

**St Francis of Assisi, Llay**

# PARISH NEWS

Mid-December 2024



*The content in this Parish News is in addition to that in the Parish Bulletin, the Parish Website and the Diocesan newsletter, The Wrexham Clarion. If you have news or opinions of interest that you'd like to share here, would you please let our parish secretary know of them.*

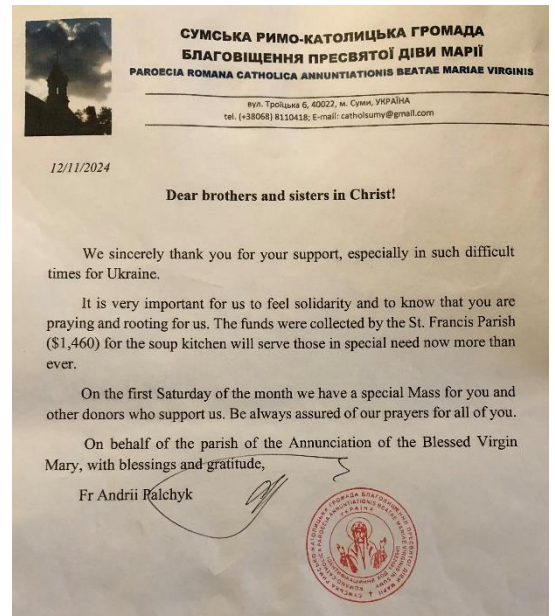
## SUPPORT FOR THE PARISH CHURCH IN SUMY, UKRAINE

Many of you will remember the close links our parish has had over nearly three decades with the Parish of The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Sumy, close to the Russian border in North East Ukraine.

Two years ago, we held the last of the many Soup and Carols evenings to support the soup kitchen which continues to supply hot food twice a week to those in need, and which has been even more important since the Russian invasion. Transferring the £1200 raised to Sumy proved to be extremely difficult, but thanks to Oksana Danko the money was handed, in cash, to Fr Andrii when she returned to her home town for a short visit last month. She found many buildings destroyed or with damaged windows, air raid warnings throughout the day and night, an 11pm curfew and schools working online. People sleep fully dressed so that they can go quickly to a shelter, but many simply go to the corridor or bathroom to wait out the danger. The warning time of an attack is short and increasingly the strikes are carried out not by drones, but by glide bombs, against which there is no defence yet.

In Sumy region along the border there are almost no people left as they were forced to leave their homes and farms, unable to withstand the daily shelling and losses. But on Sundays the church is full, including many military men. Two days after Oksana's return, 11 people were killed in a Russian attack, and more have been killed and injured since. Despite this, Sumy lives on, and isn't going to give up!

Fr Andrii and Sumy parishioners sent their greetings and many thanks for the support and prayers, more important now than ever. Please keep the people of Sumy and all those suffering from this war in your prayers, and many thanks to those who took part in the evening of Soup and Carols, and to Erica Rowlands and Oksana for their perseverance in collecting these funds then getting them to the soup kitchen.



## ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Santa Dash and Light up a Christmas candle

During the week prior to the first Sunday of Advent, parents and family members were invited to join us on a special afternoon walk through Belle Vue Park. The walk took us to different stations, each offering opportunities for everyone to reflect on the message of Jesus' hope, peace, joy and love at Christmas. Children and adults purchased candles to light up our prayer garden in memory of our loved ones in Heaven, and all offerings will be given to Nightingale House Hospice, along with the donations collected on Christmas jumper day on 12<sup>th</sup> December. Well done everyone.



### School Christmas Fayre- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November



To enter into the festive spirit and come together as a school community to raise some much-needed funds to support the work of the school, our Friends of St Mary's held a very successful outdoor Christmas market/ fayre on 28<sup>th</sup> November. Each year group was responsible for setting up a stall to sell their Christmas crafts and offering a fun game or activity for all to enjoy. The weather was perfect; dry, crisp and cold, and everyone had a wonderful time. Even Santa and his cheeky elves were able to join us for a lovely story time session.

## ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC AND ANGLICAN HIGH SCHOOL

### Advent at St Joseph's

It's a very busy time of year in the RE department and Chaplaincy in school. The Advent Candle is lit, rehearsals are taking place for the Advent Liturgy at the end of term and Advent Reconciliation Services have taken place for all year groups. Each class attended a service in our Chapel led by their RE teacher, the chapel is decorated and prepared so the pupils enter into a prayerful and quiet atmosphere. They have time to reflect on God's love for them and His willingness to forgive us all, as they make an examination of conscience, considering the direction their lives are taking and what adjustments they might need to make to be really happy and fulfilled. The theme of the reconciliation this year was "Out of the Darkness into the Light". During the service all pupils had the opportunity to go to the Sacrament of Confession, Fr Jaspher and Fr Nicholas were available for the Catholic pupils and Rev Lara for those children who are Anglicans. The pupils wrote their promises and dedications on paper stars which were placed around the nativity figures in the chapel.