

Every young person at this school or elsewhere brings with them, among other things, great hope. You bring hope to the older generation that life will continue; hope to your houses that sound leadership and spirit will go forward; hope to the world that you will improve things for the better. When an heir to the throne becomes a mum or dad, there is a new confidence for the future of the country.

The old man Simeon, who spent his life longing and waiting for his eyes to see the Messiah, hoped for the day (we celebrate) to arrive: the day that Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple, where Simeon spent his waking hours. The Holy Family, dwarfed by the scale of the building, saw the elderly man shuffle towards them, and no matter how busy the Temple was with visitors that day, he saw the light. The Light of the World shone that day in the dark Temple of Jerusalem.

The Upper Sixth processing into the Abbey Church today are a sign of hope. The truth is, we have each been entrusted with the light, as children of the light. The *Lumen Christi* shines in all of us, and all are called to carry God's presence into the world beyond. The Upper Sixth will be called on to do this soonest of all, this summer and beyond, and we hold them in our prayers. When they lit their candles, they passed the flame among themselves and the light quickly spread. Is the Lord's light safe with you? Your parents, if you were baptised as a baby, were given a candle with the words: *This light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly.*

That same message is for you, at an age where you can choose to receive or to reject it. *The Lumen Christi (the light of Christ)* has been put into your hands. Everything you have is gift. You yourself are becoming a gift to the world. Called to bring the long hoped-for light that everyone longs for.

In the Gospel, Simeon does not keep the child for himself. He takes Jesus in his arms, blesses God, and recognises him as a light not just for Israel, but for all peoples. Having seen that light, Simeon is able to let go. That is where this Gospel leaves us. The light has been revealed, but it must now be carried. You are now part of that story, signs of what God is still doing. And so, like Simeon, we can entrust the light to you and step back in peace, confident that what we have waited for, will be carried forward, in you.