



Loreto schools and colleges in England are centred in God, rooted in Christ and animated by the spirit of Mary Ward, the founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our vision is that they will be educational communities where each person has the experience of being loved and valued as a sacred individual created by a loving God; communities where students enjoy an enriching and liberating education that helps them grow into the fullness of life and empowers them to be men and women of courage who are alive to the needs of humanity and committed to making a better world.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ETHOS

Chaplaincy in a Loreto school or college works within the

“Vision, Values and Philosophy”

statement of

Loreto Education in England.

Its role is defined in this document as:

“helping students to strengthen their relationship with God through prayer, liturgy and action and (in) helping them reflect on their hopes and fears, dreams and gifts.”

Within our chaplaincies there is a special, though not exclusive, emphasis on the Ignatian spirituality in which Mary Ward was steeped. Consequently, our approach to students and staff is rooted in a belief that God can be found in all things and that our own experience of day-to-day living is where God speaks to us.

Our chaplains share the profound hope and desire that all will experience that “free and open access to God” of which Mary Ward spoke. Critical to this hope is the willingness to allow each person to be their true self and to recognise that

“the spontaneous Spirit of the God of surprises is equally at home in the awkward, the wayward, the different, in those who march through the classrooms of their education tuned in to a different iPod.” (Daniel O’Leary)

THE WORK OF CHAPLAINCY

Our chaplains nurture the gift of discernment in both themselves and those to whom they minister. They are tuned in to everyday reality and aware of what touches students and staff, knowing that every human experience opens the door to God. They embrace the richness of those of other faiths and none and share with them what we value and hold dear. They are attentive listeners and holders of courageous conversations that challenge and deepen understanding of what lies below the surface of our lives. They are dream keepers.



Conscious that Mary Ward, though often critical of aspects of the Church, always remained its loyal servant, our chaplains are committed to helping all come to a deeper understanding of the Church that Christ founded and to find their place within it.

At the heart of the work of chaplaincy is care for the person. Our chaplains serve the needs of all students and all staff and provide a setting where all are welcome and where lives and experiences can be shared in safe and affirming surroundings.

The work of a Loreto chaplaincy is wide-ranging and will differ from school to school, though certain activities, in light of the principles and ethos described above, are central to its function. The chaplaincy, for example:

- ♦ *is involved in the telling of Mary Ward's story and in deepening staff and students' understanding of the relevance of our core values to the day-to-day life of the school or college*
- ♦ gives a lead in liturgical events
- ♦ *provides opportunities for one-to-one and small group spiritual development, prayer and reflection*
- ♦ responds to major events in the life of the school and college and the individuals within them
- ♦ *has close links with the RE department, pastoral tutors and JPIC activities*
- ♦ has a role in staff development and training.

STRUCTURES

Each Loreto school and college is different and different models of chaplaincy suit particular circumstances. Certain features, however, are common to all our establishments:

- ◆ *sufficient time and resources are allocated to the work of chaplaincy*
- ◆ senior leaders support the chaplaincy by ensuring that all staff understand the work that it does
- ◆ *appropriate support is provided, for example: supervision, professional development and the existence of a chaplaincy team*
- ◆ a job description with clear lines of accountability is available
- ◆ *arrangements are in place for the chaplains across the Loreto establishments to meet on a regular basis.*

