present their proposal and face scrutiny from the rest of the class and the Speaker (me). They all stood up to questioning extremely well, showing obvious clarity of thought as well as research into their chosen area.

The first group proposed that abortion should be banned in the UK, and they made strong, logical arguments why this should be the case. Interestingly, aside from the obvious fact that abortion is murder of the most innocent and vulnerable members of society, the group based their arguments on the damage abortion does to the common good, and the way abortion strips society of talent, and its inherent selfishness that leads to societal issues such as depression and guilt, not to mention the happiness that children bring. It showed thought and nuance, which is

encouraging for their age. Obviously, it was particularly difficult for the rest of the class to offer many counter arguments as everyone was in full agreement and the motion was passed with ease – if only Westminster were the same!

The next group proposed quite a different issue, arguing that those who wish to smoke or vape should require a permit. Their basic premise was the introduction of permits, at a cost to the permit holder, in order to discourage smoking/vaping, especially amongst those under legal age. Their arguments included how the scheme would work, which was modelled on the driving licence, coupled with fines and parental punishments where violations occur. Again, the arguments were strongly about the common good and costs to society, but their general thrust obviously didn't convince the House who were rather concerned about potential government overreach and the general sense of punishment and control that the scheme seemed to be suggesting. On this proposal, the motion wasn't carried.

The final group to make a proposal were keen to prevent those who identify as the opposite sex from competing in professional sport as the opposite sex of their birth. Their main argument was the potential for unfair advantage, and they were keen to stress that this is not an equality issue but one of impact on sport, both for the players and spectators. Their arguments were strongly based on common sense and well-established physiological differences between men and women. They were also keen to point out that sometimes women have an advantage over men and so this doesn't just apply to issues of strength. Their arguments were clearly well received, with the House giving strong support for their proposal.

Unfortunately, a couple of groups were unable to present their proposals, as happens in the timetable for parliament at Westminster, so their proposals will be rolled into the next parliamentary session! For the record, they were proposing government grants for those over 25 seeking a mortgage, and that anyone over 14 should be able to learn how to drive. It would have been interesting to see how those went.

Nonetheless, the exercise showed, as has the whole year, that our students have the ability to develop cogent, logical arguments on topical issues. It is a skill that will become more and more necessary as the scope to have reasoned, logical debate narrows. As the campaign to invert truth gathers pace, it becomes all the more necessary for our students to examine the world around them and to both identify and know how to counter the folly around them. Hopefully the General Studies course in Year 7 has helped develop that ability and will continue to be harnessed across the rest of their time at St. Michael's.

R. Malliff, Head of Secondary

Primary Phase - Lenten & Summer Terms

Our primary school aims are to educate children in virtue in a happy and safe environment and to help them fulfil their academic and physical potential.



During the Lenten term the children were happy and, I hope, grew in virtue! Lent provides the perfect opportunity to encourage the children to think of others and to offer up their difficulties. The primary school council chose to support the 'Mini Vinnies', the children's section of The Vincent De Paul Society. Our activities included writing letters to the lonely, extra visits to the chapel and collecting goods for food parcels and care packages.



The children have worked hard across the curriculum. Jr 2 were introduced to computer lessons and have learnt to create documents and graphs. The Infants visited Milestones Museum to support their topic on transport. Jr 1 visited Reading Museum to examine the replica of The Bayeux Tapestry, which was part of their history learning. Jr 2 was learning about The Tudors and visited Hampton Court Palace.



In the Spring, the children gave a presentation to parents of their learning in poetry, recorders, dance and artwork.

They celebrated World Book Day by dressing up as different book characters and adding new books to their fiction library. Each class had a design technology project. Congratulations to Aoife, Cecilia and Melanie who won prizes for their elastic-power vehicle, bridge and land-yacht respectively.

Thank you to Mrs Brucciani, who organised a French market for the children to practise their French shopping vocabulary. It ended with a French 'gouter' of baguette and chocolate. A very enjoyable and beneficial experience for all!



The Lenten term ended with a recollection and confessions given by Fr Steele. How rare for children, nowadays, to be able to go on retreat! All their prayers were offered for benefactors.

Hampton Court = "We shuffled into a huge hall with tapestries lining the walls, stag heads, stained glass windows, and if you looked up, eavesdroppers poked their heads out to listen to you. This was the King's Great Hall where he ate. There were long tables on both sides of the hall and a table facing out to the rest of the hall. At the table were two special seats where the king and queen would have sat." (Excerpt from recount by F. Jirgens)



After a year of preparation, four pupils were ready to make their 1st communions on the Feast of Corpus Christi.



The summer term was busy with preparations for a challenging play: a musical based on Treasure Island. The children were outstanding and visibly enjoyed singing and acting by heart their parts. The audience was delighted!





The High Altar



A worthy edifice for the Holy Sacrifice

The Church Construction Project is now nearing completion. Deo gratias! We hope and pray that we can move in by autumn. There may be some details still yet to complete, but the building should be ready for use.

It is hard to believe that this particular dream has become a reality. After so many years of « making do » with a converted room and makeshift sacristy, the reason, purpose and end of all that we do - the worship and praise of God Almighty - will finally receive a fitting setting. Our Lord will not fail to bless the school and parish community accordingly.

As soon as we have the proper visibility we will announce dates for the opening ceremony. We are hoping for Saturday 30th September ... TBC!

Meanwhile, please consider securing Our Lord's blessing and protection by generously contributing to His new home where He will play the perfect Host to our pupils and their families.

« Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such. » (Matt. 19:14)



Urgent Facade Repairs

Please help us carry out urgent maintenance to the White House facade. The render needs significant repair to stop the water seeping through the walls! Despite the heavy expenses of the Church Project, we can no longer postpone this necessary and costly intervention.

Scaffolding: £5201

Render: £20,225

Projects in progress this summer: renovation/decoration of primary school corridors & boys' playroom. Tree removal, wood cutting, window frame restoration, gutter clearance/repair/replacement. Roof moss removal, perimeter fence installation. We must also acquire nine new single desks for the growing secondary school. Please be generous!



Boarding Prize Winners 2023



Caught in time.



Wells Cathedral, year 9 & 10



Vocal Harmonies



Yrs 5 & 6, 2023



Hungarian Embassy with Archduke Eduard Habsburg of Austria



Snowdon 2023



New Supervisors' Training



SAINT MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

Harts Lane, Burghclere, Newbury, RG20 9JW, U.K.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>this donation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>all donations for the 2019-20 tax year</i> |
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HOLY MASS OFFERED FOR ALL OUR BENEFACTORS ON THE 1ST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH.