



**Very Rev. Fr. Stephen Morrison O.Praem.**

Sub-Prior of the Norbertine Community

Curate of the Parishes of Our Lady Immaculate and Holy Name, Chelmsford

Chaplain, Our Lady Immaculate Primary Academy.

I am Father Stephen, and chief among my duties as curate is being Chaplain to Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School.

I love being the chaplain... It allows me to engage in teaching, assemblies, collective worship, and - above all - celebrating the Mass and other Sacraments for our children and staff.

The whole school community is one of faith, centred around Christ and rooted in devotion to His Immaculate Mother, Mary, our patroness.

As well as Mass on feasts and Holy Days, there are also special events throughout the year in which the school participates - the Procession and Mass for Candlemas, the May Procession for Our Lady, and the Blessed Sacrament Procession around the streets of Chelmsford for Corpus Christi. Our children all take an active part in these magnificent celebrations, which are always as fun as they are moving.

Helping our pupils to grow in their faith and piety is always a privilege. I am inspired and supported by the wonderful staff of our school, particularly the Headteacher and the RE Subject Leader. The pupils involved in our Worship Team contribute to the whole community by their efforts and enthusiasm. I also assist the staff in any way I can to encourage the Faith ethos of the school and to open the children's minds to the realities of the world around us, showing how the Gospel has something to say to us, to our world, and to our families. As they grow in the knowledge and love of God, they also grow in awareness of the great family of the Church to which they belong, both in its local manifestation (parish and diocese) and in the universal sense of belonging to the worldwide communion of Christians which we call the Catholic Church. They also learn to embrace others of different faiths and traditions with respect and charity, and to have a regard for the dignity of each and every member of society.

I aim to teach every class in the school three times a year; firstly, on a curricular topic already familiar to them in their RE syllabus; secondly, a supplementary class exploring something 'off topic' but still important; and thirdly, a lesson in prayer and meditation before the Blessed Sacrament. Learning about God is always an invitation to learn how to pray - which is what keeps our relationship with God alive.

We also help the children to face life's challenges and difficulties, in a way that helps them to understand the reality of human experience. Our Remembrance services in November, for our deceased relatives and friends, and for all who gave their lives in war, and our Lenten Penitential services, are good reminders to us adults of how the simple faith of children can be remarkably strong and courageous. These poignant moments allow our children to face calmly the wonderful sacrifice that Christ made for us on the Cross, and the ways in which he helps us to carry our crosses of sorrow, loss and pain, with the same love that made him carry his.

Christmas and Easter are obviously the hinges of the whole Christian year, and the children always come together with all their talents and enthusiasm to tell the familiar stories of the Birth of Christ, and his Death and Resurrection, with zeal and flair, giving much cause for joy and pride to their teachers, parents and families.

As Chaplain, I also write regularly to parents in our newsletter, offering a little help and advice as I can throughout the school year. We expect all our Catholic parents to support the Faith Life of their children, but we also expect *all* our parents to uphold the Catholic ethos of the school, regardless of their denomination or tradition. As a community, we seek to encourage the Home-School-Parish triangle that keeps us together as a Christian family, and allows our children "To live, love, and learn together, knowing Jesus Christ." (Our School Mission).

**Welcome to our school - welcome to our family.**

- It is a place where Mary prays with us and for us, as we try to follow her example of service and love, both for God and for our neighbour.
- It is a place of excellence, where we set the highest possible standards for our children, both academically, pastorally and spiritually.