

# Celebrating a new year!

We had the privilege of attending the most wonderful, spiritually rich celebration in St George's Cathedral, Southwark on 26<sup>th</sup> September, to celebrate the beginning of this new academic year.



**Organised by the Education Service in the Archdiocese of Southwark, our school was invited to attend a very special Mass, together with representative students and staff from no less than 130 other primary and secondary schools in the Diocese. The cathedral was completely packed and there was a unique, uplifting atmosphere from start to finish!**

The Mass was celebrated by the **Most Reverend John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark and Metropolitan**, together with four supporting Priests and an Assistant Priest.

Particular schools had been given the privilege of leading on different parts of the Mass, and five of the eleven Year 8 students who represented Richard Challoner School (pictured to the left), had the onerous responsibility of being Altar Servers, which they carried out to perfection.

Archbishop John's "sermon" started by inviting those students who felt brave to go up to the Altar and answer some questions about the Bible, and four of our Challoner students rose to the challenge.

Tying in with the Gospel reading of Luke 9, the Archbishop talked about staying curious and open to God's work in the world and to understand more of who Jesus is, like Herod who was curious to meet him. The Archbishop asked the students to provide their thoughts on how we can be open to God's work. The responses given were spontaneous and thought-provoking,

including one from a young student who mentioned about living the Beatitudes!

The Archbishop asked everybody to try to put into practise the many lovely responses the students had given.

Following the Liturgy of the Word, Archbishop John invited all the Headteachers, the Representatives of the schools' Governing Bodies, the Chaplains and the Education Service staff, to reconfirm and renew their commitment to their special roles, and to join together in the Prayer of Dedication for the year ahead.



*Pictured by the stunning stained-glass window behind the altar are our eleven Year 8 students with Mrs D'Silva, Chaplain at Richard Challoner.*



## Our experience at the Diocesan School Mass!

We all met at New Malden train station, where we got onto the train heading to Waterloo and that's where we started our adventure. The train was quite busy, but we managed to get through offering seats to the public, talking to each other and playing games!



When we arrived at the Cathedral after a quick walk from the station, we went inside the beautiful house of the Lord (St George's Cathedral). With the stained glass windows lighting up the church, we prepared for the mass by putting on our robes and cinctures and we got the acolytes and the cross, then we also got told how to behave in the mass by the Deacon. Some of us learnt how to Altar Serve and to be an acolyte. We also learnt to correctly carry the cross and to carry the book.

The cathedral was full of people. We could see schools from all over the diocese including Holy Cross, Ursuline High, Our Lady Immaculate, Notre Dame (which in French means Our Lady), Donhead and Richard Challoner. The mass had beautiful singing and was very loud.

The song choices were amazing, the sound of the music was very soothing as well. The mass had over 1500 people inside it. Also, on the way back down the aisle, one of our friends accidentally spilt candle wax right next to his eye, but he was fine. But overall everybody had a great and fun time at the mass and we would love to do it again. 😊

Above piece was written by our group of Year 8 students.