

The Roman Catholic Parish of St Charles Borromeo, National Forest

Our Lady of Lourdes and St Charles Borromeo, Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Our Lady of Mercy & St Philip Neri, Melbourne

Church of the Risen Lord, Castle Donington

24 August 2025

Dear Students, parents, careers and teachers,

As a new academic year begins at St Charles Catholic Primary, Voluntary Academy, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all. At the very centre of the teaching ethos of our school is Christ. It is my sincere hope that a love of God will be found here for all of you. For students, both new and returning, may you find a learning environment in which you thrive. For parents and careers may the growth of your children bring you joy and confidence in their future. For teachers, may you impart wisdom and awe of God's love to the children you are called to inspire.

As the parish priest I have a particular spiritual care for all who attend the school, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. There will be services throughout the year for the whole school community to attend: Mass, Adoration, opportunities for Confession, school services at the local church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, processions and more. If there is anything I can help you with, please contact me.

All students planning to receive 1st Holy Communion in the coming year are expected to be regular Mass attenders already, and if not should start doing so now. At Our Lady of Lourdes we are restarting our children's liturgy during the 11am Sunday Mass, beginning in September and would like to invite all children between the age of 4 ½ / 5 – 7 ½ years. Once the start dates for 1st Holy Communion have been finalised this will be published in the church bulletin and the school newsletter. We also run courses for adults. If you are interested in the teachings of the Catholic Church then please come along on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of every month to our RCIA (Roman Catholic Initiation of Adults) course which is held in the crypt at Ashby, or call or email me. (Contact details are below)

Over the coming year I look forward to meeting with you and getting to know each of you much better, building upon the strong links that already exist between the school and the church. May we grow in faith together.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Andrew Harding