



5th September 2025



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

Weekly Reflection.

At the start of the new term we had our first assembly and we heard about being a shining light to everyone around us. We remember our school mission statement and that Jesus is the shining example to us all.

*'Jesus is the centre of our lives, our learning and friendships.
in a safe, happy and caring community where all are welcome.'*

We ask that God gives us the strength and wisdom to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead of our school community this year and the Holy Spirit to guide us on our paths.

Have a wonderful weekend

Mrs Kerrell
Headteacher

Welcome to the new school year

The children have made a wonderful start to the new school year and I am very proud of how well they have coped with getting back into the swing of things. They have been very positive and happy in their attitudes to school and pleased to be back together. We have spent the first 3 days settling in and getting used to new teachers, adults, classrooms and routines. We will finish our week of welcome with a family picnic day tomorrow to which everyone is warmly invited.

We would all like to extend the warmest of welcomes to our new Reception children and their families as they join Holy Cross on Wednesday.

Clubs

We will be starting teacher clubs on Monday 29th September and Mrs Slater will be sending out details and sign up sheets next week. Do please remember that if your child signs up to take part in a club then they are committing to it for the term.

Healthy Snack

As parents and Carers know, we have a healthy snack policy at Holy Cross. Children may bring fruit and/or vegetables to school for their snack and we would encourage parents to get reluctant fruit or vegetable eaters to enjoy these foods at home. Please also only put water in your child's water bottle and not juice. This is in line with the Essex Healthy Schools guidance. If your child does not have the correct snack they may be hungry in the middle of the morning.

Hats and Water Bottles

Whilst we still have sunny weather we ask that children have a hat in school as they will be outside a lot in the daytime. It is very important that your child stays hydrated throughout the day so they must have a refillable water bottle in school only with water in. No juice or Prime Drinks please. If your child has an expensive Air Up bottle, please name it as there are many in school and your child will need to identify theirs easily.



Uniform

Our Holy Cross School uniform is very important to our school mission statement and we wear it with pride. This half term as the weather is warmer, parents may choose summer or winter uniform but not a combination of both. If your child is wearing a shirt (not a polo) **they must wear a school tie**. The length of girls' skirts must be to the knee. Trainers are not part of the school uniform only the PE kit. Please make sure everything is named.

There have been some enquiries regarding the PE long training pants. Up until this year we requested that children have the Holy Cross Logoed PE bottoms which are lightweight silk like material. The government has made it statutory that primary schools can only request parents to purchase 3 items with the school logo on. For Holy Cross these items are: the school jumper/ cardigan, the PE T shirt and the PE jacket. The PE bottoms if not logoed must be the same material to make the school tracksuit. Therefore, cotton jogging bottoms and cycling shorts are not permitted.

Jewellery is not allowed at Holy Cross and this includes earrings, children can wear clear plastic spacers which are flat to the ear. These must be removed for PE. Children may wear a watch but are not allowed to wear Smart watches which can receive messages. For further information please visit our school website <https://www.holycross-pri.essex.sch.uk/page/?title=Uniform&pid=101>

Swimming

We have made a change this year to the classes who will be going to swimming lessons and we will start with Year 3 Badgers on Monday. Please make sure that your child has a named costume and towel and they must have a swimming hat. The children will be coming to school in their PE kit on Mondays which will make changing at the pool easier.

Welcome Picnic

We hope all our families can join us for a special Welcome Picnic to start off the year together. The gates will open at 2pm and we ask that everyone pays just £1.00 entry then all of the inflatables are free. They will operate from 2.30-4.30pm and we will have 4 Bouncy Castles and a refreshment stand. **Please be aware that parents are responsible for supervising their child when they are on the inflatables as they will be unmanned.** The event finishes at 5.00pm and then we hope our families will join Father Bernard for Mass in the church at 5.30pm.

Celebration Assemblies

We are changing our assemblies this year so that we can maximise learning time. Our whole school assembly will now be on Friday afternoon at 2.00pm in the church and this will be Celebration Assembly. Our first Celebration Assembly of the new year will be on Friday 19th September. You will receive a text next week if your child is receiving an award.

Seesaw and Tapestry

Children have all had their new log ins-please make sure that you can log on and you will find that teachers have uploaded their Welcome Letters and the Curriculum Map for your child's Year Group and they have been emailed out this afternoon. The Maps can also be found on the website.

Parent Code of Conduct

As part of starting the new year we ask staff to sign a Staff Code of Conduct and as parents are part of our school community we are sharing a Parent and Carers Code of Conduct with you. We will send this out by email and it will also be available on our school website. We ask that parents and carers in our school community follow this please and show respect to other parents and carers and to school staff at all times. Shouting, swearing or being verbally or physically aggressive will not be tolerated. Please be kind and empathetic.

Attendance Guidance

A reminder that we will be following the attendance guidance issued by the local authority which is detailed in our Attendance Policy on the school website. Should you wish to take your child out of school in term time please complete an absence request form. If you have any questions please contact the school office.

Past Pupils

It has been wonderful (and a bit emotional) to see photos of lots of our Year 6 pupils from last year in their new school uniforms as they start the secondary school journeys this week. We wish them all so much luck and we are keeping all our past pupils and their families in our prayers.

Welcome to the new school year

Family Picnic

Free
Inflatable
fun

Lite
Refreshments

Bring your
own picnic

£1
entrance
fee

Saturday 6th September 2pm to 5pm
at Holy Cross Academy

Year 5 & 6 Girls football trials

Think you've got the skills?

Come and show us what you can do on the pitch!

Date: Tuesday 9th September

12.30-1pm

Where? - school field

With? - Miss Cargill & Mr Clarke

We are looking for...

- Team players
- Enthusiasm & effort
- Determination to improve

Training will be taking place every Monday after school.

Sign up in the office if you are interested.



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Congratulations to this year's winners of the KS1 Attendance Award, Dragonflies achieving 99% attendance. Well done! The 3 winners of this year's KS2 Attendance Award are Badgers, Rabbits and Kingfishers attaining 99% 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 Arbor 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.

Your child's attendance is available for you to view on Arbor. Compare it to the image right, to see how many hours of lost learning it equates to.

Butterflies	
Ladybirds	
Dragonflies	99%
Grasshoppers	91%
Hedgehogs	92%
Squirrels	93%
Badgers	99%
Foxes	97%
Hares	98%
Rabbits	99%
Kingfishers	99%
Robins	94%
Eagles	96%
Owls	91%

Essex County Council
Education

Where does your child sit on the attendance mountain?





Based on the gospel for Sunday 7 September, Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time: Luke 14:25-33

"Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."

In this gospel, Jesus challenges his followers to understand what discipleship really means. He asks for a radical commitment to justice, truth and love. For Christians today, we are called to move beyond comfort zones and truly live out our faith, especially in a world struggling with inequality, poverty and exclusion.

Discipleship is not simple. It means standing against injustice, even when it's the unpopular stance. This is why CAFOD campaigns on issues such as the global food system, the climate emergency, cancelling debt and human rights. Jesus reminds us that we cannot be half-hearted followers - we must be ready to live our lives with a commitment to compassion and justice.

This might mean not keeping silent when we see exploitation or choosing to support fair-trade or ethical products even if they cost more. It might mean including the person who is often left out, or advocating for changes in our school, work or community. These aren't easy choices - but they are the kinds of sacrifices Jesus is asking of us. Being a disciple means building a world that reflects God's justice, mercy and peace.

Prayer
Jesus,
you call us to follow you
not with words alone,
but with our whole lives.
Help us to stand for justice when it's hard
and to walk beside those who are hurting.
Teach us to love with courage and sacrifice.
Amen



The Words of Pope Leo XIV

Let us pray together that, inspired by Saint Francis, we might experience our interdependence with all creatures, who are loved by God and worthy of love and respect.

Wednesday
3rd September

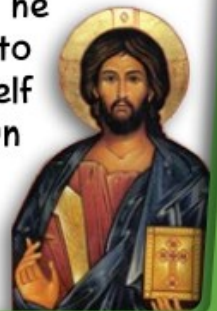


**Good News
for Families**

1

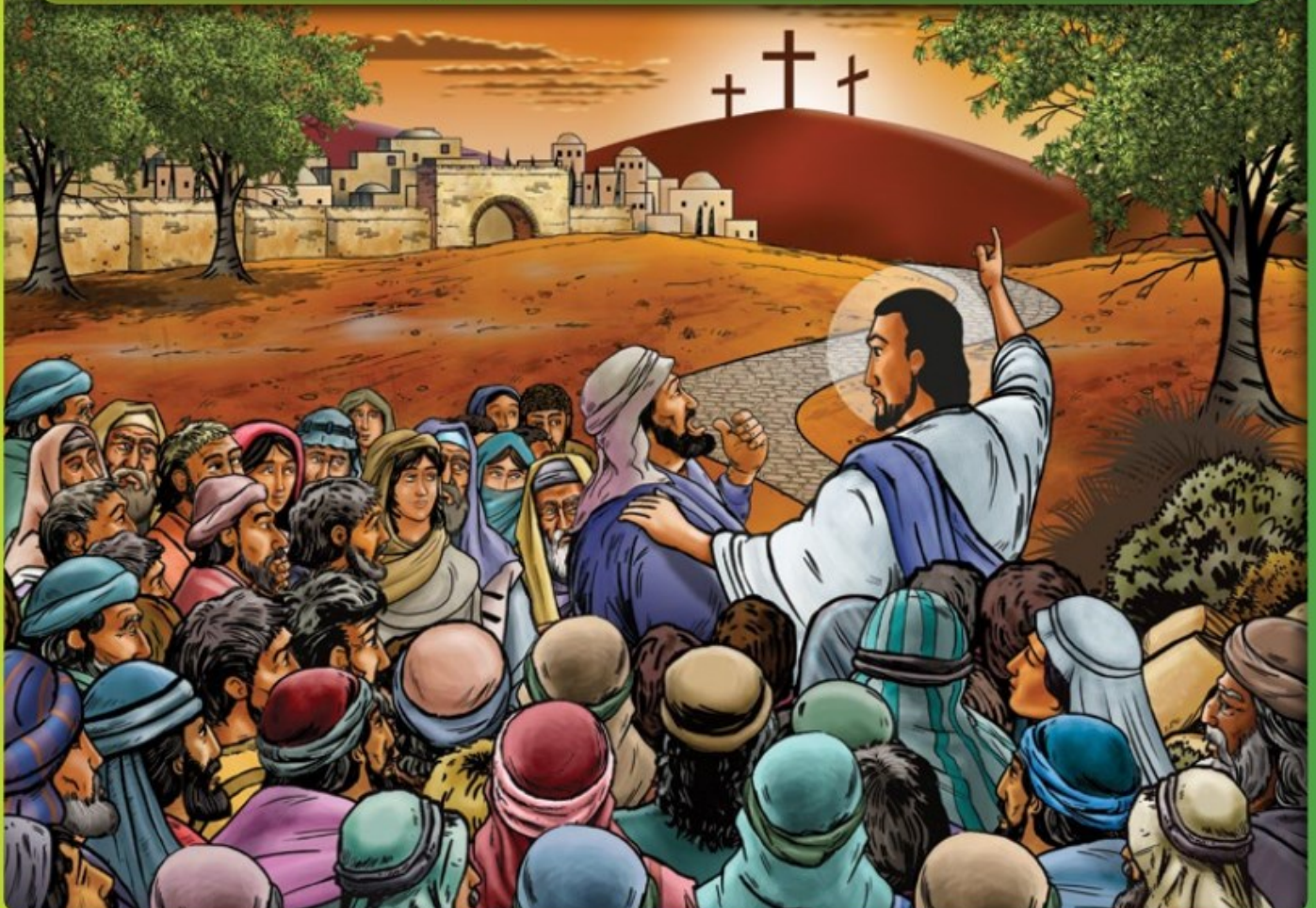
Enjoy reading this Sunday's Gospel

Great crowds followed Jesus on his way and he said to them, "If you want to be my disciple, you must love God more than anything else, even more than your family and even more than you love yourself. If you really want to be my disciple, you must be willing to carry your cross and follow me." Then Jesus gave them this example: "Suppose a builder wanted to build something. Would he not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, 'Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish what he started.' So, you must be willing to give up everything you have if you want to be my disciple."



Taken from the Gospel of Sunday 7th September. Luke 14:25-33 (the 23rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C)

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



2

Wednesday's Word

LOYALTY



"We understand that loyalty to God is a matter of loyalty to a person to whom we are bound to walk together on the same road. And this person is Jesus." *Pope Francis*

What are some of the things that Jesus said his disciples must do? This Sunday's Gospel reminds us that, to be Jesus' friends, we must put our loyalty to him before anything else in our life. Ask your child what the word 'loyalty' means to them. Who stands out to them as being a loyal friend - someone who stays with them in both good and difficult times? What other qualities make a loyal friend? We can all ask God to help us to grow in loyalty - it's a gift worth asking for.

"Jesus is the loyal friend who never abandons us." *Pope Francis*

To be loyal is to be faithful, reliable, supportive and trustworthy - to keep promises and stand up for the truth. Being loyal to Jesus is not always easy. He asks us to take up our cross. This means that we must sometimes do difficult things like saying sorry or helping when we don't want to. In what other ways can we show our loyalty to Jesus in the new school year? Perhaps we can: always try to love our neighbour as ourselves; spend time with Jesus and listen to him through daily prayer; be self-giving - always trying to put others' needs before our own; try to forgive others in the same way that Jesus forgives us.

3

Dear Lord Jesus, help us to grow in our **loyalty** to you: to be trustworthy and reliable people who always stand up for the truth, even when it's hard. Amen.

WEDNESDAY WORDSEARCH



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

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

GREAT CROWDS

LOVE GOD

GIVE EVERYTHING

FOLLOW JESUS

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

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

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

Cross out the letters **b k s** in the 4 jumbled words to find 4 real words.

banysthikng Yobkus blosvek smokreb
 Jesus said, " _____ must _____ God
 _____ than _____ else."

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

As I start a new school year, I will try my best to ...



.....



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 7th September 2025
 The 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C — Luke 14:25-33

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.



Read

This Sunday's Gospel : THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP



Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way and he turned and spoke to them. "If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. And indeed, which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, 'Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish.' Or again, what king marching to war against another king would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions."

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...



Jesus does not pull his punches, and here delivers a series of devastating body-blows to anyone who is looking for easy discipleship. All through this journey which culminates in Jesus' own death at Jerusalem the cost of discipleship has been a recurrent theme: 'Let the dead bury their dead' (13th Sunday), the Parable of the Rich Fool (18th Sunday), 'From one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded' (19th Sunday), 'Father against son, son against father' (20th Sunday), and now 'Hate father and mother' and 'Give up all your possessions'. A certain amount of the vigour of these demands may be attributed to a Semitic (Hebrew/Aramaic) mode of expression (they would often use superlatives and rarely use comparatives), but there is no doubt about the absolute demands made on the disciple. When Jesus made these demands he knew what lay ahead of him, and was only asking his disciples to follow his own course. We must count the cost before beginning to build the tower. Most of us have, of course, already started to build the tower by responding to Jesus' call. There is no turning back from the plough (13th Sunday); only pray for a courage and loyalty which exceed our own powers.

Why does Jesus use such fierce language? What is the hardest thing about trying to be a disciple of Christ?

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.



Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit. You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.



Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **LOYALTY!**
 (To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)



As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

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.



First Reading: *In Praise of Divine Wisdom*



Wisdom 9:13-18

What man can know the intentions of God? Who can divine the will of the Lord? The reasonings of mortals are unsure and our intentions unstable; for a perishable body presses down the soul, and this tent of clay weighs down the teeming mind. It is hard enough for us to work out what is on earth, laborious to know what lies within our reach; who, then, can discover what is in the heavens? As for your intention, who could have learnt it, had you not granted Wisdom and sent your holy spirit from above? Thus have the paths of those on earth been straightened and men been taught what pleases you, and saved, by Wisdom.

This lovely passage is the conclusion of Solomon's prayer for heavenly Wisdom, saying that heavenly Wisdom and the true knowledge of the things of God are beyond human grasp. If we cannot fully understand the visible world around us, how can

*we hope to reach an understanding of the divinity beyond the awareness of all our senses? The prayer is put in the mouth of King Solomon, who in the Old Testament is almost the personification of human wisdom; these are the sort of words he may have used because Solomon reigned in the 10th century BC and the Book of Wisdom was composed at Alexandria only shortly before the birth of Christ. The recognition at this moment that divine Wisdom lies well beyond the reach of all human faculties is all the more impressive in view of the achievements of the great philosophical schools of Alexandria. Such occasional poems, scattered throughout the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament, are a valuable reminder that God is beyond all human comprehension in wisdom, in strength and in beauty. Perhaps the most wonderful and overwhelming of all is the experience of God conveyed in the poems of Job 38-41. These poems may also be seen as praise of the Wisdom of God which will become flesh and be manifest to us in Christ Jesus. **'Of what we cannot speak, it is better to keep silent.'** Is this true of God?*



Second Reading: *Paul and Philemon*



Philemon 9-10. 12-17

This is Paul writing, an old man now and, what is more, still a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for a child of mine, whose father I became while wearing these chains: I mean Onesimus. I am sending him back to you, and with him - I could say - a part of my own self. I should have liked to keep him with me; he could have been a substitute for you, to help me while I am in the chains that the Good News has brought me. However, I did not want to do anything without your consent; it would have been forcing your act of kindness, which should be spontaneous. I know you have been deprived of Onesimus for a time, but it was only so that you could have him back for ever, not as a slave any more, but something much better than a slave, a dear brother; especially dear to me, but how much more to you, as a blood-brother as well as a brother in the Lord. So if all that we have in common means anything to you, welcome him as you would me.

Paul's letter to Philemon – and this reading makes up about half the letter – is a friendly little note from Paul to Philemon about a slave of Philemon's called Onesimus, who has been serving Paul in his imprisonment, and has become a Christian. There are two theories about why Onesimus was with Paul: either Onesimus ran away from his master and took refuge with Paul, or Philemon lent Onesimus to Paul for a limited period. In either case Paul is now sending Onesimus back, and at the same time putting pressure on Philemon to send him Onesimus for a further period. The most important and attractive element in the letter is Paul's affectionate brotherhood with the slave, now a Christian. After accepting slavery within Christianity for a long period, Christians came to realise that the affection and brotherhood expressed here by Paul make slavery among Christians intolerable. A further step was taken later when it was recognised that any enslavement of human beings is incompatible with Christianity, and that all human beings must be treated as brothers and sisters, equal before the Lord. It is a classic case of the slow deepening of the understanding of Christian morality. **Is there someone that you find difficult to accept as an equal?**

“ All human beings must be treated as brothers
and sisters, equal before the Lord. ”

The Wednesday Word: Connecting Home, School and Parish through the Word of God

Happy Birthday this week to...

Justin, Halle, Riley, Blake,
Olivia Vienna-Baye & Arthur



Menu week 2

Diary Dates

Monday 8th September

Year 6 to St Marks

Badgers swimming

Tuesday 9th September

Wednesday 10th September

Reception half day

Thursday 11th September

Reception half day

Wednesday 12th September

Reception full day

Welcome Mass 2 pm



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