



Introduction:

Hello and welcome to the Holy Family Senior School newsletter. We are so excited to share our recent events with you in the run up to Christmas.

Mark your Calendar

December 22nd - Christmas holidays

December 22nd - Winter Solstice

December 24th - Christmas Eve

December 25th - Christmas Day

December 31st - New Year's Eve

January 1st - New Year's Day

January 4th - World Braille Day

January 6th - Nollaig na mBan

January 8th - Return to school

January 15th - Martin Luther King Jnr Day.

December Facts

(By Max Kane, Faye Miley & Ruby Browne)

- **Did you know?** December is the 12th month (and last month) in our modern Georgian day calendar. However, it was originally the 10th month of the Roman calendar (until 153 BC). Hence, "December" comes from the Latin word "Decem", meaning ten.
- **December** brings the winter solstice in the Northern hemisphere. This is the shortest day of the year, the day with the least amount of daylight.
- **December 1st 1640**-Nationalist revolution in Portugal led to independence from Spain.
- **December 1st 1822** - Dom Pedro founder of the Brazilian Empire was crowned as the first Emperor of Brazil.
- **December 4 1791** - The Observer, now the oldest Sunday newspaper in the world, was first published in Britain.
- **December 5th 1492** - Haiti was discovered by Christopher Columbus
- **December 9th 1941** - During world war 2, China issued a formal announcement of war against Japan, Germany and Italy.
- Look skyward on the night of **December 13th** after 9pm to catch a glimpse of the Geminid meteors.
- **December 14th 1911** - A Norwegian explorer became the first person to reach the South Pole. His name was Roald Amundsen.



Student Council Buddies (By the Student's Council)

Our Student Council buddies continued their weekly visits to all of the classes this half term. We really enjoyed visiting the classes and hearing what they have been up to. Here's what's been happening around the school since our last newsletter.

Eimear and Aoife's STAR classes

The children in the STAR centre have been going swimming every week and have been really enjoying their lessons. They have made yummy gingerbread men. The children in Aoife and Eimear's classes all really enjoyed wearing their Christmas jumpers and running in the Fun run. The children are excited about Santa's visit to school and also are busy preparing a Christmas dinner for all in the STAR centre to enjoy.

3rd and 4th Class Activities

- All of the 3rd and 4th classes really enjoyed walking to O'Moore Park to support our teams in the Cumann Na mBunscol finals.
- The third classes have been doing GAA training every Friday with Jamie.
- Ms. Sheehan's class hosted assembly and sang two songs from Matilda.
- All of the classes have completed amazing Christmas art - Christmas stockings, sock snowmen, painted Reindeer to name a few!
- Some classes went to Kilminchy nursing home where they sang carols and hand delivered Christmas cards to the residents there.
- A nature walk in People's Park.
- Planted fabulous tulips.
- Fun science activities such as making lava lamps.
- Wore their festive jumpers and ran in the Fun run around the school.
- Ms. A O'Hara's class are writing their own books based on superheroes - how exciting.
- Learnt all about the Stone Age and made clay pinch pots.

5th and 6th Class Activities

- Ms. Whelan's class did a beautiful display for our Holy Space at the front of the school.
- The 5th classes have been busy practising their carol singing and sang in Laois Shopping centre.
- All of the classes went to Christmas Mass.
- The debating team from 6th class debated in their second debate and won! They did a great job.
- The children have been busy selling raffle tickets before our big raffle which will take place on Wednesday 20th. There are some amazing prizes!
- School Fitness Ireland came to the school and did a range of activities with the 6th classes.
- We sent 310 Christmas Shoeboxes to children across Europe and Africa.
- The 5th classes got creative for Science week and made robotic arms, marble runs and volcanoes.
- The 6th classes had fun with Science week making catapults and using the school's green screens to get creative!

Christmas around the World

(By Kevin Manoj)

Poland:

Sometimes on Christmas Eve both adults and children go to their neighbours and family. As a reward, they receive money or sweets. When midnight comes, many Polish people go to Christmas mass. Pasterka is a midnight mass celebrated by Roman Catholics during Christmas between 24 and 25 December across Poland.

Brazil:

In fact, Christmas Eve is the main day for celebration in Brazil. Following mass, many friends and families join together to exchange gifts and enjoy a traditional Brazilian Christmas dinner. Those who do not attend church also celebrate with food, drink, family, and presents on the night of the 24th.

The Netherlands:

In the Netherlands, people celebrate Christmas both on the 25th and the 26th of December. During Dutch Christmas people spend two days with their family, playing games, watching movies and eating some traditional Christmas food.

Jokes (By Aneeqa Bibi)

What is every parents favourite Christmas song? Silent Night

Elves use what kind of money? Jingle bills

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire? Frostbite

Why do reindeers like Beyoncè so much?
She sleighs

Who is Santa's favourite singer? Elfish Presley

Riddles (By Melay Tinoo)

Answers on last page 😊

1. I come with many colours, very big and bright, I turn so many houses into a beautiful sight. What am I?
2. I'm a cookie you might like to eat, and some might say I'm a favoured Christmas treat.
I have brown arms, eyes, and don't forget my feet. What am I?
3. If the end of the year is December 31st, what is the end of Christmas?

School Quiz team

After trials, the school quiz team for 2023-24 was selected.

The team is Carrie Gorman (Mr. Finn), Alex Korovesi (Mr. Malone), Sarah Ging (Ms. Moloney), Dylan Lawlor (Ms. Moloney), Ari Ajayi (Ms. Dooley), and the team captain is Lily Delaney (Mr. Malone).

The school has a proud tradition of performing well at quizzing, and this year's team will enter two competitions in the New Year, the Credit Union Schools' Quiz, and the Laois Cumann na mBunscol Quiz. We wish them the very best of luck.

The team would like to challenge you with this question - Which cartoon character's real name is Norville Rogers? Google the answer!

Goal - den Days

On December 6th, staff member Mr. Malone launched a book he has written. It is a sports book called *Goal-den Days*, and is a nostalgic look at growing up in Portlaoise in the 80's and 90's, and the importance of sport on childhood. The book is illustrated throughout by Molly Byrne, a past pupil of Holy Family, and is available to buy from All Books in Portlaoise. We would highly recommend this book for all sports lovers. We are so proud to have a published author in our school.

Cumann na mBunscol success!

(By Aoife McEvoy and Jade O'Brien)

We are so delighted that four of the teams playing Gaelic Football in our school made it into the finals in O' Moore Park. We had some amazing support in the crowd as our whole school went down to support the teams. First up, was the boy's championship final, playing against Portarlinton and successfully winning the game, taking home the cup. Next was the sixth-class girls' team in the shield final against Killenard. It was a very close game and all the girls were brilliant, they also won that game as well! After that was the other boys' team in the championship finals playing vs Killenard, and once again they took home the cup. Last but certainly not least, was the fifth-class girls' team playing against Killeen. It was a very good game finishing off the matches, leaving Holy Family winning all four matches! There was a programme booklet selling in O' Moore Park both Wednesday and Thursday with a list of the matches and a list of all the players in each team participating in the Cumann na mBunscol Finals. Well done to all the teams. It's amazing to see all four teams playing. It has never happened before, what an achievement! The other teams did so well too. A big well done to all the players and coaches

Please note that you can access team photos by clicking this link: [2023 November Cumann na mBunscol by Jeff Harvey \(pixieset.com\)](https://www.pixieset.com/2023/11/cumann-na-mbunscol)

Thanks to all of our contributors from the Student's Council (pictured below) who made this issue possible.



Riddle answers!

1. Christmas lights
2. A gingerbread man
3. The letter "s"