



10th January 2025



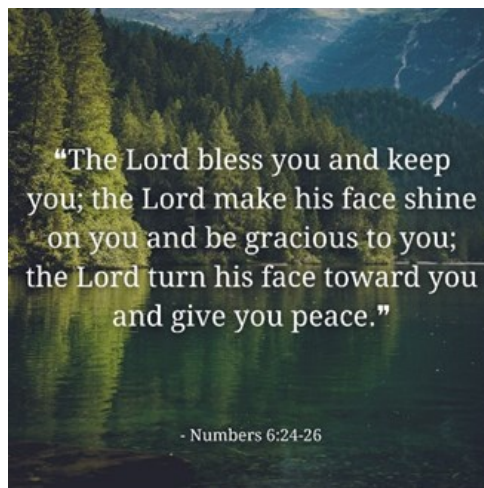
# Newsletter

**GOSPEL: VALUE:** Our Gospel Value for next week is Gentleness. Please reflect on this at home with your child.

## Weekly Reflection

Welcome to the new term everyone. I would like to wish all our families a very Happy New Year and I hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas. It has been a busy week at school and it has been good to see the children happy and settled after the 2 week holiday. They have come back with a positive mindset, ready to start the new term.

I would like to share this piece of scripture with you as a New Year blessing. It is taken from the readings from the 1st January...



Wishing everyone a wonderful weekend.

*Mrs Kerrell*  
Headteacher

## Cold Weather

It has been bitterly cold this week! We will assess the weather on a daily basis and if we feel it is cold enough the children will come straight in. Please bear in mind that we will only do this if it is exceptionally cold or it is raining, at other times parents and carers (with the exception of Year 6) must wait on the playground until the bell rings at 8.40am.

## One Way System

As parents and carers know, we introduced a 1 Way system at the start and end of the day (as a request from the Parent Forum) to support with safer entry and exit to the school premises. It is very important that everyone follows this please and that children do not pull on the tape. Please supervise your children as they leave at the end of the day.

## Careers Fair

We are very excited to be holding our first Careers Fair on Wednesday 26th March. If you would like to take part and share with the children what you do as your job, please get in touch with Mrs Slater. We are looking forward to giving you more information about this in the coming weeks.



## Jubilee Year-Pilgrims of Hope.

We have been talking to the children this week about the forthcoming Jubilee Year: Pilgrimage of Hope. We will have the launch on the 24th January and we are going to embrace this special year as an opportunity to do all we can to help our neighbour and make our world a better place. For more information please follow this link: <https://cafod.org.uk/jubilee-schools>



**MORNING COFFEE**

Wednesday 15th January 2025

8.30am to 10am  
in the Parish hall

Come and meet  
Carla Piper from MIND



### Times Tables Rockstars

Congratulations to the following children for trying really hard with their times tables this week.

Hedgehogs:	Grace	Squirrels:	Lucas
Badgers:	Arnas	Foxes:	Gabriella
Hares:	Medeina	Rabbits:	Lucas
Kingfishers:	Luna	Robins:	Keaton
Eagles:	Jeanette	Owls:	Tehilah



Holy Cross Primary Academy

# HISTORY DAY



Tuesday 4th February 2025

## Parent workshops

Years 3 to 6 9am to 10am

Years 1 and 2 10.30am to 11.30am

COME AND  
HAVE SOME  
FUN WITH  
YOUR CHILD



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FREE



## Talking So Children Will Listen

Effective communication is the foundation of a healthy parent-child relationship. During our online workshops, parents and caregivers will learn the skills needed to communicate with their children in a constructive and encouraging way. This course emphasises the importance of using positive language, avoiding harmful labels, and fostering open dialogue that supports a child's emotional development. By understanding how words can shape a child's self-perception and behavior, participants will gain tools to nurture a more trusting and connected relationship with their child.

Sign up via the QR code or website:

[ACLEssex.com/Family Learning](https://ACLEssex.com/Family Learning)

Can't find what you are looking for?

email us - [aclfamilylearning@essex.gov.uk](mailto:aclfamilylearning@essex.gov.uk)



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FAMILY LEARNING

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## Empower Your Child, Ease Their Anxiety.

Unlock parenting skills to help your anxious child thrive. Join our online courses to gain essential tips and tools to support and empower your child through anxiety. Discover practical strategies and compassionate approaches that make a real difference.

**Sign up via the QR code or website:**

[ACLEssex.com/Family Learning](https://ACLEssex.com/Family Learning)

**Can't find what you are looking for?**

email us - [aclfamilylearning@essex.gov.uk](mailto:aclfamilylearning@essex.gov.uk)



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☀️ Help Your Child Master Their Emotions ☀️

Join our transformative sessions designed to equip you with information to support your child to understand their emotions, & to self regulate.

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FAMILY LEARNING**  
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## Raising Boys, Raising Girls

Join one of our 'Raising Boys' or 'Raising Girls' sessions (or BOTH!) Find out how to support your son, or daughter's, growth into a confident and resilient individual. Sign up today!

Sign up via the QR code or website:  
[ACLEssex.com/Family Learning](https://ACLEssex.com/Family Learning)

Can't find what you are looking for?  
email us - [aclfamilylearning@essex.gov.uk](mailto:aclfamilylearning@essex.gov.uk)



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# ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Congratulations to this week's winners of the KS1 Attendance Award, Hedgehogs achieving 98% attendance. Well done! The winners of the KS2 Attendance Award, are Owls attaining 97% attendance. Well done!

Please ensure you are sending your child into school everyday, unless they are not well enough to attend. Attending school is so important and makes a huge difference to your child's learning. The gates open at 8:30am until 8.50am.

It is essential you notify us of your child's absence by 9am either by telephone or using the Pupil Asset report absence option on every day of absence. We need full details of why your child is unable to attend school. We are frequently having to contact parents, to find out why their child is absent from school. If you do not notify us of the reason for your child's absence it may not be authorised.

Absences over 3 days require supporting medical evidence, for the additional absence to be authorised. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, antibiotics and medical appointments.

Parents of children below attendance targets will be invited in for a meeting with the Educational Welfare Officer.

Butterflies	96%
Ladybirds	91%
Dragonflies	86%
Grasshoppers	97%
Hedgehogs	98%
Squirrels	96%
Badgers	95%
Foxes	93%
Hares	94%
Rabbits	89%
Kingfishers	91%
Robins	94%
Eagles	93%
Owls	97%

## Gospel Value Awards

### Love

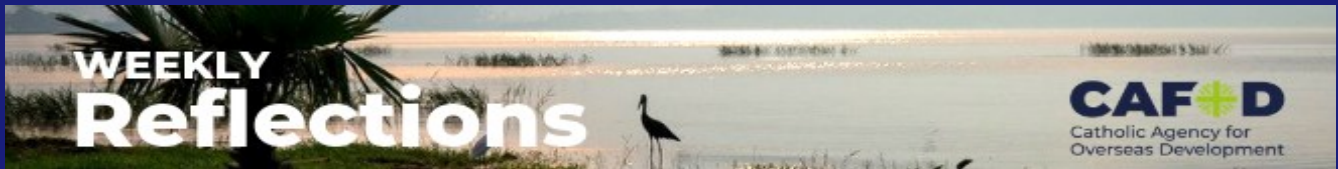
**joy, commitment, dedication, sacrifice**

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. Matthew 23: 10-12



Congratulations to the following children who received the Gospel values certificate this week.

Dragonflies:	Chloe	Grasshoppers:	Olivia
Hedgehogs:	Filip	Squirrels:	Leroy
Badgers:	Lillian	Foxes:	Neave
Hares:	Hannah	Rabbits:	Autumn
Kingfishers:	Aimee	Robins:	Yannick
Eagles:	Ellis	Owls:	Ilinca



Based on the gospel for Sunday 12 January, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord: Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

**"He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire."**

Seeing and hearing John the Baptist in the wilderness, "the people were in expectation." Something new was happening, but the advent of Jesus Christ exceeded and transcended what they had anticipated.

In *Spes non confudit*, the bull of indiction for this Jubilee year, Pope Francis invites us to be Pilgrims of Hope, "a hope that does not disappoint" (Romans 5:5). In particular, Pope Francis calls us to be signs of hope for prisoners, the sick, the young, migrants and the elderly. Perhaps we too, like the people who flocked to John the Baptist, will see our hopes transformed.

As we progress through this new year, we should recall the dignity conferred on us at our own baptisms to be priests, prophets and kings, and remember that we have been empowered: "He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Recalling this, may we use our gifts boldly and discern the ways in which we are called to be signs of hope to those we meet in our own lives.

Whatever, we may or may not achieve this year, let us be assured of God's love: "You are my beloved Son

God of Light,  
empowered with the fire  
of your Spirit,  
may we be signs  
and bringers of hope  
in the darkness of our world.  
Amen.



### **The Words of Pope Francis**

Even in the darkest nights, a star shines. It is the star of Jesus, who comes to care for our fragile humanity. Let us set out towards Him. Let us not give apathy and resignation the power to trap us in the sadness of a flat life.



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to school and a Happy New Year to all.

In Church this Sunday we celebrate a special feast – the Baptism of the Lord. The new year presents an opportunity to remember, or to discover, the blessings received at Baptism.

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus begins his mission to the world when the Holy Spirit comes down upon him – the same Spirit we receive through Baptism and Confirmation.

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Pope Francis reminds us that, "Faith is a gift which we receive in Baptism and which allows us to encounter God." Jesus came for everyone: to draw us all into his family so that we can become more like him and joyfully share in God's own life.

Enjoy your week and help spread God's love. Blessings and best wishes for 2025.

*Dom Henry Wansbrough*



A Word from Pope Francis

*"Baptism gives strength and it gives light."*

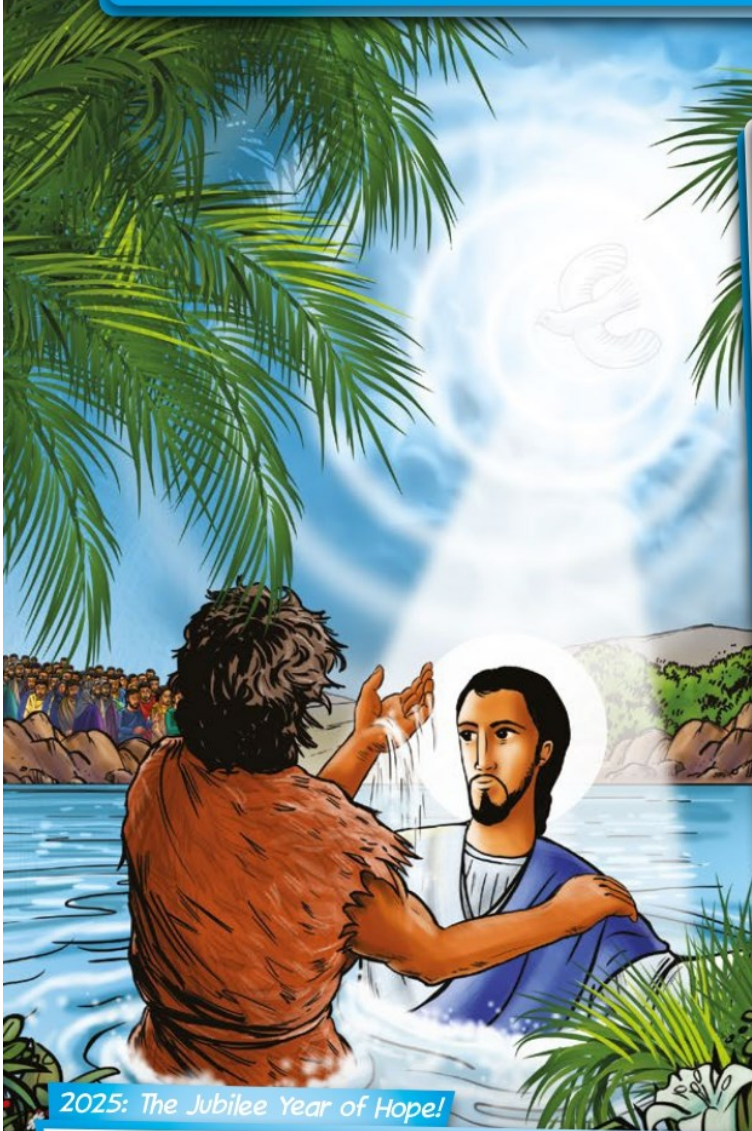
## THE GOSPEL IN CHURCH Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2025



A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John the Baptist might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire". Now when all the people had been baptised, and as Jesus was being baptised, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you."

*Adapted from Luke 3:15-16.21-22  
The Baptism of the Lord, Year C*

Getting to know Jesus makes life joyful.  
Learn more about this Sunday's Gospel in your local Parish Church: all are very warmly invited.



2025: The Jubilee Year of Hope!

Having Hope  
in our Families

Baptism is one of the seven sacraments which bring us closer to God. When we are baptised we become a new creation; we receive new life and a Christian identity. We become members of Jesus' family where everyone is a brother or sister to each other and where God is our loving Father.



# Good News for Families

## TOGETHER TIME



### 1 READ & REFLECT! Listen & Learn with Jesus, the Word!

Filled with excitement, the people were wondering if John the Baptist might be the Christ, so John said to them, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am and he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." Then, after the people had been baptised by John, Jesus himself was baptised. While Jesus was praying the sky opened and the Holy Spirit came down on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved Son, and with you I am very pleased." **What was John the Baptist doing?**

Which word or words stood out for you in this Sunday's Gospel, and why? Spend a few relaxing moments pondering the picture together. Share any thoughts before moving on.

### Sunday Gospel Gallery

Look at this Sunday's Gospel picture. What can you see? How do you feel? What does it make you think about?

### 2 SHARE & CARE! Growing in Goodness & Love: This Wednesday's Word...

"Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift." *St Gregory of Nazianzus*

## BAPTISM



Ask your child what they know about baptism. Ask them if they know what any of the symbols of baptism represent (e.g. candle, water, oil, white garment, the sign of the cross). If your child has been baptised, ask them if they know who chose their name, and why that name was chosen for them. You might also like to share with your child any memories you have of their baptism and how you chose their name. Perhaps you have photographs to show them.



Baptism is the start of a life-long call to reveal God's Spirit to our family and community. When we are baptised, we receive the very same Holy Spirit, to help us to live like Jesus. How can we live more like Jesus as we begin this new year? Perhaps we can: always try to be fair, honest, generous and ready to go out of our way to help others; as a family, choose to support a charity in 2019; regularly make an effort to let other family members know how much we love them.

3 Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of **Baptism**. Please help us to live like you and to spread God's love throughout this new year. Amen.

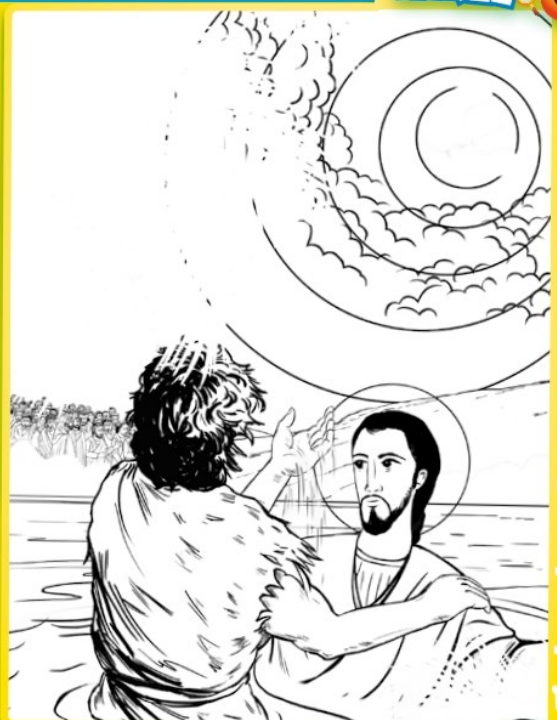
### FINDING THREE

**WEDNESDAY WORDSEARCH**

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>JOHN</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>RIVER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>BAPTISED</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>JESUS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>VOICE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>HEAVEN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>BELOVED</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>SON</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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



Find and draw 3 differences, then colour the picture

Cross out the letters **u k m** in the jumbled words below to find 4 real words.

**Bamputistk Churmkist womnuderking pumeoplek**

The \_\_\_\_\_ were \_\_\_\_\_ if John  
the \_\_\_\_\_ might be the \_\_\_\_\_

**At Jesus' baptism, God the Father called Jesus his Son.** Through Baptism, we too become children of God. After Baptism, as part of God's family (the Church), we are called to live the life of a Christian by loving God and our neighbours, just as Jesus did.

**This week I will try my best to...**

**Write a promise & draw a big smile on Smiley**



Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**THE** Wednesday  
**WORD**



## Encountering Christ

### The Wednesday Prayer Custom for Homes, Schools & Parishes

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.



Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present. Read the Gospel, 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.

1

### Read

#### The Gospel for Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2025

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you."

**Taken from Luke 3:15-16. 21-22 The Baptism of the Lord, Year C**

2

### Reflect

After reading the Gospel, did any words stand out? If they did, ponder or discuss them before proceeding with the reflection.

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

Luke does not tell us who baptised Jesus. In Luke the story of John the Baptist ends with his promise of one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit - then John is arrested. At the baptism itself all Luke's concentration is on the coming of the Spirit. Indeed, it is hardly an account of the baptism at all, for the baptism is only a time marker for the coming of the Spirit when "Jesus, after his own baptism, was at prayer". Jesus' mission begins with the coming of the Spirit. In the same way, Luke's second volume (the Acts of the Apostles) begins with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. It is as though Luke wants to show the importance of the Spirit from beginning to end of the Christian life. And this is the case: in both books the part played by the Spirit directs all the action. The same is still true in the Christian community today, though sometimes human stubbornness and blindness does its best to impede the leadership and guidance of the Spirit. Most of us are artists at blocking the Spirit when the Spirit's promptings are inconvenient!

**What does Luke's account of Jesus' baptism tell us about the Holy Spirit?**

*Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB*

3

### 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, hope, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, patience, humility, joy, forgiveness, self-control, courage, generosity, faith or something else.

4

### Pray for Families

**This Wednesday's word for our school families is BAPTISM !**

After praying for your loved ones, please remember to pray for our present and future Church, particularly for the families connected to our schools. 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 Jubilee  
Year of Hope**

**Share the Prayer:** Why not forward a digital copy of this Parish Version to your friends? Also, to see a sample of your primary school's *Family Version*, visit: [wednesdayword.org](http://wednesdayword.org)

# WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of **Sunday 12th January 2025**



**1st Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5. 9-11**

## Console my People, Console them

"Console my people, console them," says your God. "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes." A voice cries, "Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God." Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him; his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.



The reading from Isaiah for today is the joyful song which opens the second part of Isaiah. After the 70 years of the Exile the people of Israel are looking forward to the return to Jerusalem, aware that they are soon to be released from their captivity. They have 'served their sentence' in Babylon and their sin has been forgiven. The Lord will lead them in joy across the great desert as he led them across the desert at Exodus, and will manifest his glory again. For Christians the excitement is that John the Baptist picks up this message as he prepares for the coming of Christ. We can see the fulfilment of this passage from Isaiah in the coming of Christ in history and in his future return in glory. Christ brings about his Kingship of God, but it is for us Christians, as we await his coming again, to show by our lives the glory and the love and the generosity of God to a world which refuses to see the splendour of his coming. This is the daunting responsibility of those who bear the name of 'Christian', who see in Jesus the manifestation of God's reign.

**How today do we best manifest God's reign and fulfil our mission as Church?**

**Jesus baptism is  
the model of your  
and my baptism.**



**2nd Reading: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7**

## Reborn in the Cleansing Waters

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what he have to do is give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good. When the kindness and love of God our saviour were revealed, it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our saviour. He did this so that we should be justified by his grace, to become heirs looking forward to inheriting eternal life.



The phrase in this reading which seizes the attention is "he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit". Is this referring to Jesus' baptism or to yours and mine? My guess is that in the original letter it referred to our baptism, but that, by putting it forward on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the Church is referring it to Jesus' baptism as the model of your and my baptism. We received in our baptism the same re-birth as children of God and the same renewal in the Holy Spirit as Jesus did in the Jordan. The image of birth from the waters is a fascinating one, and can be taken on many levels: the ocean as the great, turbulent place from which all life derives, the source of life and fertility for plants, animals and humans, the 'waters' of each mammal's birth. By the waters of baptism we are given a wholly new life as adopted sons of God. We have seen how, in Luke's account of the Baptism of Jesus, the coming of the Spirit is the main focus. On us too the Spirit comes at baptism and empowers us to do all kinds of good works beyond any human ability.

**How do we see the Holy Spirit at work in our own particular local Church community?**

**The Wednesday Word** Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God

**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church  
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**

Happy Birthday this week to...

Ama, Marcel, Hendrix, Stevie, Sebastian,  
Zora, Liam, Jayden & Millie



### Golden Awards

- Dragonflies: Orlagh, for a wonderful performance as Grumble the Donkey in our nativity.  
Grasshoppers: Marco, for working hard in maths.  
Hedgehogs: All of Hedgehogs, for an amazing Christmas concert.  
Squirrels: Elissa, for a fantastic attitude to learning.  
Badgers: Oba, for always being willing to help adults and others.  
Foxes: Jonny, for his excellent attitude to all his work.  
Hares: Albie, for a great attitude, especially in computing, when discussing and making a website.  
Rabbits: Christabel, for having a consistently loving attitude.  
Kingfishers: Oliver, for his fantastic contributions in class and effort with his writing.  
Robins: Indiana, for her excellent attitude in English when creating a story.  
Eagles: Leah, for always working hard and trying her best in every lesson.  
Owls: Ellie, for listening carefully and following instructions to make a waistcoat.



### Menu week 1

### Diary Dates

Monday 13th January

Tuesday 14th January

Wednesday 15th January

Thursday 16th January

Friday 17th January

Karate - Years 2 & 3

MIND coffee morning 8:30 - 10:00

Karate - Years 4, 5 & 6

KS2 assembly 9:00

KS1 assembly 14:30

### House Points

Congratulations to the winning house this term, St George's

Wishing everyone a lovely weekend.

Mrs A Kerrell

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '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](http://www.holycross-pri.essex.sch.uk)