

20<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Re: First Year Retreats

Dear Parents,

We are, like you, committed to your son's growth and development in a range of knowledge and learning experiences, including the faith dimension of his life.

The purpose of the Religious Education programme and the retreat as part of it, is to integrate the spiritual with the personal development of the student, as well as, to build up a Christian community in both the class and the school.

Faith formation is not a mysterious process. In the main, it follows the same developmental procedures as other modes of learning. Spiritual growth requires exposure both to spiritual values and spiritual experience. In this, parental example is a powerful teacher. We meet God in prayer, personal and communal. Building a relationship with God follows the same developmental pattern as human relationships. It comes through contact, regular and consistent.

It is said that Faith is 'caught' not 'taught'. Thus, as part of the Faith Formation programme in Gonzaga, we have a retreat for each of the six years. This helps to supplement the faith 'information' in the classroom with faith 'formation' through prayer, reflection and sacrament.

We hope that the retreat will be an opportunity for your son, to 'experience' as well as 'learn about' faith. The retreat's theme is *Being the Best You Can Be*. As this is the boys' first retreat after their Confirmation, the content of the day is designed to help the students reflect upon ways in which the gifts they received at Confirmation are bearing fruit in their life, behaviour, social interactions, feelings and their

growing relationship with Jesus. The day will include games, song, film, drama, prayer and meditation.

The retreats will take place in Emmaus Retreat Centre, Swords, Co. Dublin and each group will be accompanied by two teachers. The logistics are as follows:

**1A and 1B:            Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**1C and 1D:            Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

Meet in Gonzaga            **08:00 sharp**

Arrive in Gonzaga            **16:15**

Dress: The boys do not need to wear school uniform. The dress code is 'neat casual'. It is advisable for the boys to wear runners, as there is an opportunity to play outdoors during breaks.

Lunch is provided by and in Emmaus Retreat Centre.

Thank you very much for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Damon McCaul  
Headmaster

Elisabeth Anna Clarke  
Director of Ignatian Formation and Services Programmes