



NEA NEWS & VIEWS



DECEMBER 2025

THE HOPE OF CHRISTMAS *by Krista Besselman*

When the days feel cold and lifeless,
Like the darkest winter night,
May we bring the hope of Christmas
To a world that needs more light.

When it feels like nothing's sacred—
Nothing chaos can't destroy—
May we bring the hope of Christmas
To a world that's lost its joy.

To a world that thrives on outrage—
No forgiveness, no release—
May we bring the hope of Christmas
Through the promised Prince of Peace.

There is fear and death and darkness
But through faith we rise above
As we show the Christ of Christmas
To a world that needs His love.

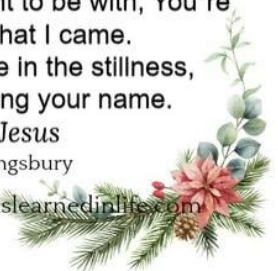


If You Look For Me At Christmas

If you look for me at Christmas,
You won't need a special star.
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,
I'm right there where you are.
You may not be aware of Me,
Amid the celebrations.
You'll have to look beyond the stores,
And all the decorations.
But if you take a moment,
From your list of things to do,
And listen to your heart,
you'll find I'm waiting there for you.
You're the one I want to be with, You're
the reason that I came.
And you'll find Me in the stillness,
As I'm whispering your name.

Love, Jesus
by Valerie Kingsbury

lessonslearnedinlife.com



The Christmas star shines
as a beacon of hope,
guiding hearts to peace.

TOP SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Sister Barbara Bailey drew attention to this good news about the success of Rathmore Grammar School, Finaghy, Belfast (founded by the RSHM). It features in the UK Sunday Times in a Top Schools supplement. It Rates 35 out of top the 100!

There is a mention, too, of Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock, Belfast (an amalgamation of SHM, Holywood, Co Down and St Patrick's College, Knock) which had the top 'A' Level results in Northern Ireland.

We, RSHM, can be justly proud of the two schools where many of the Sisters were involved from their foundation and in which we served for many years. Congratulations to all the Staffs, pupils and parents.

THE ARTICLE IN THE SUNDAY TIMES UK ON SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER

After years of consultation, revolution is coming to classrooms in Northern Ireland with the new TransformED NI strategy through five key reforms: curriculum overhaul for "coherent, knowledge-rich" learning; standardising assessment and qualifications at primary, lower secondary and vocational levels; better professional development for teachers; a revised qualification for school headship; and measures to tackle disadvantage.

The statutory desire to boost performance further comes as three out of ten pupils in Northern Ireland scored top marks this year, achieving A* or A grades in at least one subject. All of Parent Power's top ten schools in Northern Ireland are also ranked in the UK's top 80 state secondaries.

Some schools are already getting it right. Clíodhna Logan, head girl of Rathmore Grammar School, earned four A*s in chemistry, biology, maths and physics to read medicine at Queen's University, Belfast, and the school's results were so impressive that Paul Givan, the education minister in Northern Ireland, paid a visit to offer his congratulations.

Some of the best A-level results in a decade, and GCSEs in which 75.8 per cent of pupils gained seven grades 9-7, has led to Rathmore climbing 17 places in the UK league table to rank 35th and take the title of Secondary School of the Year in Northern Ireland.

It follows another win at the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition in Dublin. Rathmore pupil Eoin Rossney-Hyde took home the first prize for his project focused on "the application of abstract mathematical theories to mitigate against racial and gender bias in AI".

Arthur Donnelly, principal of the coeducational Catholic school in Finaghy, Belfast, attributes the success *"to the people and the sense of community we have. It's the bedrock of everything."* *Former pupils often become teachers and staff may spend their entire career at the school, while the prefect team raised more than £18,500 to support the work of Trócaire, an NGO that works to improve social justice and human rights as well as supporting a local mental health charity. But nowhere is community more celebrated than when it comes to sport, with extracurriculars including cross-country, boys' and girls' Gaelic football, football and basketball, hurling and camogie.*

"Our motto, which we share with our founders, the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, an international congregation of religious sisters, is UT VITAM HABEANT ('That they may have life')" Donnelly says. *"I think that speaks for itself."*



Rathmore pupils

The school with the top A-level results in Northern Ireland is [Our Lady and St Patrick's College](#), Knock, a co-ed Catholic voluntary grammar school. (Diocesan and SHM amalgamation).

Tribute to Rosemary from St Francis Hospice

The recent edition of Scoop, the St Francis Hospice Newsletter, contains an article written about Rosemary's Diamond Jubilee by her Line Manager who is a Muslim. Congratulations Rosemary!

The Scoop



Celebrating Sister Rosemary: 60 Years of Religious Profession

Shahina Haque

We are filled with joy, pride, and deep gratitude as Rosemary celebrates an extraordinary milestone. For six decades, Sister Rosemary has lived her vocation with faithfulness, humility, and love. Her life has been one of prayer, service, and deep compassion.

We are truly blessed to have her as part of our team. Rosemary brings wisdom born of experience, a gentle spirit that comforts those in her care, and a joyful presence that uplifts everyone around her. Her faith and dedication inspire us daily to serve with the same tenderness and devotion. "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:23). We give thanks for her remarkable journey and for the countless lives she has touched, and trust she may continue to be blessed with peace, joy, and strength in the years ahead.

POSTINGS FROM THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

During Advent Camilla posted an 'Advent Calendar' using a quotation from Gailhac and a suggestion for putting this into practice in today's world. These suggestions can be used at any time. There are more details on the RSHM facebook page.



SET UP OR ARRANGE THE NATIVITY SCENE IN YOUR HOME/COMMUNITY WITH PRAYERFUL INTENTION.



CHOOSE A SMALL HABIT THAT YOU WANT TO RENEW THIS ADVENT (PRAYER, LISTENING, PATIENCE) AND WRITE IT DOWN ON A PIECE OF PAPER.



CHOOSE SOMEONE TO PRAISE SINCERELY.

03/12

"NA VIDA, HÁ DIAS DE PAZ E DIAS DE COMBATE."
"IN LIFE, THERE ARE DAYS OF PEACE AND DAYS OF COMBAT."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

IDENTIFY AN INNER "STRUGGLE" WITHIN YOURSELF AND ASK FOR STRENGTH TO FACE IT.

04
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

04/12

"HABITUE-SE A DIZER TUDO EM POUCAS PALAVRAS E CLARAMENTE."
"GET USED TO SAYING EVERYTHING IN A FEW WORDS AND CLEARLY."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

WHEN FACED WITH THE FIRST STRESS OF THE DAY, PAUSE AND BREATHE BEFORE REACTING.

05
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

05/12

"COM CALMA E BOM-SENSE TUDO SE CONSEGUE."
"WITH CALMNESS AND COMMON SENSE, ANYTHING CAN BE ACHIEVED."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

WRITE A SHORT, AFFECTIONATE MESSAGE TO SOMEONE.

06
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

06/12

"CUIDE DE SUA SAÚDE E FARÁ A VONTADE DE DEUS."
"TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH AND YOU WILL DO GOD'S WILL."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

TAKE CONCRETE STEPS TODAY TO CARE FOR YOUR BODY.

07
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

07/12

"PARA OS CORAÇÕES NÃO HÁ DISTÂNCIA."
"FOR HEARTS, THERE IS NO DISTANCE."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

CALL SOMEONE YOU HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO IN A WHILE.

08
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

08/12

"VIRGEM SANTÍSSIMA, MINHA BOA MÃE, COM O VOSSO AUXÍLIO, QUERO SER FIEL."
"MOST HOLY VIRGIN, MY GOOD MOTHER, WITH YOUR HELP, I WANT TO BE FAITHFUL."

Sr. Saint Jean
 (25.10.1849, p. 48)

PRAY A HAIL MARY SLOWLY, CONTEMPLATING EACH WORD.

09
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

09/12

"REZE MUITO, PENSE, PEÇA CONSELHO, MAS DEPOIS ENTRE EM AÇÃO."
"PRAY HARD, THINK, SEEK ADVICE, BUT THEN TAKE ACTION."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

GET SOMETHING OFF YOUR TO-DO LIST THAT YOU'VE BEEN PUTTING OFF.

10
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

10/12

"A VERDADEIRA CONFIANÇA É SEMPRE CALMA."
"TRUE CONFIDENCE IS ALWAYS CALM."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

CHOOSE A SITUATION IN WHICH YOU WOULD NORMALLY FEEL RUSHED, ANXIOUS, OR THE URGE TO JUSTIFY YOURSELF, AND TRY TO ACT CALMLY.

11
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

11/12

"ORGANIZE A SUA VIDA PARA TER TEMPO."
"ORGANIZE YOUR LIFE TO HAVE TIME."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

LOOK AHEAD TO NEXT YEAR: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE COME TO FRUITION? CHOOSE AN INTENTION AND GET ORGANIZED TO WELCOME IT.

12
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

12/12

"COMPADEÇA-SE DAS FRAQUEZAS HUMANAS, CONSÓLE E ENCORAJE SEMPRE."
"BE COMPASSIONATE TOWARD HUMAN WEAKNESSES, ALWAYS COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

SAY A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE FIRST PERSON YOU MEET AFTER READING THIS MESSAGE.

13
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

13/12

"NÃO SE AMONTOA UM GRANDE TESOURO SENÃO COM PEQUENAS ECONOMIAS."
"A GREAT TREASURE IS NOT AMASSED EXCEPT THROUGH SMALL SAVINGS."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

WHAT HAS BEEN EXCESSIVE IN YOUR ROUTINE? CHOOSE ONE SINGLE ADJUSTMENT TO MAKE TODAY AND ALLOW THE ESSENTIAL TO HAVE SPACE AGAIN.

14
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

14/12

"QUE A GRAÇA DO ESPÍRITO SANTO ENCHA O SEU CORAÇÃO DE CALMA, DE PAZ E DE UMA SANTA ALEGRIA."
"MAY THE GRACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FILL YOUR HEART WITH CALMNESS, PEACE, AND HOLY JOY."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

DO SOMETHING CONCRETE TODAY TO BRING JOY TO SOMEONE.

15
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

15/12

"NA PRÁTICA DO BEM NADA É PEQUENO OU INDIFFERENTE."
"IN THE PRACTICE OF GOOD, NOTHING IS SMALL OR INSIGNIFICANT."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

IDENTIFY SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS THAT HAVE MADE YOU FEEL GOOD AND FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN REPAY THEM.

16
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

16/12

"AS PALAVRAS VOAM, MAS OS EXEMPLOS TRIUNFAM SEMPRE NOS CORAÇÕES."
"WORDS FLY AWAY, BUT EXAMPLES ALWAYS TRIUMPH IN PEOPLE'S HEARTS."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

OBSERVE: WHAT ARE YOU TEACHING OR CONVEYING TO OTHERS WITHOUT REALIZING IT, JUST THROUGH YOUR BEHAVIOR?

17
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR

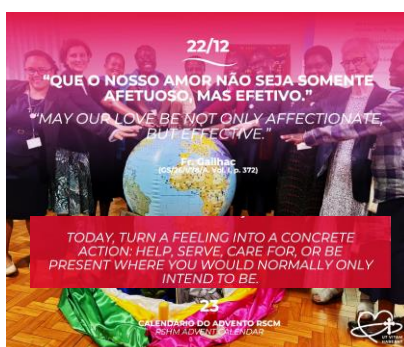
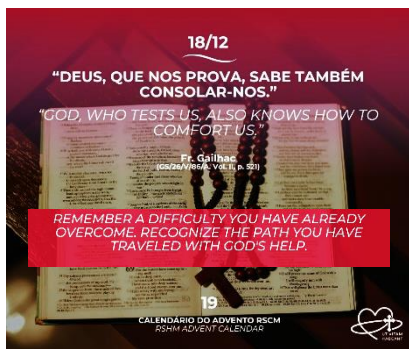
17/12

"O AMOR ARDENTE NÃO FICA OCIOSO."
"ARDENT LOVE DOES NOT REMAIN IDLE."

Fr. Gailhac
 (CS/28/IN/75/A, Vol. I, p. 43)

RESUME SOMETHING GOOD THAT YOU ABANDONED DUE TO FATIGUE OR DISCOURAGEMENT.

18
 CALENDÁRIO DO ADVENTO RSCM
 RSHM ADVENT CALENDAR



BEREAVEMENTS



We offer our sincere sympathy to the Sisters in the EAA on the death of **Sister Edna O'Connor RSHM** on 3 December in Marymount Convent, Tarrytown. Sr Edna was 90 years of age and has spent 73 years as an RSHM. May Edna rest in peace.

We offer our deepest sympathy to Sister Bernadette McNamara on the death of her beloved sister **Nuala Bruton** on Saturday 13 December. May her immediate and extended family be comforted by the support they receive at this sad time and may Nuala rest in peace.



+++++

*Thank
you*

Arrowsmith House and Seafield wish to thank all those who sent messages, prayers and Mass cards on the occasion of Sr Marie Clune's death RIP. We share with you the quotation below which was found in her room and was on her requiem booklet.

*Always remember you matter,
you're important, and you're loved.
Your presence on this earth makes a difference
whether you see it or not.
(The boy, the mole, the fox and the horse)*

Dear Sisters,

Thank you for your prayers and support to my family and to me at the time of my sister Margaret's death RIP. So many of you got in touch sending messages, promising prayers, sending sympathy cards and Mass cards. We, as a family, very much appreciate that those in the London area were able to attend her funeral Mass in her own parish in Kingsbury.

Mass has been requested for all your intentions. *Joanna*



Thank you so much to everyone who sent me good wishes on my Diamond Jubilee and my 80th Birthday! I am very grateful for your kindness and I wish you all a Happy Christmas and Happy New Year!
Rosemary



Christmas Greetings

People send Christmas greetings to spread goodwill, maintain connections, and share holiday cheer in a tangible way, offering a personal touch beyond digital messages, sharing life updates, and decorating homes with festive greetings. Originating in Victorian England with the first commercially printed card in 1843, the tradition continues as a way to show care, connect with distant loved ones, and even serve as a yearly recap of life.



Warmest Christmas greetings to everyone from us all in *Arrowsmith and Seafield*.

Pope Francis prayed before this Icon of Madonna & Child before and after his trips abroad. As Christmas comes around once more I pray that you will all have a happy Christmas and peace and good health in the New Year. *Love from Eleanor*



We wish all our sisters, extended family and collaborators a very happy and peaceful Christmas. We pray for you all and hope that 2026 will bring love, joy and peace into all our lives and to the areas of the world that are in conflict and war.

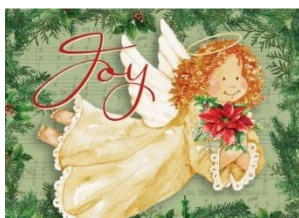
We have given a donation to our local branch of the St. Vincent de Paul to help the many struggling families in our area.

Your sisters in Naomh Brid, Ferrybank

Wishing you all the Joy and Peace of Christmas and many blessings throughout the New Year.

A donation will be made to the Homeless Charity CRISIS

Love from Dorothy, Rosemary, Breda and Kathleen, Manor Park Community

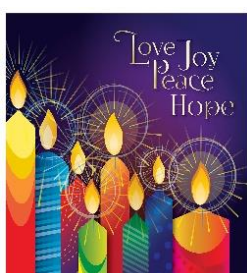


My sincere greetings and best wishes to each one for peace and joy at Christmas and for a New Year filled with hope and trust in the Lord's words "Fear not, I will help you".

Love and blessings, Brigitte

A very happy and peaceful Christmas to all of you, your families and friends. May the season bring you joy and happiness and may this continue into 2026. We have donated to the local Saint Vincent de Paul conference in lieu of cards and postage.

All of us in Grianán, Ferrybank.



As we celebrate the miracle of this special season, may our hearts be filled with peace and joy.

May the blessings of Christmas stay with us throughout the year.

Donations to food vouchers. *Your Sisters in Fazakerly*

Christmas blessings and greetings to all our sisters
from *Margot and Mary Jo in The Park*.
We join in celebrating the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace,
And pray for peace in our broken world.
We will contribute our card money to a local Charity.



Dear Sisters

We *Maeve, Ursula and Mary, living in Dunmurry*, wish to send Greetings to all the sisters of our Area. May each one experience the joy, hope and peace belonging to the great Feast of Christmas when God took on Flesh as a little Child with the mission to lead us back to the Father who Loves us always and for ever. We wish you every blessing for Christmas and for 2026.

Christmas Blessings



May this Christmas season wrap your heart in peace and your soul in joy. May the gentle light of Christ's love guide your every step, bringing hope where there's been worry, and warmth where there's been waiting. May laughter echo through your home, and may even the quiet moments feel full—full of grace, full of gratitude, full of God's promises. May you find beauty in the simple, blessings in the ordinary, and miracles tucked in the smallest corners of your day. As the star once led wise men, may you be led into a new year with renewed faith, deeper love, and a heart ready for all God has prepared for you. Merry Christmas, and may His peace be with you now and always.

In Jesus Christ's name, Amen.