

Novena of Masses

A wonderful initiative was brought into the school over the past nine days. It was a Novena of masses which was orchestrated by Fr. Malachy; *to pray mass for nine consecutive days for our Cistercian community*, both on the College Campus, and to all those extended members who are also part of this community. **So all of you were in our prayers during this time.**

The Novena was to ‘*Our Lady of Lourdes*’ and the prayer to her was acclaimed each day for her protection and healing to us at this time of pandemic. Various years attended the Novena each day and it is safe to say that this experience was one that was filled with many graces and blessings.

Unfortunately, It is impossible to write about all the nuggets of wisdom that were provided at each mass, so I will speak on some of the wisdom we received throughout the Novena.

Fr. Malachy spoke about the theme which transpired from the beginning of the masses which was that of ‘Transformation’. He reminded the Second Year students that they will be top of Junior Cycle class next year and encouraged them to look after the First Years when they enter. He asked them to recall when they entered the school many years ago and the feelings of fear and anxiety that they may have experienced. He asked them to ease such emotions for the new student intake in September 2022. This was the goal assigned to them to take on, if they were up for the challenge.

He also spoke on bullying and remembered Brian Dargan who committed suicide because others preyed on him. We were reminded that; ‘*Someone's banter is someone else's pain.*’ He told us to have the courage and conviction to stand up for what is right and not tolerate what is wrong. He asked us to always link in with our moral compass and tell others if they believe something is unacceptable and wrong. He reminded everyone that they are ‘CCR students’ and that this was something to embrace and be proud of. Bullying at every level is wrong and should never be tolerated.

We also prayed for Aisling Murphy throughout the Novena. Our Sunday night mass collided with a candle light Vigil that was taking place in Roscrea. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family at this time.

Fr. Malachy repeated throughout the Novena to look at our vices and virtues, and see what is preventing us from forming a true relationship with God. He questioned; *what our true values are*, and mentioned the importance of respect and integrity in a community. He asked us; what has blocked our arteries and hardened our hearts from reaching out more to others and to God. He set us a goal, *to reflect on this*, over the coming days and see what changes we could make.

Hence, the theme developed again to ‘*Transformation and Change*’. Fr. Malachy called on us to open our hearts to the Lord and seek a complete transformation that would make us the ‘**Best Versions of ourselves**’ and help us to become the ‘**Best**’ we can be, not only in Cistercian College, but for our wider society. He told the students that they are the future of our world and they are the ones that can change society, by being the leaders they are called to be by God.

In CCR, our tagline is that this is; ‘*A Place to Grow*’. Fr. Malachy told the Leaving Certs students during their mass on Tuesday, that six years ago, he was taller than them, but now they had grown past him physically. He also praised them, in that he had recognised that they

had developed and grown in maturity both on an emotionally and spiritually level. He told them that they were the future of our society and encouraged them to have the courage and conviction at all times to call people out on what is wrong.

He spoke about a culture in the past that accepted many things; it was perfectly fine to smoke everywhere and to drink and drive, but now our culture tells us that this is wrong and people would ‘call people out’ if they behaved this way.

He asked us to look at our society and to really see what is wrong. He urged us not to become like sheep who follow the crowd, but to be leaders who lead for change and truth. He pointed out there will be times that it will be hard to go against the grain, but that God would give us the strength, courage and ability to do what He is calling us to do.

On the last day of the Novena today, He asked the students to reflect on what God was doing in their hearts and challenged them to embrace the change and transformation that this novena has begun in their lives.

The students were very grateful to Fr. Malachy and expressed their gratitude throughout the week to staff members, especially for the confessions that took place on Wednesday night as part of the Novena for Senior House. This was a very soul filled and unique event, as Jesus was also present on the altar.

The Theme that emerged from the Novena was ‘*Change and Transformation*’ and I for one can truly say that graces have touched my heart throughout the week. I can only hope that God will continue to change and transform me into the ‘Best’ I can be for all the students in CCR and for our wider community.

Míle Buiochas Fr. Malachy,

Yvonne O’ Rourke
Chaplain
CCR

First Year Mass:

Many thanks to Ben D’Arcy, Alex Finn, Fr. Malachy (celebrant), James O’ Sullivan and Sean Stone.



Second Year Mass:

Many thanks on the left to James Hyland, Harry Finlay, Fr. Malachy (celebrant) and Paudraig Barrett. Many thanks on the right to: Culann Kehoe, Paudraig Barrett, James Hyland, Kyle Dooner and Fr. Malachy (celebrant)



Third Year Mass:



Many thanks to the 3rd Years who participated in the mass Sean Killeen, Paul McCarthy, Fr. Malachy (celebrant), Patrick Hyland and Robert Kennedy.



TY Mass:

Many thanks to Mark Tynan, David Purcell, Raef Donnelly, Fr. Malachy (celebrant) and Mac Dara Fitzpatrick.

5th Year Mass:

Thank you to Richard Whelan, Rory Óg Doody, Greg Fitzgerald and Fr. Malachy (celebrant)





6th Year Mass:

Many thanks to Lorcan Fallon, Charlie Smyth, Fr. Malachy (celebrant) Tom Kilrane and Cuan Culliton