



24th October 2025



Newsletter

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

Weekly Reflection.

In the Gospel this coming weekend, Jesus makes a comparison between the proud Pharisee and the humble tax collector. We are reminded of the importance of Humility which has been our Gospel Value this week and how Catholic social teaching invites us to live with humbly, seeing others not as lesser or greater than ourselves, but as brothers and sisters of the same family. At Holy Cross we show love and kindness to each other as God's family. These words of the Gospel remind us that humility is lived in small acts of love and compassion rather than grand gestures



Wishing everyone a wonderful half term.

Mrs Kerrell
Headteacher

Religious Education Directory

Parents will be aware that we have now rolled out the new Catholic RE curriculum, The Religious Education Directory across the school. This is new this year and has very much enhanced how we are teaching RE to your child. We are looking forward to sharing the RE books and Prayer Journals with you at Parent Consultations, after half term. I would like to know your thoughts on this and please feel free to chat to me at the consultations, if you have and feedback or thoughts. We will be updating the website after half term, sharing examples of children's work and what they say about the new RED. If you would like to find out more please follow this link to the curriculum: <https://shorturl.at/74ApV>

Prayer at Holy Cross

At Holy Cross Prayer is fundamental to our Catholic Life. Please visit this section on our school website for ideas and guidance: <https://www.holycrosspri.essex.sch.uk/page/?title=Prayer+and+Worship&pid=228>

This month of October we have been focusing on prayers to Mary as this is one of her special months. As we finish this month you may wish to visit the Cafod website for some prayer ideas: <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/pray-the-rosary/marian-prayers>

School Uniform

A reminder that all pupils must be in the winter uniform after half term please- therefore no shorts of summer dresses. Children must wear a tie with their shirt or blouse. Please also remember that hair accessories and coloured braids must be Holy Cross colours: green, gold, white or black. Please do not have your child's ears pierced as pupils are not allowed to wear earrings at Holy Cross. For PE children must have a tracksuit: Holy Cross t shirt, jacket and black bottoms (not jogging bottoms) as they will be going outside.

Winter weather

The temperature has significantly dropped today and we have noticed a number of children don't have coats. Your child will be outside during the day and therefore they will need a warm coat, hat, scarf and gloves if this is something you are struggling to provide for your child, please see Mrs Gallagher and we may be able to offer some support with this.

Year 6 SATs

A reminder that next year, week beginning the 11th May 2026, Year 6 pupils will sit their SATs tests. It is very important that your child is in school and we kindly ask that parents do not book days away from school or a holiday this week as the children need to be in school to sit the test.

Parent Consultations

We are looking forward to meeting with you after half term on either Tuesday 4th November or Thursday 5th November. You will have been sent the opportunity to book an appointment with your child's class teacher but if you have any problems making this appointment please speak with the school office.

Year 6 Boosters and clubs

Our Year 6 pupils will not be allowed to walk home after boosters or clubs which finish after 4pm. This is due to it getting dark much earlier.

Secondary School Applications for September 2026 - Reminder

The new secondary school admissions are open, for parents of current Year 6 children to apply for a secondary school (Year 7) place for September 2026.

The closing date for applications is **31st October 2025**. Any applications made after this date will be treated as late applications and will only be allocated once all other applications have been processed.

Applications can be made online via www.essex.gov.uk/admissions.

Parents applying for St Mark's must also complete and return the gold Supplementary Information Form. This is in the pack sent home, previously, following Year 6's visit to St Mark's.

Christmas Card Competition 2025

Design your own Christmas Card on the theme, '**Sculptures in the Snow**', inspired by Harlow's sculpture collection.

Whether you reimagine a statue dressed up for the festivities, create a snowy sculpture scene, or design your own Christmas sculpture, we want to see your creativity!

Age Categories:

4-7 years

8-12 years

13-16 years

18+ years

**Submit your entry by
Friday 14th November, 2025**

For more information and to download the entry form please visit our website.

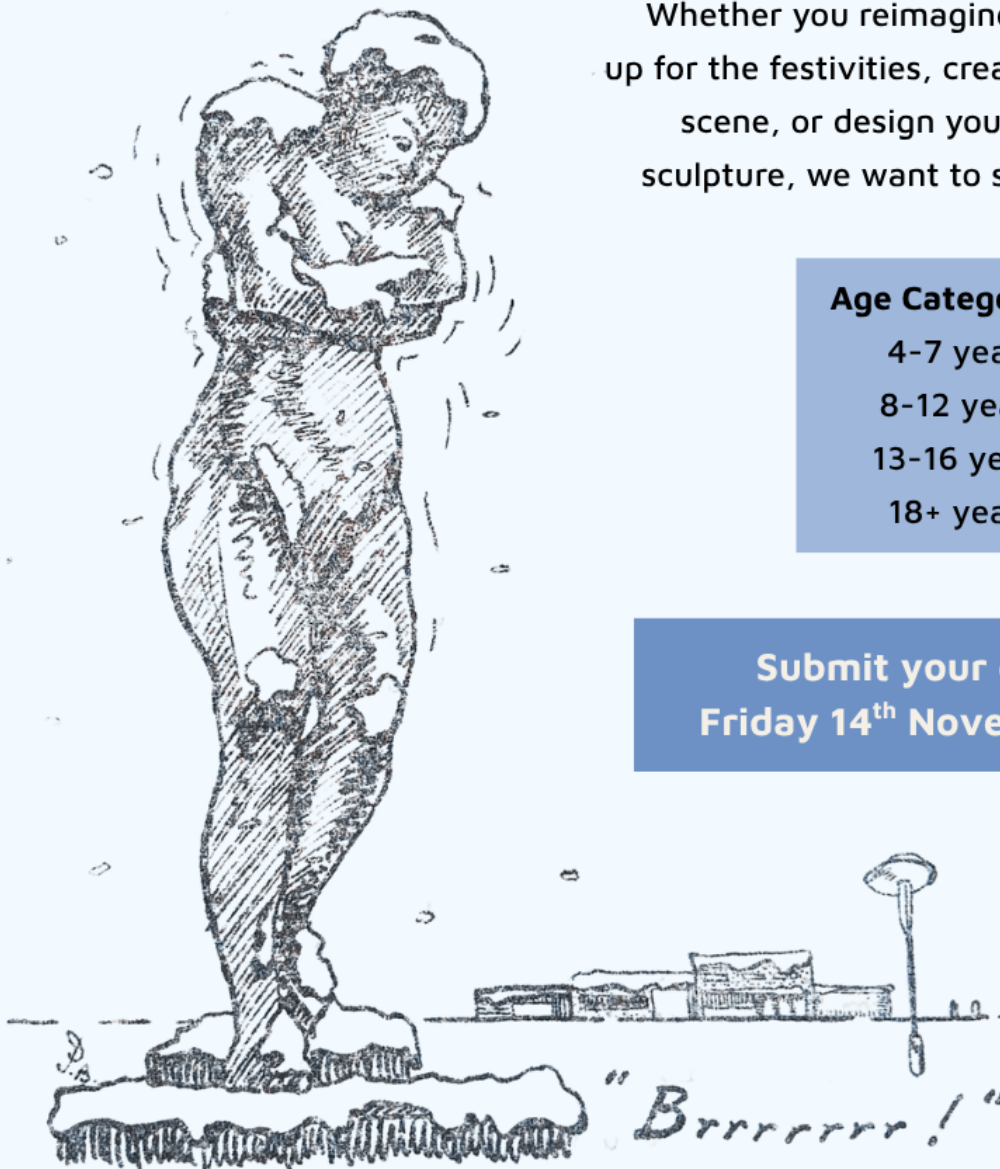


Illustration of Rodin's 'Eve' from the 1960 Christmas HDC Flagstaff

The background of the entire page is a dark navy blue, decorated with a pattern of stylized fireworks. These fireworks are represented by white and red lines radiating from a central point, with some lines ending in small circles. Interspersed among these are solid red circles of various sizes, white circles, and small red diamonds. The overall effect is a festive, celebratory pattern.

Fireworks Disco

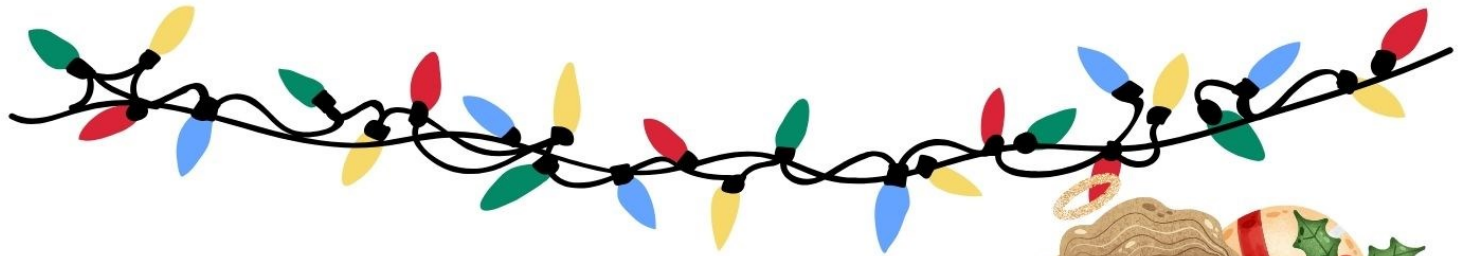
FRIDAY 7TH NOVEMBER

Reception, year 1 and year 2 - 3.30pm to 4.45pm

Years 3 to 6 - 5pm to 6.30pm

£4 a child, this includes snacks and unlimited juice.

Payment can be made by cash or card



THE GIVING TREE



Pick a tag off the tree
and buy a gift for someone in
need

**10th November
to 10th December**



This year all our tags are for
the local children's home,
Abbot Care home, Manor
Hatch and the Women's
refuge.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Congratulations to this week's winners of the KS1 Attendance Award, Grasshoppers achieving 98% attendance. The winners of this week's KS2 Attendance Award are Foxes, 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 8.55am.

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.

Butterflies	97%
Ladybirds	97%
Dragonflies	96%
Grasshoppers	98%
Hedgehogs	96%
Squirrels	94%
Badgers	93%
Foxes	99%
Hares	95%
Rabbits	95%
Kingfishers	96%
Robins	96%
Eagles	93%
Owls	95%

Football Match

Last Thursday, our school football team played their second 'Champions League' match as we hosted Hare Street. We were looking to bounce back after a defeat to Jerounds. Hare Street were a good side and they opened the scoring with a tidy finish. Filip scored a vital equaliser before James slotted in from close range to put us into the lead. We then had Axel to thank when he made a fine save to preserve our lead.

In the second half, we played brilliantly and scored five goals, with Hare Street scoring one more. The game ended with an emphatic 7-2 victory for Holy Cross, who were cheered on by our key stage 2 crowd! Captain Ciaran grabbed an impressive hat-trick including a penalty, with Sid and Barry scoring too. Kojo, Alex and Eryk were great in defence, Keaton, Blousey and Parker were tenacious in midfield. A real team effort and we look forward to our next match vs Water Lane in November.



Based on the gospel for Sunday 26 October, Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time: Luke 18:9-14

"For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

In this parable, Jesus contrasts the proud Pharisee with the humble tax collector, reminding us that righteousness is not measured by self-assurance or outward displays of virtue, but by honesty of our hearts before God. In a world that appears to reward conceit, success and self-promotion, the quiet humility of the tax collector stands as a radical act of faith that reminds us that we are all equal before the Lord.

Catholic social teaching invites us to live with humility and solidarity, seeing others not as lesser or greater than ourselves, but as brothers and sisters of the same family.

Like those who quietly dedicate their lives to serving others - teachers who nurture struggling students, carers who tend the elderly with dignity, or volunteers who support the homeless without recognition - we are moved to listen and not judge, to serve rather than seek recognition and to walk with those who suffer injustice or exclusion.

These modern examples remind us that humility is lived in small acts of love and compassion rather than grand gestures. With guidance and faith, we may all begin living humbly.

Dear Lord,
Help us to walk humbly with you. Teach us to serve others without pride and to see your image in every person we meet. May this humility draw us closer to one another, helping us to build a world rooted in justice, compassion and peace.
Amen.



The Words of Pope Leo XIV

On the paths of the hear, the Risen One walks with us and for us. Jesus bears witness to the defeat of death and affirms the victory of life, despite the darkness of Calvary. Our lived history still has much goodness in which to hope.



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 26th October 2025
 The 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C – Luke 18:9-14

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 PHARISEE AND THE TAX-COLLECTOR



Jesus spoke the following parable to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else. "Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, 'I thank you, God, that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like the rest of mankind, and particularly that I am not like this tax collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get.' The tax collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' This man, I tell you, went home again at rights with God; the other did not. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the man who humbles himself will be exalted."

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...



These two figures in today's Gospel are stock characters, sketched with Luke's brilliant wit and sensitivity. The gospels invariably give the Pharisees a bad press: after the destruction of Jerusalem they were the only surviving branch of Judaism and so, for the evangelists, they represent the vigorous opposition of Judaism to Christianity at that time. The Jewish historian, Josephus, paints a sympathetic picture of them, and Matthew's picture of them as the personification of hypocrisy may be a caricature of their scrupulosity concerning the observance of the Law. Jesus played them at their own game in his careful interpretation of scripture, presenting them with a rich and profound understanding of God's Word. The question must be asked: was Jesus a Pharisee too? Pre-occupation with exact observance of rules can often appear to outsiders as hypocrisy. In Jesus' time a tax-collector was the epitome of malpractice and the abandonment of all decent standards: he worked for the hated Roman occupying power; he had to make his own living by extorting excessive tax. So this parable is one more example of Jesus' reversal of expected values, and his outreach to those generally despised: to the woman notorious in the city as a sinner, to the woman taken in adultery, to Zacchaeus and to the 'good thief'. It beautifully fulfils the first reading, demonstrating that the prayer of the humble 'pierces the clouds'. **Take some moments to reflect on these words from the Gospel: "God be merciful to me, a sinner". Through these words, what is God saying to you?**

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 **HUMBLE!**
 (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: *The Prayer of the Humble*



Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 35:12-14. 16-19

The Lord is a judge who is no respecter of personages. He shows no respect of personages to the detriment of a poor man; he listens to the plea of the injured party. He does not ignore the orphan's supplication, nor the widow's as she pours out her story. The man who with his whole heart serves God will be accepted, his petitions will carry to the clouds. The humble man's prayer pierces the clouds; until it arrives he is inconsolable, nor will he desist until the Most High takes notice of him, acquits the virtuous and delivers judgement. And the Lord will not be slow, nor will he be dilatory on their behalf.

The Book of Sirach was translated into Greek by the grandson of the author. The grandfather wrote in Hebrew. He was a wise, witty and sometimes cynical teacher in Jerusalem, who gathered and built on the pithy sayings of the sages. The first part of

*this reading, about the widow's persistent appeal to the Lord, may well be the basis of last Sunday's parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge. Did Jesus build his parable on this piece of wisdom of the ancients, or did Luke use the Book of Sirach to expand Jesus' teaching? So also the second part of the reading, which prepares us for today's parable of contrasting suppliants (proud and humble) in the Temple: did Jesus build on the ancients or did Luke? Jesus certainly heard and learnt from the holy books of Judaism. Whether Jesus directly used Sirach or not, the message of the two parts of this reading is clear in the phrase which joins them together: whoever whole-heartedly serves God will be accepted. There is no pretending in prayer. As a wise old priest once said to me, 'In prayer you can stop pretending to be Queen Victoria or a poached egg.' **What does this reading from Sirach have to teach us about prayer? What is the best short prayer you know?***



Second Reading: *Paul's Farewell*



2 Timothy 4:6-8. 16-18

My life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to be gone. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his Appearing. The first time I had to present my defence, there was not a single witness to support me. Every one of them deserted me - may they not be held accountable for it. But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the whole message might be proclaimed for all the pagans to hear; and so I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

*This is the last Sunday reading from the 'Pastoral Letters', addressed to Paul's assistants, Timothy and Titus. Fittingly, it is a summing-up and defence of his mission, according to the literary conventions of the time. We do not know where the trial he mentions took place, nor the eventual outcome, though the tradition holds strong that he was martyred in Rome (and his severed head bounced three times, giving rise to three fountains, the famous 'Tre Fontane' in Rome). In his letters Paul several times mentions imprisonment, but nowhere a formal trial; so we can only guess. Did he set out on further journeys, even to Spain, after his confinement in Rome? We do not know. The sporting images of the 'good fight' and the 'race' are typical of Paul, and also the image of a libation, the first few drops from a cup of wine, offered in homage to a divinity. But most of all we are reminded that Paul had long yearned for death and to be fully united to his Lord and ours: 'Life to me, of course, is Christ, and death would be a positive gain' (Philippians 1:21), but he remained fully aware of the Lord's call to provide energetic guidance in the early Church. **Can you make any of Paul's self-defence your own?***

“ Be fully united to the Lord. ”

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

Wednesday
22nd October

Good News for Families
T10GETHER TIME 

1 Enjoy reading this Sunday's Gospel


There were some people who thought they were better than everyone else. One day Jesus told them a story." Two men went into the Temple to pray. One of them was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, 'I thank you, God, that I am not greedy, dishonest, and unfaithful like other people, and particularly that I am not like this sinful tax collector here. I fast twice a week and always give money to the Temple.' The tax collector stood some distance away, not even daring to raise his eyes to heaven, but he bowed his head and said, 'God, have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.'" Then Jesus said, "It was the tax collector who was pleasing to God, not the Pharisee. Those who praise themselves and think they are better than others will be humbled, but if you humble yourself then you will be praised by God."



From the Gospel of Sunday 26th October Cf. Luke 18:9-14. (The 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

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 **HUMBLE**.



To colour the picture for this Sunday's Gospel, please see the back page. 



"When we live humbly, God takes our small efforts and creates great things." Pope Francis (Pope from 2013-2025)

Whose prayer was pleasing to God: the humble tax collector's or the proud Pharisee's? This Sunday's Gospel reminds us that we should be humble - especially when we pray. Ask your child what the word 'humble' means to them. (Parent help - humble people do not think that they are better or more important than others; they are honest about their weaknesses and not afraid to say 'sorry' to God if they have done wrong). Who does your child know who is talented, but does not boast or show-off? It may help your child if you give an example of a humble person that you know.

"God speaks to those who are truly humble of heart" St Pio of Pietrelcina

God is pleased with those who are humble. A humble person knows that all good comes from God and that any talents we have are gifts from God. As a family, name one of each other's special God-given gifts, something that you admire in the other person. Then each of you name a gift that you are especially grateful for - it could be a quality, skill or attitude. Decide on a way that you will use that gift to help someone in this coming week. You may like to finish this evening's special Family Time in humble prayer, each thanking God for the gift that he has given you to share with others (please see the prayer below).

3

O my God, I thank you for the gift of [Each person name their gift], which you have given to me. Help me always to serve you **humbly** and use my gift to make the world a better place. Amen.



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



**PHARISEE
TEMPLE**



**TAX
COLLECTOR**



**HUMBLE
PEOPLE**



**PLEASE
GOD**



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

S	P	R	O	T	C	E	L	L	O	C
A	P	H	A	E	L	B	M	U	H	M
C	T	X	A	P	E	O	P	L	E	P
O	E	G	O	R	L	B	L	G	O	D
L	M	E	D	H	I	S	E	M	E	T
L	P	H	A	R	I	S	E	E	X	H
E	L	H	U	B	A	R	E	C	T	U
C	E	G	A	E	T	E	L	E	L	M
T	A	T	L	E	L	P	M	E	T	B
O	H	P	M	D	O	G	E	S	A	L
R	P	P	L	E	A	S	E	G	X	E

Cross out the letters

a k c

in the 4 jumbled words to find 4 real words.

tahkecn Gakocd kawilcl chaumkble

"If you _____ yourself _____
you _____ be praised by _____."

This week let's make a special effort to: say sorry to each other if we have done wrong; praise other people's strengths and successes; regularly remember to thank God for our own gifts.



This week I will try my best to...

Write a promise & draw a big smile on Smiley



Happy Birthday this week to...

Jaden, Dani, Krzysztof,
J.J., Alexander & Nihiniolawa

Happy Birthday in half term to...

Benjamin, Rosie, Naomi,
Luna & Lyla



FIREWORK SAFETY



Always wear gloves with sparklers

Keep sparklers at arm's length

Always stand well back from where fireworks are lit

Only adults should light fireworks

Never throw fireworks

Never go back to a lit firework

New menu week 1

Monday 3rd November

Foxes swimming
* Drama club
Art club
Scrapbook club
Lego club
Coding club
Mindfulness and Yoga club
Board Games club
Girls football team
Boys football team
Year 6 Boosters

Tuesday 4th November

Parent consultations
* Multisports club
* Dance club
Year 6 Boosters
Young Carers club

Wednesday 5th November

* Football club
* Karate - Years 2 & 3

Thursday 6th November

Parent consultations
* Football club
* Karate - Years 4, 5 & 6
Cafod club

Friday 8th November

Year 6 to Potter Street Memorial
Celebration assembly 2:15 pm
* Musical Theatre club
KS1 disco 3:30 - 4:45
KS2 disco 5 - 6:30

* External club, fees apply

Diary Dates

House Points

Congratulations to the winning house this week, St Andrew's

Wishing everyone a lovely weekend.

Mrs A Kerrell



JUBILEE 2025
PILGRIMS OF HOPE