

Welcome

We would like to welcome our first year students and their families to our school community.

Exam Results 2015

Congratulations to the Leaving Certificate class of 2015. Students achieved outstanding results in the state examinations and scored an average of 411 CAO points per candidate, which is above the national average of 350. 82% of students achieved above 400 points with 28% achieving over 500. This compares with 9.9% at national level. Students were delighted with their results and have now moved on to the next stage in their education. Students have taken up courses in Trinity College, NUIG, UCD, UL, University College Maynooth, The Institutes of Technology in Galway, Mayo and Sligo and the local college of further education in Castlebar as well as many other universities and colleges. Students have taken up courses in areas of science, business, medicine, education, social studies and technology. We wish them every success in their future careers. The Junior Cert. exam results were also outstanding again this year. Well done to Niamh McDermott who achieved 10 A grades.

Irish Times Survey

St. Joseph's was ranked the top all girls secondary school in Mayo and 39th school in Ireland.

School Enrolment 2015

Our school's enrolment night will take place on the 28th of January from 5-8pm. All sixth class students and their families are invited to attend.

Board of Management

A new Board of Management commenced their three year term of office in October 2015.

Business Studies Awards

The following students; Sinead Horkan, Niamh McDermott, Aine Monaghan, Claire Murphy, Ethel Nyland, Siofra McHale, Clodagh Healy, Ciara O'Malley and Ciara O'Malley were presented with Certificates of Achievement from NUI Galway on Wednesday, 14th October 2015, based on their Junior Certificate results. The students received an "A" in their Higher Level Business Studies Examination 2015 and were among a group of 300 students from across Connacht to receive awards. The presentations in association with the Business Studies Teachers Association of Ireland, were made at a special ceremony at the university, which included parents and teachers. They were accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Bourke.

Junior Cert. Business Quiz

The CIMA, BSTAI and NUI Galway Western Region School Quiz took place on Wednesday, 14th October 2015 in NUIG. Thirteen schools with a total of 26 teams took part and competed from all over the west. The quiz allows NUIG to engage with second level students and foster their interest in Business Studies. St. Joseph's was represented by the following teams: Team Q: Kate McCarthy, Niamh Breslin, Aoife Donohue, Aoife McEveley, Edel Egan, Evanna Summerville, Sarah Boyce-Homan, Megan Deeley, Isabelle Hussey and Eunice Prabhu. The students finished with a very impressive score and were accompanied by their business teacher.

Trip to Lourdes

Ten 5th years will once again be travelling to Lourdes next Easter with the Irish Pilgrimage trust. This project, led by former school chaplain Fr. Mike Murphy, is in conjunction with Mount Saint Michael Secondary School, Claremorris. Since September, the group have been busy fundraising and would like to thank everyone who has helped so far. Good luck to the girls as they prepare for what is a very special and memorable week.

Mentors

The Mentor programme in the school is, once again, proving to be very successful. The fifth year mentors have been meeting with their first year classes every Tuesday and Wednesday at lunchtime since September. They have done many activities together and are now preparing for their annual Christmas concert which is always packed with laughter and fun.

Pope John Paul II Awards

The Pope John Paul II awards give young people an opportunity to get involved in parish and social awareness projects. This year in St. Joseph's we had 20 students receive the Gold Medal and 3 students receive the Papal Cross. Well done to all the students. They received their awards at a ceremony in the newly refurbished basilica in Knock on Thursday the 26th November. The awards were presented by the Archbishop Michael Neary and he congratulated the students on their tremendous work in the parish throughout the year. Well done to all the girls.

School Mass

The opening of school year mass was celebrated on September 24th, which was Mercy Day. The theme of the mass was 'You are Lovely, You are Loveable, You are Loved'. It was a celebration, through music and prayer, of our identity as a Mercy school and a CEIST

school. Thanks to Fr. John Murray, our school chaplain, for celebrating the mass with us.

Peer 4 Peer Training

13 TY students will participate in Peer 4 Peer training on Tuesday the 12th and Thursday the 14th of January. They will deliver the programme to primary school students in the New Year.

First Year Musical trip

On Tuesday 20th October all first year students attended the musical 'Grease'. The musical was a production by the students of Mount Saint Michael, Claremorris and the event was enjoyed by all!

Ecumenical

Students from TY and 3rd year participated in a mime at an ecumenical service for people bereaved through suicide in the church of The Holy Rosary on Friday 27th of November. They performed a beautiful liturgical dance to a song called 'You'll Never Be Forgotten'

Wash Bags for Syrian Refugees

Over 250 washbags consisting of soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, facecloth and other toiletries were donated by the school community to the Syrian Refugee Appeal. A big thank you to students, teachers and parents/guardians who were so generous in their response

Carol Service

A beautiful carol service to mark advent and Christmas will be held in the school hall on Thursday 17th of December. Through word, story and music we will retell the story of the birth of Jesus. It will be a joyful reminder to us all of the true meaning of Christmas.

Public Speaking

Congratulations to our public speaking team, Niamh McDermott, Sinead Horkan, Rachel Barrett, Emma Flannery, Una Togher and Aisling Flannery who competed in Westport Town Hall on December 9th, achieving first place. Thank you to Ms Morrissey for all her input and advice.

November Prayer Service

"In November, we remember"

This year in the prayer room we created a tree of remembrance on which each student placed a leaf with the names of deceased members of their families and friends. Each class also had a prayer service with reflection and music.

St. Vincent de Paul

The annual St. Vincent De Paul Food Appeal was a huge success again this year. Students and staff contributed non-perishable food items which were presented to the local St. Vincent De Paul branch. Thank you to everybody who contributed and the food items will be distributed to families in the Castlebar area this Christmas.

Advent Penitential Service

Our Advent Penitential Service and the Sacrament of Reconciliation was celebrated on 16th December in a beautifully decorated school hall. Students were given the opportunity to prepare for Christmas in a meaningful way. Sincere thanks to the priests of the parish who celebrated the sacrament with us.

Parish Liturgy

Students have been actively involved in Liturgies in the Church of the Holy Rosary, Castlebar. Students have participated in their parish as Ministers of the Word and the senior choir, under the direction of Ms. Lee, have participated in the 7.00pm mass on Saturday evening. Well done to all.

Cycle Against Suicide – Ambassador School Programme

In September we were delighted to learn that we had become an ambassador school for Cycle Against Suicide. The aim of the programme is to encourage schools to become actively involved in mental health promotion, and to integrate positive mental health activities into the school plan. It rewards schools that go that extra mile. We received our awards at Farnleigh House in the Phoenix Park on Friday the 11th of September and the school community was represented by Aoife McHale, Tiwalade Yusuff (5th year) and Ms. McHugh. Well done to the fifth and sixth years that put in such a fantastic effort to achieve this award.

Music & Choir

The senior choir of 5th and 6th year students sang on Friday evening, 27th November for the turning on of the Christmas lights. This performance took place at the courthouse, Castlebar and a lovely evening was had by all. On Monday, 30th November, members of the TY choir sang in the Social Services and were filmed by TV3 for their Ireland AM morning programme. They are looking forward to their television appearance in December!

All choirs are busy preparing for our annual school carol service, taking place on Thursday 17th December. Members of our school orchestra will also perform at the carol service.

Transition Year News

Transition Year kicked off in earnest for the 2015-2016 cohorts with a full day of fun and induction followed by a trip to Ultra Fit Studios and Healthquaters gym to aid with group bonding and kick the year off to a flying start. In October, the girls headed to Killary Adventure Centre for an overnight trip where much exploration, craic and mud walking was had.

Congratulations to Laura Corcoran who won a trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg through the Graduate quiz.

Preparations for *Tale as Old as Time* began quickly after the Junior Certificate exam results were released. The show was staged in the Royal Theatre on the 18th and 19th November to packed houses and rave reviews. This was a great experience for all the TY students.

Mindspace Mayo

On Monday 14th of December Mr. Peadar Gardiner spoke to the Leaving Cert. classes about Mindspace Mayo which is based in Castlebar. This is a free and confidential support service to promote young people's mental health and wellbeing. It aims to support young people aged 15-25 who are going through a difficult time to ensure they get the support they need. The talk was very informative and beneficial to all present.

Bressie Talk on Mental Health

On Thursday the 17th of December some students will attend a presentation on the topic of Mental Health which will be given by Irish musician and Voice of Ireland Coach Niall Breslin, better known as 'Bressie'. Bressie will speak about the topic of mental health, his inspirational story, coping mechanisms and minding your mental health. The students are looking forward to his talk and are delighted to be meeting Bressie.

Workshops

The TY students received a talk with an organisation called Youth Connect on 25th November. The idea of the workshop was to teach students about their rights as a worker, minimum wage and proper treatment as a worker. The girls also took part in Soar on the 26th November, a workshop about positive well-being. They visited Turlough house on the Thursday 29th September and the 3rd of December for help and advice with their history projects. 36 students also took part in a sign-language course taught by Tara McNally. They signed for poet Paul Durcan on the 3rd of December in the Linenhall.

St Joseph's TY's To Launch Bank

A group of TY students were addressed by Mr Alan Durcan and Ms Donna Burke from Bank of Ireland on

November 30th about launching a school bank. They will be setting up their bank in the near future.

Student Council

The Student Council members for the current school year are: First Year: Michelle Moran, Marianne Ludden, Lucai Murphy and Caoilinn Gaughan. Second Year: Aoife Joyce, Jane Mellet, Holly Berkeley and Ciara Bourke. Third Year: Cathriona Heneghan, Mercy Okojie, Lyn Rochford and Anna Forde.

T.Y: Sinead Horkan, Elaine Dunne and Alison Morley. Fifth Year: Ciara Murphy and Sarah-Jane Hamilton. Sixth Year: Aishlinn Gormally, Megan Devaney, Bridin Joyce and Ce'Nedra Cullen O'Brien.

German Department

The first round of the All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad will take place at the end of January. Ms Loftus encourages everyone to take part. The second round will take place in Trinity College for anyone who gets through. This year we have Ursula Reiter from Austria working as a foreign language assistant. She organised a sixth year debating team who competed on the 10th of December. Frohe Weihnacten!

Rua Bake Sale

Our school was delighted to join forces again with Aaron and Colleen of Rua, Spenser St. for our annual Cake Sale. Our very talented TY Home Economics students and Home Economics department sold our baked produce in Rua, Spenser St. on Sunday, November 8th. Deliciously crumbly chocolate chip cookies, caramel squares, luxurious coffee slices, mouth-watering lemon drizzle cakes, apple crumbles and more were available to buy on the day. Thanks to all for your support. Thanks also to Rua for sponsoring our TY Christmas cake top completion recently.

Art News

Congratulations to Poledra Cullen O'Brien (5th year), Sinead Sweeney (2nd year) & Alison Ryan (1st Yr) on their success in the Credit Union Poster Competition. They girls were winners at local level.

Parents' Council

We would like to say thank you to the Parents' Council for their help and support this year. The Chairperson of the Council is Ms. Terri Fahy, Treasurer Mrs Marie Jennings and Secretary Mrs Alison Ryan.

Transition Year Coaching

TY's will be coaching St Angela's, Breaffy N.S. and Scoil Raffeyri N.S. Spikeball in January. This year they will also coach our own first years and will have a spikeball tournament for them after Easter.

Swimming

The Schools Swimming Gala will be held in January. The school will be represented in both team and individual events. The team consists of: Laura Fahy, Niamh Heneghan, Edel Egan, Hannah Grady, Niamh Breslin, Niamh Egan, Heather Fadden, Brianna Horan, Caitriona Mc Cormack, Rachel Heneghan, Maeve Gallagher, Fiona Conway, Sarah Conlon, Mairead Gallagher and Megan Deely. Best of luck girls!

Basketball

Congratulations to the U19 basketball team who were crowned West Regional Champions recently. They defeated St. Nathy's in the semi-final in overtime and Claremorris in the final also in overtime with a final score of 34-32. They are now through to the All-Ireland quarter finals playoffs. Good luck! The U16 basketball team lost in the semi-final by a narrow margin 21-19.

Camogie

Congrats to our school's camogie team, coached by Mary Kennedy, who won the County Mayo Junior Camogie shield earlier this term.

Cycling

Congratulations to Maeve Gallagher (2nd year) who won the All Ireland Under 14's girls Cycling Championships in Westport.

Gaelic Football

The U-14 team are through to the group semi-final in January. Best of luck girls!

Sports Visitors

Henry Shefflin, Kilkenny All-Ireland hurler, and Keith Higgins were welcomed to our school on October 2nd. It was a great day for all! On the 18th of September the Women's World Rugby Cup was presented to the students of the school.

Gael Bhratach

This year we are hoping to achieve a Gael Bhratach, a flag for promoting Irish in school. The TY's have set up an Irish blog which can be viewed under the 'Parents and Students' tab on www.stjosephscastlebar.com.

Club Gaelach

TY's have set up an Irish club to encourage 1st and 2nd years to speak Irish. This takes place every second Thursday and is going towards our Gael Bratach.

World Triathlon Championships

Well done to Ms. Carey on her success at the World Triathlon Championships in Chicago last September.

Basketball Hall of Fame

Congrats to Ms. Kilkenny who was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame recently.

New School Building

The Department of Education and Skills has approved a grant for the provision of 4 new classrooms, 1 new home economics room and a number of new bathrooms. The school is delighted with this additional accommodation. It has gone out to tender, it is hoped to start building in the next academic year.

Cycle Against Suicide 2015/2016

The Transition Years are currently working towards achieving Ambassador School Status for the academic year 2015/2016. Some great ideas will be happening after Christmas as they promote this year's theme which is 'Together We Can'. They will also be attending the student's leaders congress in the RDS Dublin on Thursday the 14th January. The aim of the congress is to promote positive mental health, help-seeking behaviour in young people, and the Cycle against Suicide Message that "It's Ok not to Feel Ok and it's Absolutely Ok to ask for Help". The day will consist of Music, inspiring celebrity speakers, discussion and much more. Everyone is looking forward to the event!

Lunchtime Concert

There will be a concert held on the 21st of December in the school hall. Brave Giant has kindly agreed to perform. The concert costs €2 per student.

Sympathy

We extend our condolences to families and staff members in our school who have been bereaved recently and who are experiencing sadness at this time. Go dtuga Dia faoiseamh dóibh uilig.

Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge and celebrate the many students in our school who have represented themselves and their clubs in various disciplines at local, national and international level over the past few months. Well done to all!

Season's Greetings



The community of St. Joseph's would like to wish you all a happy and holy Christmas. See you all in 2016.

