

# Enhancing Faith

Maria Sandoval, Year 6



**During my time at St Vincent de Paul School my religion has been greatly strengthened by our many faith-based traditions. One of our foremost practices is connected with the feast of the Miraculous Medal, which takes place on 27 November. It is very meaningful to us, because the image of the Miraculous Medal is our school badge. We are so fortunate to have such a precious symbol on our school uniform. Every year, St Vincent de Paul pupils receive a Miraculous Medal and a booklet which includes information about the medal and its significance, as well as prayers to Our Lady. This year I have received my eighth Medal, due to the fact that I have been lucky enough to have attended SVP School since Nursery.**

Another important tradition is the May Procession. The Year 3 pupils participate in the Procession dedicated to Our Lady. All of the children dress in their First Holy Communion clothes, which makes it a very special and

prayerful time. The Procession is similar to a wedding, there is one girl who represents Mary, and two bridesmaids who tend to her. Other pupils either throw petals across the floor or accompany the girl who plays Holy Mary. We also sing hymns to Our Lady.

We have another tradition, which is the Advent Garden Service that the Year 4 pupils perform. We light our Advent Wreath and the children sing songs from their countries all over the world. Each candle has significance and this is explained through the dramatization. This is followed by the Year 4 girls who gracefully perform a ballet dance which concludes the service.

Furthermore, one of our most significant traditions is the Nativity Performance. It takes place every year in December on the main sanctuary of Westminster Cathedral and it is a public event! Every pupil in the school participates in this joyful Christmas production. The main Christmas message is to love and care for others and to celebrate the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I can recall the story of Christmas more easily when I stand before the Crib or when I participate in the Christmas production.

Another extremely important event is the Passion Play, which Year 5 undertakes. It is also open to the whole school community and occurs close to Passion Sunday, again on the main sanctuary of the Cathedral. The Play depicts the whole story of the Passion of Christ. During this holy season of the year, my faith increases by remembering the Passion of Our Lord, because when I find things difficult, I remember that Jesus went through much more hardship and pain than I ever have. Throughout the time of Easter, we have to remember how God sacrificed his only-begotten Son to die on the Cross for us. That is why we should cherish that act of unconditional love and care.

Moreover, one of our daily traditions is class worship, and every day we have two pupils who lead our collective worship. We also have assemblies, which happen weekly, where we focus on prayer and scripture passages from the Bible. We are a Catholic school; this is our main area of study, but we also study other religions in Religious Education. Recently we have been studying Judaism. It is so interesting to learn about and have respect for other religions. St Vincent de Paul School has really strengthened my faith and relationship with Jesus, and I hope that I remember the message my school has given me throughout all of my life.