



5th January 2024



GOSPEL: VALUE: Our Gospel Value this coming week is PEACE. Please reflect on this at home with your child.

Weekly Reflection

A very Happy New Year to all our Holy Cross pupils, families, staff and governors. I sincerely hope that you had a wonderful Christmas and that 2024 brings you many blessings. In our first Assembly of the new year and spring term we reflected on the scripture readings from the 1st January, the Feast of Mary the Mother of God. We heard how Mary kept close to her all of the special events of the night of the birth of Jesus,

'And all that heard, wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.' Luke 2: 18-19

We thought in Assembly about all the special moments that we enjoyed during Christmas and that we would treasure these in our hearts, just like Mary our Mother. We celebrated a beautiful Mass this afternoon to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany and we are reminded that our journey from Christmas through the year, continues. We are called to bring the light of Jesus to everyone in our lives by showing love and kindness.

We have added a new Gospel Value this term, bringing our Gospel Values to 10. As a school we feel that this is an important part of our school ethos and we have added **Peace**; Peace in our hearts, Peace in our lives and Peace in our world. The children have been writing some beautiful prayers about Peace and we have shared some in this week's newsletter.

*'The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.
The Lord shew his face to thee, and have mercy on thee.
The Lord turn his countenance to thee, and give thee peace.'* Numbers 6: 24-26



We welcome our new Deputy Headteacher, Ms Dodd to our Holy Cross family; please join me in wishing her every success and happiness as she begins her journey with our school.

I hope that you all have a great weekend.

Mrs Kerrell

Headteacher



Ms Dodd

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year. May the coming year bring you peace, happiness, and good health.

My name is Ms Sarah Dodd and I am thrilled to be joining Holy Cross as the Deputy Headteacher. I have been privileged to work in many schools across my career and this is my second Deputy Headteacher post. I have spent the last two days getting to know the children who have all been so excited to be back at school. It has been a real joy.

I will be on the school gate most mornings. Please do not hesitate to come and say hello if you see me there. I believe in the importance of open communication between staff and parents, and I look forward to working closely with you.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Holy Cross team for their warm welcome to the school. They are an exceptional team, and I am confident that, together, we will continue to provide a safe, happy and caring community where all are welcome.

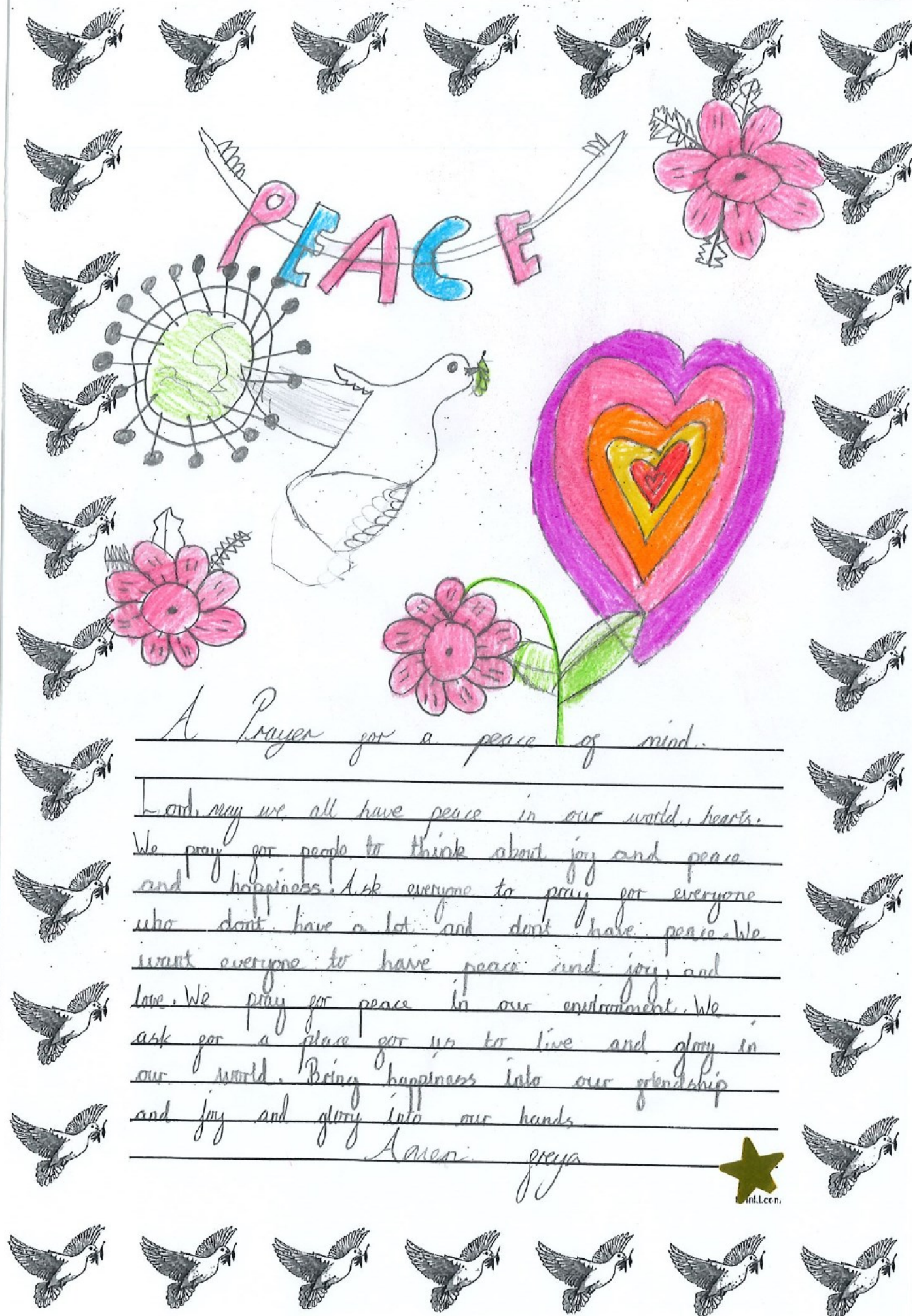


School Uniform

A reminder about the importance of wearing the correct Holy Cross winter uniform, which includes our school coat. Children should not wear any other coat please. It is also important that children wear the correct school tie, for their Key Stage. Boots are okay to wear but they must be black and suitable for school.

Also a reminder that jewellery is not part of the school uniform and this includes earrings. Please also make sure that your child does not wear make up or nail varnish to school, as they will be sent to the office to remove it.





A Prayer for a peace of mind.

Lord, may we all have peace in our world, hearts.
We pray for people to think about joy and peace
and happiness. Ask everyone to pray for everyone
who don't have a lot and don't have peace. We
want everyone to have peace and joy, and
love. We pray for peace in our environment. We
ask for a place for us to live and glory in
our world. Bring happiness into our friendship
and joy and glory into our hands.

Awen freya





Dear God I pray for Peace please
let the world experience it in many
ways in silence and quietness and love
let the world love and care for peace
and love." Lord let us show peace for
everyone in the world, let us show
love, peace and faith our hearts with
Joy, Peace and kindness. Amen.

Hendrix M.



twinkl.co.uk



A prayer for peace of mind
Lord fill our hearts with joy, and
love and fill our hands with
friendship and bring glory to
all sins and make this
a better place for us in the
world, bring happiness to
everyone and laughter to the
whole world, bring love to
everyone and never give up
when you sail don't worry what
people think about you just focus
on what you love and you will
never sail. Amen

Liana



peace



Dear Lord Please bring peace to our
world so no more wars happen
this year and bring harmony to
the world to make a loving and
caring community to our world
to make it a better place bring
joy to our world give us sins
Amen

Harry





National
Online
Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

12 Social Media Online Safety Tips FOR CHILDREN WITH NEW DEVICES

With Christmas only a few weeks away, many of you will be using social media to share your excitement with friends and family. Being active on social media is a great way to show others how much fun you're having, but it's important that you know how to use these apps safely and securely so that bad things don't happen. By following our safety tips below, you can make sure that your personal information stays private, your postings are positive and that your social media use overall is responsible, healthy and most of all enjoyable.

1 DON'T ACCEPT FRIEND REQUESTS FROM STRANGERS

Make sure that you set your profile to private so that people you don't know can't find you online. Always tell a trusted adult if a stranger or somebody you don't know sends you a message or a friend request.

2 NEVER SHARE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION WITH PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW

Keep your personal information personal. Sometime people online aren't always who they say they are and might ask you to share things that you don't feel comfortable sharing.

3 DON'T SHARE EMBARRASSING PHOTOS OR VIDEOS OF OTHERS ONLINE

This could really upset them and could get you into a lot of trouble. Always think twice before posting anything on social media and treat people online as you would in real-life.

4 NEVER SEND NAKED PICTURES OF YOURSELF TO OTHERS

This is illegal if you are under 18 and you could get into trouble with the Police. If you are being pressured by someone, always say no and tell a trusted adult. Even if you think it is innocent fun, the photo could be shared with other people and you won't be able to control who else sees it.

5 CREATE A POSITIVE ONLINE REPUTATION

Always be kind and polite when posting comments on social media and only upload pictures and videos of things you are proud of. This forms part of your digital footprint. Everything you do online can be tracked and monitored and could affect what people think of you in real-life if it is negative.

6 LIMIT YOUR SCREEN TIME

Social media can be addictive, and it is easy to keep checking newsfeeds or your notifications every 5 minutes which can affect your behaviour and stop you from doing other things. Remember to only use your phone at certain times of the day, turn notifications off at bedtime and go out and have as fun as much as possible. This will keep you fit and healthy and make you appreciate there's more to life than just what's on social media.

7 BLOCK ONLINE BULLIES

Sometimes people might say nasty things to you online or post offensive comments on your pictures or videos. If this happens, always tell a trusted adult who will help you block them from your profile and support you in taking further action.

8 REPORT INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

If you see something on social media that you don't like, offends you or upsets you, you should always report it to a trusted adult. You should also report it to the social media app who will be able to remove the content if it is against their user policy and can block the person who posted it.

9 ONLY USE APPS WHICH YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH TO USE

Before downloading any new social media app, always check the age-rating. If you need help, ask your parent or carer to make sure that the app is safe for you to use and never download anything which you are too young for as it may contain content that isn't safe for you to see.

10 ALWAYS SECURE ALL YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES WITH A PASSWORD

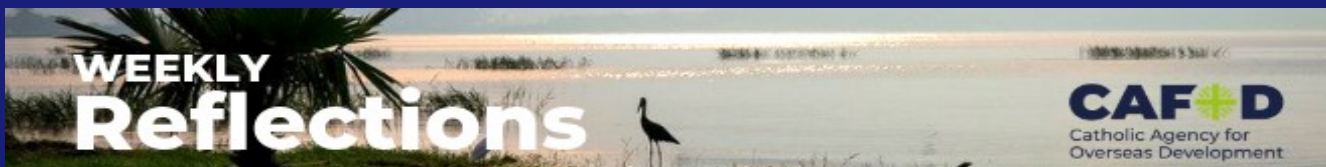
This will help to keep your private information safe and won't allow others to access your profiles without your permission. Make sure your passwords are memorable and personal to you but something which other people can't guess, and always share them with your parents just in case you forget them.

11 ASK PARENTS TO SET-UP 'PARENTAL CONTROLS' FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

When you download a social media app, you should always ask a trusted adult to help you set it up for the first time. This will help you control who sees what you post, who can contact you and make sure you are able to enjoy using the app safely and securely.

12 ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR TRUSTED ADULT IF SOCIAL MEDIA IS MAKING YOU UNHAPPY

Sometimes, social media can make us feel bad about ourselves or sad that we aren't the same as someone else or doing the same things as someone else. Remember, if you ever feel this way, it's really important to talk to your trusted adult(s) like your parents, carers, other adult family members or a teacher, all of whom will be able to support you and discuss your feelings with you to help make you feel better.

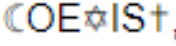


Based on the gospel for Sunday 7 January, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord: Matthew 2:1-12

"We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage."

Preaching on the feast of the Epiphany, St Oscar Romero spoke of the Magi searching in the darkness for a mystical light, shining as a sign of God present to all the nations, through his Son who would bring universal salvation and wellbeing. At a time of increasing conflict in El Salvador it was, he said, time to heed Pope St Paul VI's call "No to violence! Yes to peace".

Journeying to pay homage to the infant King, the Magi may have followed the path taken by Mary and Joseph from Nazareth. Today this would take them through a land aching under years of conflict, a Holy Land which is not a place of peace. Bethlehem is now partly surrounded by a wall, once depicted by the artist Banksy with Mary & Joseph on one side, the stable with the star above on the other. A wall seen by some as an essential means of protection, by others a sign of occupation and a barrier to freedom.

Polish graphic designer Piotr Młodożeniec created the image  to represent tolerance between religions, replacing letters with symbols of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. As we witness the latest conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, let us hope that one day the light of true peace and reconciliation may emerge from the darkness of war. May there be peace and justice for all for whom Abraham is one father in faith, in the Holy Land where the Prince of Peace was born, taught, and died for us all.

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace

May your light shine for all the nations, to follow the path to reconciliation and peace. May all people live together in freedom and without fear, walking side by side on the road to Bethlehem and throughout the Holy Land.

Amen.



The Words of Pope Francis

We all have shortcomings, loneliness, and voids that ask to be filled. When we are tempted to retreat into ourselves, let us go to Mary, Mother of fullness. When we cannot untangle the knots of our life, let us seek refuge in her.

Encountering Christ

Prayerfully preparing for Sunday Mass with special prayers for our school families

Set aside 10-15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



Read

The Gospel for Sunday 7th January 2024
WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him, 'for this is what the prophet wrote: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel".' Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said, 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

Taken from Matthew 2: 1-12. The Epiphany, Year B



Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering the Gospel, continue by reading this reflection

The Wise Men, with their clever knowledge of astronomy and their lavish gifts, represent all that is best in worldly values. They also have a bit of magic about them, for frankincense and myrrh were used in spells, and the word for 'wise men' can also mean 'magicians'. In this case, the Wise Men have real wisdom and its reward, and all the respect and fame due to a 'magus' and yet they lay it all at Jesus' feet. It might be worth asking at this beginning of the year whether we submit all our skills and comforts to Jesus as the Wise Men did. The story also rests on the sharp contrast between King Herod and the Wise Men. Herod was a Jew, so he should have recognised and honoured the Jewish Messiah. Not at all! He tried to kill the Messiah. By contrast, the Wise Men, arriving from what for us would be the equivalent of outer space, carry on their search till they find Jesus and humbly bow before him. This poses a nasty question: we Christians have all the guidance and encouragement of the Church, but how often do we find those outside the Church, not even professed Christians, behaving in a more Christian way than we do ourselves!

What skill, what gift may I place before Jesus today?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

THE Wednesday WORD PARISH VERSION



Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Thank God for any insight you may have received.

Then ask God to bless you with a spiritual gift to help you act on any resolution you have made. Perhaps: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, joy or something else.



Remember

After praying for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and particularly for families connected to your parish school.

You may want to conclude this special weekly time with a simple prayer such as: St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph.

Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph
wednesdayword.org

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS +

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 7th January 2024



1

1st Reading: *Isaiah 60:1-6*

Camels, Gold and Incense

Arise, shine out Jerusalem, for your light has come; the glory of the Lord is rising on you, though night still covers the earth and darkness the peoples. Above you the Lord now rises and above you his glory appears. The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness. Lift up your eyes and look round: all are assembling and coming towards you, your sons from far away and daughters being tenderly carried. At this sight you will grow radiant, your heart throbbing and full; since the riches of the sea will flow to you; the wealth of the nations come to you; camels in throngs will cover you, and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of the Lord.

This passage from the Book of Isaiah was written at a thrilling moment of Israel's development. The people had returned from Exile in Babylon and were beginning to realise the universal task of Israel. The salvation promised to Israel was not just for the Jews but was for the whole world! Hence these cries of joy in today's reading at all these curious camels and exotic nations thronging to Jerusalem. There is a similar invitation for us too to be open: Christ brings salvation not just to us, to those who come to our church, but to the whole world - to all those grumpy, depressed, selfish, worried, suffering, disadvantaged people we meet in the street; the call is not only to Christians of every kind, but also to those who have not yet found Jesus. The Epiphany is the time when Jesus 'went public', symbolized by the coming of the Wise Men from the East, the first people outside his own sphere to greet him. So we ought to go out into the street and shout for joy to alert people to what is on offer. Probably better to be a bit less crazy about it, and simply show the happiness it has brought to us by sharing our happiness in any generous way we can!

What is the best way I can express my joy in Christ's salvation?

2

2nd Reading: *Ephesians 3:2-3. 5-6*

God's Special Secret

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace he meant for you, and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery. This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations; it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

This letter to the Ephesians talks about the 'mystery'. It really means God's great 'secret' to be revealed at the end of time. The climax of the long history of the world did indeed come at the Crucifixion and Resurrection, because all our hope is in Christ's Resurrection. That was the moment when history reached its highest point. This is the only Christian way of viewing the world, its slow evolution and then its history of human development, all directed to Christ and his Resurrection. We are much more aware these days that the immense universe, with stars millions of light-years away is one great system of which we are a tiny part. The angels hovering over Bethlehem at Christ's birth tell us that all the power of God was focused on that one event. The Christian believes that one tiny baby, presented to those Wise Men from the East, brought the secret of the universe to fulfilment. They represent all the races of the world, even far beyond the known world, coming to greet the Saviour who was presented to all people on that day.

Reflect on God's plan for the unimaginably huge universe, brought to perfection in one tiny baby.

"All our hope is in Christ's Resurrection."

2024

The Year of Prayer

Share the Prayer : Why not forward a digital copy of this Parish Version to your friends? Or to share your school's *Family Version*, see: wednesdayword.org/school/index.htm

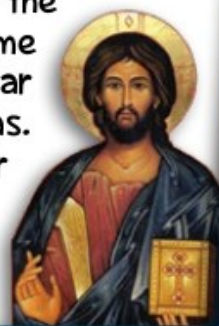
Wednesday
3rd January



**Good News
for Families**

Enjoy reading this Sunday's Gospel

Jesus was born in Bethlehem when Herod was king. Wise men came from the East to Jerusalem and said, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the sky and have come to worship him." King Herod was very worried. He called together all the priests and teachers and asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In the town of Bethlehem, in Judaea," they said. So Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem and said, "When you have found the child let me know, so that I too may go and worship him." So they set off. The star went before them and stopped over the place where the child Jesus was. The wise men knelt down and worshipped Jesus. They opened their treasure and offered him gifts – gold and frankincense and myrrh. Then God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they returned home another way.



Taken from the Gospel of Sunday 7th January 2024 - Matthew 2: 1-12 (the Feast of the Epiphany)

Which words stood out for you in this Gospel, and why? What does the picture make you think about? Enjoy exploring this Wednesday's word, which is **GUIDANCE**.



**"Let us draw from the crib the joy and deep peace
that Jesus brings to the world." Pope Francis**



"Jesus came so that our life might be guided by God." Pope Francis

What guided the wise men to Jesus? This Sunday the Church celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany. We remember how the wise men from the East were guided to Jesus. Ask your child what the word 'guidance' means to them. Who guides them through life, to make sensible and wise choices? Who or what guides you on your journey through life? The Church exists to help us and provides us with the timeless guidance of the Bible and the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church'. These are manuals for life which can guide us on our journey.

"May Christ's love guide our steps." Pope Francis

As we journey through life to God, we need good guidance to help us along the way. Ask your child if they know some of the ways in which Jesus guides us today. Perhaps it is through: listening to good and wise people; learning Church teaching; being open to correction; prayerfully considering what effect our words and actions might have on ourselves and others; reading the gospels together; going to church and listening carefully; praying to Jesus for guidance. Are you, or any members of your family, planning New Year's resolutions for 2024? If you haven't already started, why not resolve to head into 2024 on a spiritual journey as a family - to be guided by God? Wishing you and your family a happy and blessed New Year.



Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for your **guidance** - for being there to guide our family on our journey together through life. Amen.

WEDNESDAY
WORDSEARCH



SMARTSEARCHERS FIND THESE EIGHT WORDS EITHER **ACROSS** OR **DOWN**

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☐
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**SKY
STAR**

**GUIDED
BETHLEHEM**

**WISE
MEN**

**WORSHIP
JESUS**

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SUPERSEARCHERS FIND THE WORDS **BACKWARDS** OR **DIAGONALLY**

G	U	I	D	E	D	J	E	S	U	S
S	K	Y	P	I	H	S	R	O	W	M
N	M	M	E	H	E	L	H	T	E	B
A	E	C	W	W	D	S	V	N	E	M
Q	N	I	R	O	I	E	U	X	W	R
R	S	Z	L	R	S	E	D	S	O	W
E	A	S	J	S	T	B	W	I	E	S
B	K	T	F	H	A	J	I	K	U	J
Y	C	O	S	I	R	V	S	B	E	G
O	I	D	E	P	M	S	E	J	C	A
F	A	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M

Cross out the letters **e u n** in the 4 jumbled words to find 4 real words.

esanwu nustear sunkey ewornship

"We _____ his _____ in the _____ and
have come to _____ him"

Write a promise and then **draw** a big smile on Smiley

My New Year resolution for 2024 will be to.....



Happy Birthday this week to...

Adam, Zuzanna, Emilia, Olivia, Liana, Diana & Marcel



Essex County Council
Libraries

Essex Library Service

**Winter
Reading Challenge**

Saturday
25 November
to Saturday
3 February

TRAVEL
123.90

Travel around the world with Lyra this winter and meet lots of new animal friends!
Collect your booklet from any Essex library.

@essexlibraries

Menu week 1

Diary Dates

Monday 8th January

Kingfishers swimming

Tuesday 9th January

Wednesday 10th January

Thursday 11th January

Friday 12th January

KS2 Assembly 9:00

KS1 Assembly 14:30

Wishing everyone a lovely weekend.

Mrs A Kerrell

Please download our News & Events App for dates for the year. Details are available on the schools website under News & Events at www.holycross-pri.essex.sch.uk