



St David's
Coleg Catholig Dewi Sant
Catholic Sixth Form College

Leavers' Ceremony

*for the academic year
2020-2021*

*from St David's Metropolitan Cathedral
9th September 2021*



A Message from the Principal

Dear Students,

The Catholic Church has a longstanding tradition of seeking to provide a holistic education accessible to all young people regardless of their ability, background or personal experience. The Church is here for all. St David's is fortunate in being able to participate in the continuation of this tradition.

St David's offers young people a spiritual ethos founded in the Christian faith, a welcoming physical environment and a combination of empathetic and quality teaching and education that prepares its students well for the opportunities and challenges of life.

Your achievements and contributions at St David's this past year have been impressive. Many of you will now be moving on to university, while others will be moving directly into the world of employment or training. Whatever it is you choose to do, it is important to remember that, when undertaken in love, all things are worthwhile and valuable in the eyes of God.

As the awards are made tonight it is hoped that we will have time to reflect upon the names associated with them. The achievements and the sacrifices of each of these remarkable individuals, each in their own way, provides inspiration to us all. Whether it be the work of a Saint or the more modest contribution of a former member of our community, each contributes to who we are and to what we will be.

It is our hope that your time spent at St David's Catholic College has been fruitful, both academically and personally, and that you are blessed in your future endeavours. We would also be delighted to welcome you back to St David's should you ever need our help or just simply wish to say "hello" and let us know how you are getting on.

Sincerely yours,



Mr Mark Leighfield, B.Sc., M.Sc.
Principal



Mr Christian Mahoney,
Chair of Governors



Order of Proceedings

Musical Prelude - Joel Erikson & Hana Shadi

Welcome by the Principal, Mr Mark Leighfield

Opening remarks by Father Robert James

Prayer

Musical Interlude, U6th PA student Emma Barnes

SUBJECT AWARDS FOR NOTEWORTHY STUDENTSHIP

Musical Interlude #2, U6th PA student Emma Barnes

Valedictory Address by Caleb Mock

Address from His Grace, Archbishop George Stack

CROSS-COLLEGE AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

St John Henry Newman Award:

For outstanding dedication to academic enquiry across the curriculum

John Henry Newman, the 19th-century's most important English-speaking Roman Catholic theologian, spent the first half of his life as an Anglican and the second half as a Roman Catholic. He was a priest, popular preacher, writer, and eminent theologian in both churches. St John Henry Newman is an inspiration to teachers who wish to lead students to wisdom. His "Idea of a University" mapped out an educational philosophy, which is a corrective to the exaggerated utilitarian or diluted educational approaches adopted by some today.

To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.

St John Henry Newman

Blessed Benedetta Bianchi Porro Award:

For outstanding studentship in the Sciences and Mathematics

Afflicted with poliomyelitis at an early age, with a crippled left leg and a need to wear a brace to prevent her spine from deforming, in her teens Benedetta began to lose her hearing, and her health continued to deteriorate.

At age 17 she sought to study medicine. Her teachers objected to a pre-med student who was so deaf. She proved an excellent student. Benedetta was able to diagnose herself with Recklinghausen Disease-Neuro-Fibromatosis which leads to paralysis of the nervous system. In 1959 she began losing the sense of touch, taste and smell, was completely deaf, and had to give up the idea of a medical career. She then suffered permanent paralysis in both legs.

Benedetta's sick room became a refuge for the support and consolation of others. Her friends from medical school were frequent visitors. She was uniformly optimistic about life. From 1963, barely able to speak and with movement in only one hand, the number of her visitors increased as word of her holiness, her gentle understanding and her love of God spread. On a visit to Lourdes in 1963, as her family waited for her to be healed, she received her own miracle – the understanding and acceptance that her condition would not change. Benedetta died in 1964.

Let us not be overcome by doubt, never, never. And if this should happen even for a moment, Jesus will look down upon us and lovingly restore us to life, just as He did Lazarus. Have no fear.

Venerable Benedetta

St Oscar Romero Award:

For outstanding studentship in Literature and the Humanities

St Oscar Romero was a Salvadoran Roman Catholic Archbishop who was a vocal critic of the violent activities of government armed forces, right-wing groups, and leftist guerrillas involved in El Salvador's civil conflict. His outspoken defence of the poor—who were powerless victims of widespread violence—brought repeated threats to his life. In the face of those threats, Romero declared his readiness to sacrifice his life for the “redemption and resurrection” of El Salvador. In 1980, Archbishop Romero was assassinated by a right wing death squad while saying Mass.

We have never preached violence, except the violence of love, which left Christ nailed to a cross, the violence that we must each do to ourselves to overcome our selfishness and such cruel inequalities among us.

There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried.

St Oscar Romero

St John Bosco Award:

For outstanding studentship in the Social Sciences

John Bosco, popularly known as Don Bosco, was an Italian Roman Catholic priest, educator and writer of the 19th century. He dedicated his life to the betterment and education of street children, juvenile delinquents, and other disadvantaged youth. He developed teaching methods based on love rather than punishment. A follower of the spirituality and philosophy of Saint Francis de Sales, Bosco dedicated his works to him when he founded the Salesians of Don Bosco. Together with Maria Domenica Mazzarello, he founded the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, a religious congregation of nuns dedicated to the care and education of poor girls. In 1876 Bosco founded a movement of laity, the Association of Salesian Co-operators, with the same educational mission to the poor.

If we want to have a good society, we must concentrate all our forces on the Christian education of the young. Experience has taught me that if we wish to sustain civil society then we should take good care of the young.

St John Bosco

St John Paul II Award:

For outstanding achievement in the Performing Arts and Sport

Growing up, John Paul was athletic and enjoyed skiing and swimming. He went to Krakow's Jagiellonian University in 1938 where he showed an interest in theatre and poetry. The school was closed the next year by Nazi troops during the German occupation of Poland. Wanting to become a priest, John Paul began studying at a secret seminary run by the archbishop of Krakow. After World War II ended, he finished his religious studies at a Krakow seminary and was ordained in 1946.

As a Bishop, constantly concerned with the question of man, John Paul encouraged a spiritual and cultural resistance to the Communist occupation of Poland, giving his countrymen hope in the face of grave oppression.

As Pope, John Paul was a vocal advocate for human rights. He often spoke out about suffering in the world. Of great conviction, he held strong positions on many topics, including his opposition to capital punishment. He used his influence to bring about political change and is credited with the fall of communism in his native Poland.

On September 30, 2013, Pope Francis announced that the canonization of Pope John Paul II would occur on April 27, 2014. The announcement of Pope John Paul II's canonization came after the Vatican revealed that two miracles were attributed to the late pope. After a dying French nun, Sister Marie Simon-Pierre Normand, prayed to Pope John Paul II during her battle with Parkinson's disease—the same illness that struck the pope—she was cured. The second miracle involved a 50-year-old woman, who was cured of a brain aneurysm.

It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle.

St John Paul II

Chris Whelan Award:

For achievement in adversity

Chris struggled valiantly with ill health throughout his time at St David's. Despite his poor health, Chris showed great strength and perseverance. It was this spirit of determination that impressed his teachers and fellow students. He was a brave young man, who did not shy from challenge. Chris provided a great example of one who, due to circumstances, knew that he could only achieve modestly relative to his ambition but, despite this, he tried anyway. Ultimately, Chris succumbed to a heart condition. He would no doubt be pleased that his name is used for an award that recognises the achievements of others in overcoming adversity, just as he did.

Canon Ieuan Wyn Jones Award:

For outstanding contribution to the religious life of the College

Canon Ieuan was Chaplain and Chair of Governors at St David's. Energetic, caring and ultimately loving, he gave greatly of his time and resources to the college. Even in old age, he had an empathy with, and an ability to relate to, young people that few possess. He was aided and abetted in this by a mischievous sense of humour and a deep well of compassion for others. Canon Ieuan was always at his happiest and most effective when talking to students in the canteen. The occasional quickness of his temper was matched only by the speed of his forgiveness. He cared deeply about the college, gave generously of his time in the service of students and staff. He was a good man.

Dom Bryon Award:

For outstanding contribution to college life

The first Principal of St David's, Patrick Dominic Bryon – Dom to almost everyone- showed great faith and courage in the leadership of the inchoate institution. In its early days failure was a real possibility for the institution, but Dom's skilful leadership led it to early success. Dom was determined not to manage an institution but to lead a community. This he did with integrity and devotion, compassion and perseverance. Uncompromising in his faith, he laid the foundations for the St David's of today. He is fondly remembered by staff and former students as a true original and a professional of the highest standard. We are all indebted to him.

Brief remarks from the Diocesan Vocations Director & Catholic Chaplain to Cardiff University, Fr Nicholas Williams.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS 2021/2022

Scholarships are presented for academic excellence and contribution to the community to students from each of our Catholic partner schools:

- St. Richard Gwyn R.C. High School
- Corpus Christi R.C High School
- Mary Immaculate R.C. High School
- St Iltys R.C. High School
- Cardinal Newman Catholic School

'Open' scholarships are presented to students applying from other secondary schools

Alesha O'Connor Award

given to an incoming student from St Richard Gwyn R.C. High School, recognised for contribution to the community

Alesha was a student at St David's, tragically taken from our community in her first year of study. A loving and devoted daughter, a loving stepsister, a loyal friend and excellent

student, she took great joy in life and determined to share that joy with others. Lively, caring and compassionate, Alesha filled spaces like no one else. A former St Richard Gwyn student, Alesha commenced her AS studies at the college with her typical optimism, energy and enthusiasm. The whole college community was shaken to hear of her passing in a tragic car accident. It was a privilege to have Alesha as a member of our community and it is an honour to be able to offer this Award to an incoming St Richard Gwyn student. Alesha would wish to be remembered with happiness and optimism. It was how she chose to live her life.

Tom Channon Award

given to an incoming student from St Richard Gwyn R.C. High School, recognised for outstanding academic achievement

Tom completed two years at St David's having progressed from St Richard Gwyn High School. Tom studied Economics, English Literature and History. He achieved very strong grades in each of these subjects. Tom had plans to return to St David's to study A level Mathematics in a year. A tragic accident whilst on holiday with friends in Spain meant that this was not to be. Tom was a devoted son and grandson, a loving brother, compassionate friend, diligent student and a fine man. Tom was a young man who took life seriously; but not too seriously. With Tom there was always an ease or lightness of spirit, he touched many people's lives. He would go out of his way to help others and gave generously of his time to anyone. He had a genuine interest and concern for others. Tom has been, and is, greatly missed by us all. This award is made in his memory.

Helen Vickery Award

given to an incoming student from Corpus Christi R.C. High School, recognised for outstanding academic achievement

Helen was a vibrant member of the college community, a former Heathfield House student, with links to Corpus Christi. Helen played a key role in establishing the college as a centre for pilgrimage to Lourdes. It was her initiative that led to so many of the young people of St David's to assist in an annual pilgrimage. It involves caring for, and transporting the sick, infirm and disabled to Masses and other services. It requires compassion, patience, organisation skills and a sense of humour; all of which Helen had in abundance. Helen made a total of thirteen such trips to Lourdes. Helen loved music and was an accomplished flute player. Music led her to travel widely in Europe and to the United States. A devout Catholic, Helen contributed to the Catholic community through her service, music and love. This award is made in her memory.

Closing Remarks by the Principal, Mr Mark Leighfield

Blessing by His Grace, Archbishop George Stack

Musical Postlude

Thank You

*For their ongoing support,
we wish to thank:*

St David's Metropolitan Cathedral
His Grace, the Archbishop of Cardiff
The Rev. Fr. Daniel Stanton
The Rev. Fr. Robert James
The Rev. Fr. Nicholas Williams
Mrs Anne Robertson
The Rev. Dr Bernard Sixtus
The Governors of St David's College
The Staff of St David's College
All St David's Catholic Partner Schools
St David's College Performing Arts Department
Students of St David's College, past and present
Parents & Guardians

Share your memories with us & keep in touch:

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