



LETTER FROM THE HEADMASTER SUMMER 2007

May I take this opportunity to thank all the students, staff and parents for their on-going positive support of the school throughout this long and busy term. So much has taken place in the Senior and Junior Schools since Easter that the whole term has flown by. I think it is fair to say that every student, every teacher and every parent has been involved in a number of activities and events here in the school since Easter particularly parents who have more than one son or daughter in the school practically resided on the campus during the last term! I am grateful to one and all for YOUR on-going enthusiasm, support and proactive attitude, which allows for all of these events to take place with seamless ease. We sincerely wish all our Junior Cert and Leaving Cert students every success during the examination period.

Valedictory Mass

A most moving Valedictory Graduation Mass was con-celebrated by Monsignor Richard Mohan and Reverend Father John O'Connor. The themes of love, joy, peace, goodness, patience, courage, understanding, gentleness, kindness, faithfulness, wisdom and wonder were proclaimed and celebrated. These are the simple things we wish for our sons and daughters and for each other. Monsignor Mohan asked students to focus on the challenge that Christian living poses to them and to be true to themselves. The Graduation Mass celebrated both an ending and a new beginning for our 6th Year students with the Ceremony of Light adding significance to the occasion.

Medjugorje Pilgrimage

A group of twenty-one 5th Year students accompanied by Mr. Seamus Jennings and Ms. Paula Hillman travelled to Medjugorje during the second week of the Easter Holidays **they** students spent the week on pilgrimage. It included a guided tour of the Shrine, attending all of the religious ceremonies during the week and a meeting with one of the visionaries. The group also climbed the Hill of Apparition, climbed Mount Krizevac to follow the way of the Cross, visited the various communities in the area and toured the beautiful cities of Dubrovnik and Mostar. In meeting with the various students involved, there is no doubt but that this pilgrimage has left a life-long impression on the students. We look forward to further pilgrimages in the future.

Social Awareness Programme

One of the true successes of this school year is the Social Awareness Programme. Since last September the students involved themselves with a myriad of charitable works including the Sugarloaf Sponsored Run on St. Gerard's Day for UNICEF, the Christmas Bazaar, the various Transition Year Mini Company activities, the 2nd and 3rd Year CSPE Projects, the School Golf Outing, the Christmas Hamper Appeal for St. Vincent de Paul as well as other fund raising events. Since last September, in excess of €160,000 has been raised, donated and/or given on behalf of the school to approximately thirty charities, international, national and local.

This is an amazing figure.

The true test of social awareness is the integration of the students into the programme. All of the students have attended a number of lectures/presentations/talks from various speakers involved in numerous charities who have shared their personal experiences and vision with them. I commend highly all of the students who were so generous with their time throughout the year on behalf of the various charities both within the school and particularly outside of the school. It is most important to build on the excellent work done this year through the Social Awareness Programme over the coming years.

Building Update

would like to take this opportunity to update you on the progress of the various building works that are taking place in the school.

- ? Floodlighting has been completed on the Senior Rugby Pitch and Tennis Courts in addition to the earlier floodlight work to the two all-weather hockey pitches and the multi-purpose pitch.
- ? The work to the Main House was finished at Easter with the final interior and exterior decorating finishes now complete. It is proposed to have an Open Day in August for the students and parents of the school to visit the Main House.
- ? Work to the Senior School extension is taking place at pace with three completion dates proposed of August, October and December 2007 for Phases 1, 2 and 3 respectively. It is intended that the vast majority of classes will take place in the Main School Building from Halloween. It is proposed that the Prefabricated classrooms will be out of commission from December 2007. All Phases are currently on target for completion on their due dates.
- ? Within the Main Senior School Building on-going work will take place in the LRC to develop a Resource Centre for Careers, Counselling and Learning Support. The LRC itself will be enlarged.
- ? It is proposed to construct a new routeway around the Sports Hall to complete a one-way system for traffic in this area. The routeway will be completed during the month of July.

Summer Term Tours

LONDON: The English Department conducted a most informative tour to London in May for the 5th Year students. They attended a number of workshops, a musical and 'Othello' in the Globe Theatre.

COPENHAGEN: A large group of students from 6th and 5th Year travelled to Copenhagen for four days, the focus point being their visit to the UNICEF World Distribution Centre Headquarters. The tour was primarily based on the cultural highlights of the city as well as a visit to the renowned Tivoli Gardens.

Retreats

1st and 2nd Year students had one day Retreats here in the school during the month of May which were of great benefit and the 4th Year students travelled to the Esker Retreat Centre in Athenry, Galway. They climbed Croagh Patrick and visited Knock Shrine over their three day Retreat.

Model United Nations Parliament

The Model United Nations Parliament took place in Jury's Hotel during the first week of the Easter Holidays. The school was represented by Dearbhail O'Crowley, Lucie Shelly, Fiona Murray and Sophie Kruseman from 5th Year who were participating as the envoys from Guatemala. Dearbhail O'Crowley was awarded an Outstanding Delegation Award. Over fifteen hundred students from all over the world took part and the standard of open debate was remarkably high. Congratulations to our 5th Year team who did themselves and the school proud in debating most difficult topics in front of such a large crowd of delegates.

National Model European Parliament

The following Transition Year students, Amy Farrar, Andrew Hozier-Byrne, Philip McCann, Ronan McCarthy and Jonathan Towers participated in the Model European Parliament held at Easter. Etaoin Donovan of 5th Year was chosen as a Committee President at the National Model European Parliament also. This is a very distinguished honour for Etaoin and the school.

Summer Concert

We had the privilege in early May of enjoying another fabulous evening of music, song and dance at our second Summer Concert. All of the invited acts from within the Senior School student body performed to a very high level and set high standards for up and coming students to aspire to.

International Mathematical Olympiad

Congratulations to Jamie Judd of 6th Year who has been selected as a member of the Irish team at the International Mathematical Olympiad which will take place in Hanoi, Vietnam in July. This is a national team of six and it is the second year that Jamie has been selected. It is a most prestigious honour to be bestowed on him and indeed on the school.

Debating

The Senior Debating Team of Dearbhail O’Crowley, James Brankin, Gary Walker-Ayers and Eabha McMahon were most unfortunate to lose the final of the Bray Lions Competition in May. We look forward next year to great success for our Senior Debating Team as they are all currently in Transition Year and 5th Year.

Choir

The Senior School Choir once again performed well in the AIMS (Amateur Irish Musical Society) Competition in May. Many congratulations to Gary Walker-Ayers of 5th Year on winning 1st Prize in the Boys’ Youth Solo Section, having performed “Walking in Memphis” by Marc Cohen and “Silent Worship” by Handel.

My Fair Lady

Well done to the students of Standard VI on a fabulous production of My Fair Lady. It is most evident that **there** is a very talented group of students coming through to the Senior School and we look forward with confidence to great things from them over the coming years.

Irish Subject Report

The Irish Subject Report which the school received from the Department of Education and Science has been published on the Department of Education and Science Website. You will also find the report on the school Website.

Fashion Show

A Transition Year Mini Company, comprising of Maria Caprani, Katie Conway, Eabha McMahon, Sharna McMullen and Nikki Ward organised and produced a Fashion Show in aid of the charity Sonas. The show was most professionally organised. A sincere word of congratulations to all of the models who participated in the show and who were drawn from the student body of 5th and 6th Years. The evening raised in excess of €8,000 for Sonas.

Blastbeat Music Competition

Many congratulations to the school band HOTSPOT consisting of Transition Year students Jake Bitove, James Febbitt, Andrew Keyes and Hugo Sherry who won the National Finals of the Blastbeat Competition in May. This is an outstanding achievement by a most talented group. This national competition is a highly competitive one for aspiring musicians and rockbands. The Blastbeat idea in the school evolved through a Transition Year Mini Company and the school hosted the first round of the competition.

Boys' Tennis

Congratulations and well done to the Minor Tennis Team (Alan Gleeson, Nick O'Loughlin, Niall McLaughlin, Sam Gilmore, Dylan Simmonds, Ger Cunningham, Rufus O'Brien and Hugh Delaney) and to the Junior Tennis Team (Alan Gleeson, Cian Cafferky, Jonathan Towers, Rian O'Loughlin, Adam Bowtell, Colin O'Meara and Charlie Sherry) who won Division 2 of the Minor and Junior Leinster Tennis Competition. Unfortunately, the Senior Tennis Team (Shane Deignan, Edwin Jebb, Oliver Rosenstock, Paul O'Meara, Karl Kelly, Max Duffy and Thomas Delahunt) were most unlucky to lose their final which would have resulted in a wonderful treble for the school.

St. Gerard's v Greystones Lawn Tennis Club

Well done to the thirty-six 1st & 2nd Year students who represented the school in this most important fixture in May. St. Gerard's regained the Trophy after five years 11-7 in a very exciting match. This is an excellent fixture and it was very positive to see the large turnout of parents and students on the day.

Girls' Tennis

A specially noted success was the Senior A Girls' Tennis team (Aoibheann Gleeson & Sophie Pigot of 6th Year, Alexandra Pickerill, Sinead Duffy and Aoife Ni Chuilleanain of 5th Year) who reached the Leinster Schools Girls A Semi Final. They were most unfortunate to be defeated by a very good Mount Anville team who had two international players on their team.

Athletics

Fifteen students came 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the Wicklow Schools Invitational Track and Field Championships in April. At the East Leinster Athletics Championships the school was very well represented covering a variety of track and field events at Minor, Junior, Intermediate and Senior level. A special note of congratulations to Simon Wilson of 2nd Year on winning the Gold Medal in the Discus event, Ian Byrne of 2nd Year on winning 1st Place in the Long Jump and also 3rd Place in the 80m and Shauna Roche of 1st Year for gaining 1st place in the 500m Race.

Gaelic Football

Congratulations to Jordan Egan of 4th Year who was selected on the Wicklow Minor Football Team, to Darren Gammell of 1st Year who was selected on the Wicklow Under 14 team and to Philip O'Donnell of 4th Year who was selected from his Club – Cuala - to play on the Dublin Under 16 team.

Senior School Family Tennis

Many thanks to all of the families and students who attended the Senior School Family Tennis Evening on Thursday 17th May in glorious sunshine. There was a great degree of talent on display with in excess of thirty teams participating. Many congratulations to Alexandra Pickerill and her brother David who defeated Shane and Annette Deignan in the Final.

Senior Rugby and Senior Hockey Barbeque.

The Senior Rugby and Hockey Barbeque took place in April with players from both Squads presented with their Cup jerseys. It was a wonderful evening for students, parents and coaches and an excellent opportunity for the school to thank everyone for the commitment that they have shown to the school over the long years representing St. Gerard's in Rugby and Hockey.

St. Gerard's School Charity Golf Tournament:

The Annual Golf Tournament took place on Thursday May 11th in Druid's Heath Golf Club with the funds raised from the event going towards the School St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Hamper Appeal. In excess of €9,000 was raised through the event which was followed by a most pleasant evening here in the school.

School Website:

New Junior and Senior School Websites are complete and contain all updated information on the school. Please feel free to visit the School Website and indeed any feed-back would be most welcome.

School Planner:

The School Planner will be available to all students on their return in August. It is intended to continue with the current Planner format as it is proving most user-friendly and helpful to staff, pupils and parents.

School Uniform:

Please find enclosed a full list of the school uniform and sports uniform for the next academic year. The school takes great pride on the appearance of the students and a high standard of deportment is required from all students. As you are aware from information posted earlier, a small number of changes have been added to enhance the uniform. A new school jacket for the boys is a welcome addition as well as new tie for 4th, 5th and 6th Year boys which will be available from the School Office in August. Our Sports and Uniform Suppliers will return again in August for two days to assist parents in purchasing uniform prior to the school year commencing.

In House Committee

St. Gerard's School has a tradition of a vast array of social activities taking place during the final term in particular in both the Junior and Senior School. None of these events could take place without the constant support, encouragement and hard work of the ladies of the In House Committee who do remarkable work prior, during and after each event. On behalf of the school, I thank them most sincerely for their industry throughout the year.

Memories of St. Gerard's School

Three Transition Year students, Amy Farrar, Marina Zaki and Tim Costello, as part of their Mini Company project, produced a Book of Memories of St. Gerard's. This excellent publication will be of interest to any student current or past as well as current and former parents. It can be purchased through the school.

Parents' Association

A word of sincere thanks to Mr. David O'Reilly, Chairman of the Parents' Association and his excellent committee for all of the work they have done on your behalf during the academic year. Talks, Lectures, Courses and Newsletters have been of great assistance and a special word of thanks to all the parents who have worked tirelessly on the various Sub Committees during the year. In particular, we look forward to the St. Gerard's Ball in November in the new Ritz Carlton Hotel.

Prefects

Many congratulations to our new Head Boy, Jonathan Carroll and our new Head Girl, Etaoin Donovan on their appointments. As I announced on Prize Day a number of new roles have been created for the Prefects and a full review is taking place regarding the role of the Prefects in the school. Prefects will undertake training at the end of August for their new positions with a view to maximising the potential of the posts.

Staff

All of the above events take place with the encouragement, support, attendance and hard work of the teaching and the sports staff. The school makes every effort to enter and participate in as many sporting and extra-curricular competitions as is feasible. To do this, we are reliant on the continuous support of the teaching and the sports staff to give of their time and to support all of the activities listed above and in previous Newsletters.

School Office:

Please note that the School Office will be closed from Monday July 9th and will re-open on Wednesday August 1st.
I wish you all an enjoyable Summer and look forward to seeing you again in late August.

Yours sincerely,

**Tom Geraghty.
HEADMASTER.**