



13th February 2026



# Newsletter

**GOSPEL VALUE:** Our Gospel Value for the first week back is Humility. Please reflect on this at home with your child.

## Weekly Reflection

This week we attended a whole school Lenten Preparation Mass to get ready for the season of Lent. As you know it is Ash Wednesday next week so when the children return to school after the half term break, we will be in Lent. We will explain to the children over the next weeks the significance of Lent as a time of sacrifice and preparation for Easter.

It has been a busy half term and a busy half year up to this point, I know the children and staff are feeling very tired. I sincerely hope that everyone has a lovely half term break with family and lets all pray that the rain holds off so that the children can enjoy some much-needed time outside.



Have a calm and peaceful half term.

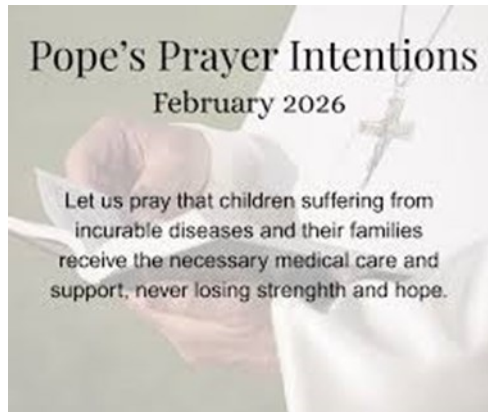
*Mrs Kerrell*  
Headteacher

### **Parents Evening Appointments**

We will be having our parent consultations on the 10th and 12th of March and appointments will be sent out after half term.

### **Pope Leo's Prayer Intention**

Each month Pope Leo will have a new Prayer Intention-you may wish to follow this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1CBCcEIkME> This February, we are praying along with our Holy Father:



### **New Playground Outdoor Gym Equipment**

We are very excited that through a generous donation and your support through fundraising, that we have been able to install some beautiful new outdoor gym equipment. This cost almost £7,000 and we could not afford this in our school budget so every bit of money we raise really does benefit the children. We hope to keep going and add more to it.

### **Mrs Gallagher**

As you will remember, I wrote to you at the beginning of the term to let you know the sad news that Mrs Gallagher has been offered and accepted another job. We had thought that she would leave us before half term, but there is a hold up with processing her paperwork. Therefore, Mrs Gallagher will continue on with us after half term until her start date in her new job comes through.



### **Ash Wednesday Mass**

Ash Wednesday Mass will be held at Holy Cross church at 9 am and 7:30 pm, on Wednesday 18th February.

### **Parking**

Disappointingly we have again had phone calls from our neighbours about parking. I ask that you park safely and with consideration of our neighbours and others outside the school at all times, especially at Drop Off and Pick Up. I appreciate that these are busy times of the school day, but please allow extra time for your journey so that you can park safely and legally, without obstructing anyone's access to their home. Please remember that we have parking available 5 minutes away at Nichols Field (information is on the website).

## Harlow Library Half Term Activities

Harlow Library have some fun, free events, this half term holiday. Booking is essential, but it is completely free. Booking is : [Harlow Library | Harlow | Events by Location](#).

### Rap & Rhyme- Oddsocktopus with Christian Foley



**Date:** Sat 21/02/2026  
**Time:** 11:00 - 12:00  
**Venue:** Harlow Library  
**Cost:** Free  
**Booking:** required  
**Ages:** 5 - 9

[Add to Calendar](#)

Childrens Family Reading and Literature

15



#### Description:

Rap & Rhyme: Oddsocktopus with Christian Foley

Clap, rhyme and join in! Rapper, teacher and children's author Christian Foley brings his picture-book world of Oddsocktopus to life in a playful, participatory session for ages 5-9. This high-energy hour blends rap, rhyming and wordplay with call-and-response, movement and lots of audience participation- perfect for building speaking confidence and a love of language.

#### What to expect

A fun, interactive performance with rap, rhythm and rhyme. Plenty of chances for children to help make the rhymes. A warm, family-friendly atmosphere (no prior experience needed!)

### Moving Up- Rap & Real Talk, Get Secondary Ready with Christian Foley



**Date:** Sat 21/02/2026  
**Time:** 14:00 - 15:00  
**Venue:** Harlow Library  
**Cost:** Free  
**Booking:** required  
**Ages:** 10 - 13

Childrens Family Reading and Literature Teens

15



#### Description:

Moving Up: Rap & Real Talk: Get Secondary-Ready with Christian Foley

Feeling ready for the next step? In this upbeat workshop, rapper, educator and author Christian Foley uses words, rhythm and real talk to help older children build confidence and find their voice as they move up to secondary.

Through quick-fire language games, call-and-response and mini performance moments, young people practise speaking out, trying ideas and supporting one another, leaving with practical tips and a boost of self-belief.

#### What to expect

Friendly confidence-building activities with rap and rhythm. Space to practise speaking up and sharing ideas. A supportive vibe, everyone can join in

# raise

## £20.26 IN 2026!

### HOW? However you like!

### Whether that's...



- Something sporty? A sponsored swim, bike-ride, walk, run, skip, goals scored, climb or even bounce
  - Something crafty? Sell your artwork, crafts or cakes
  - Something helpful? Helping with some chores or a litter pick up
  - Or even a sponsored read-a-thon or month with no sweets!
- Whatever you want!

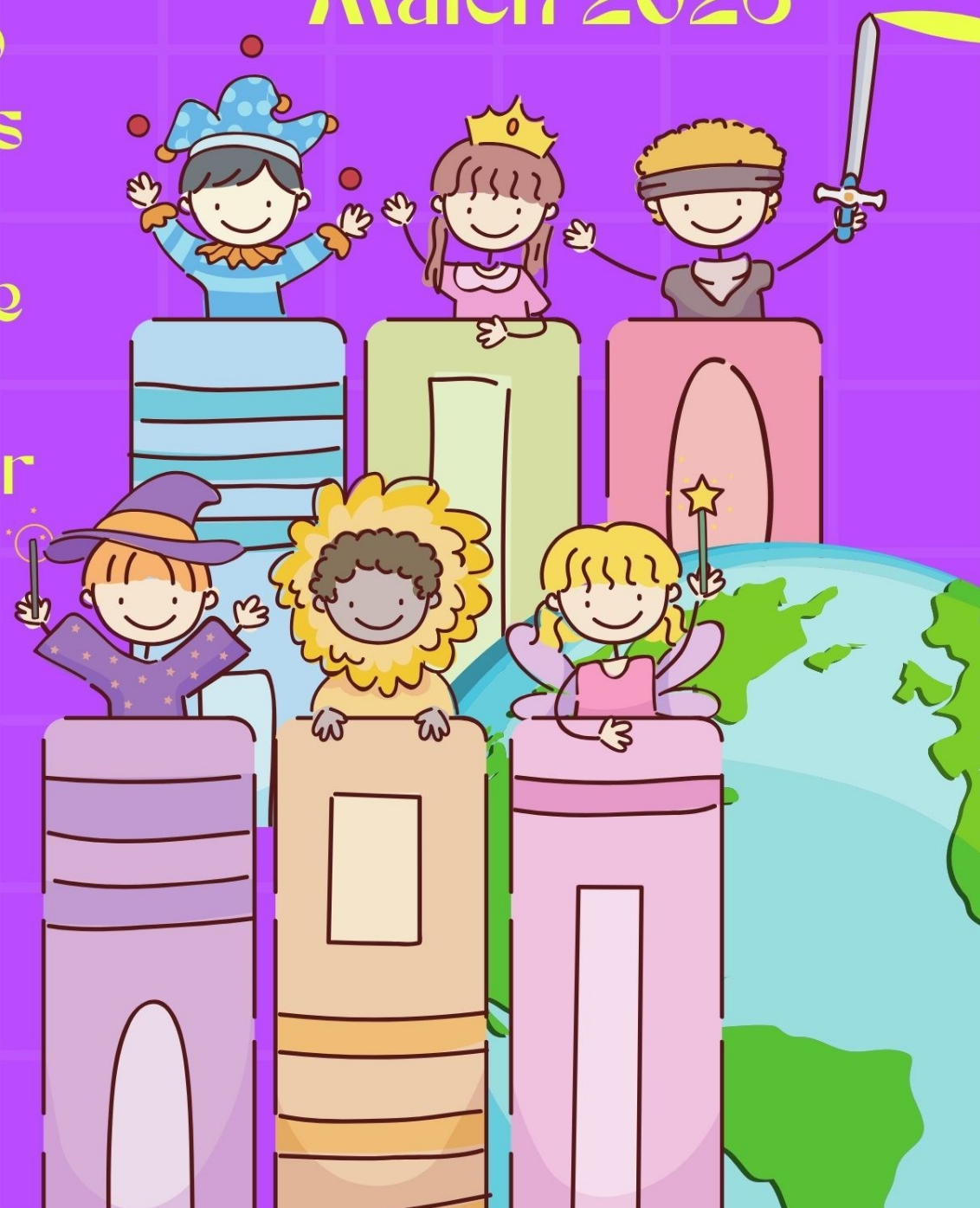
Money can be paid on line at Holy Cross School PTA a/c: 66911260, s/c: 30-90-91 or cash or card payments can be handed in at the office. Please let your teacher know when you achieve your goal so that this can be celebrated.

**£20.26 is not compulsory, all donations under or over £20.26 are welcome, just give yourself a challenge and have fun!**

# World Book

Day ✨ Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>  
March 2026

Come to  
school as  
your  
Favourite  
book  
character



# EASTER

## fundraising

Hamper  
raffle £1  
per strip.

Many  
hampers to  
be won

Easter Egg  
hunt £1 to  
enter.

Everyone that  
enters will get  
an egg

Cash or card payment





## EASTER RAFFLE

# We are holding an Easter hamper raffle

Please check your child's Tapestry or Seesaw to see what they need to bring in.

Please send items in by Monday 16th March



Tickets will be on sale  
from 18th March  
£1 per strip

Holy Cross Academy

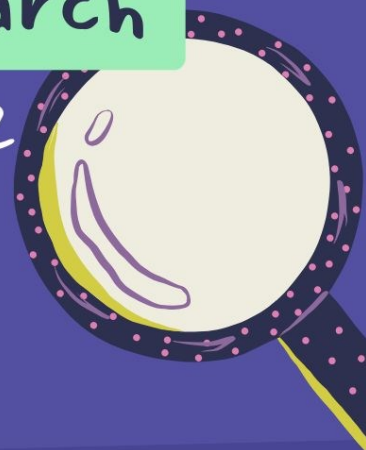
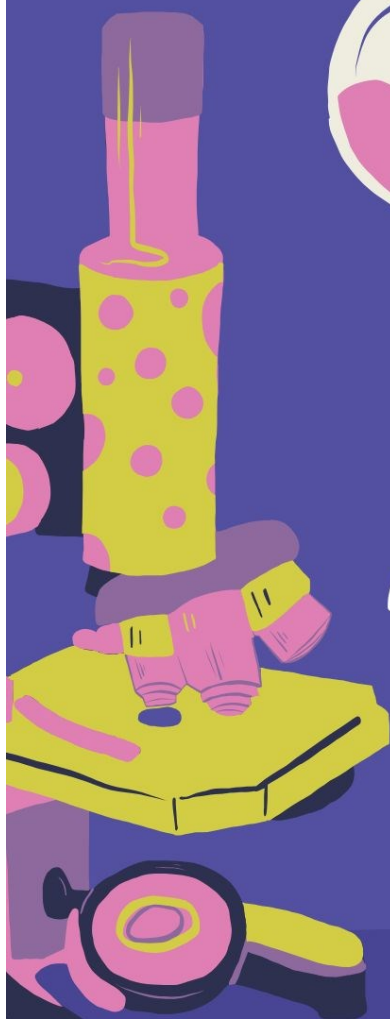
# Science workshops



Tuesday 17th March

Reception, Years 1 and 2  
9.10am to 10.10am

Years 3, 4, 5 and 6  
11am to 12pm



# ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Congratulations to this week's winners of the KS1 Attendance Award, Ladybirds achieving 98% attendance. The joint 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.

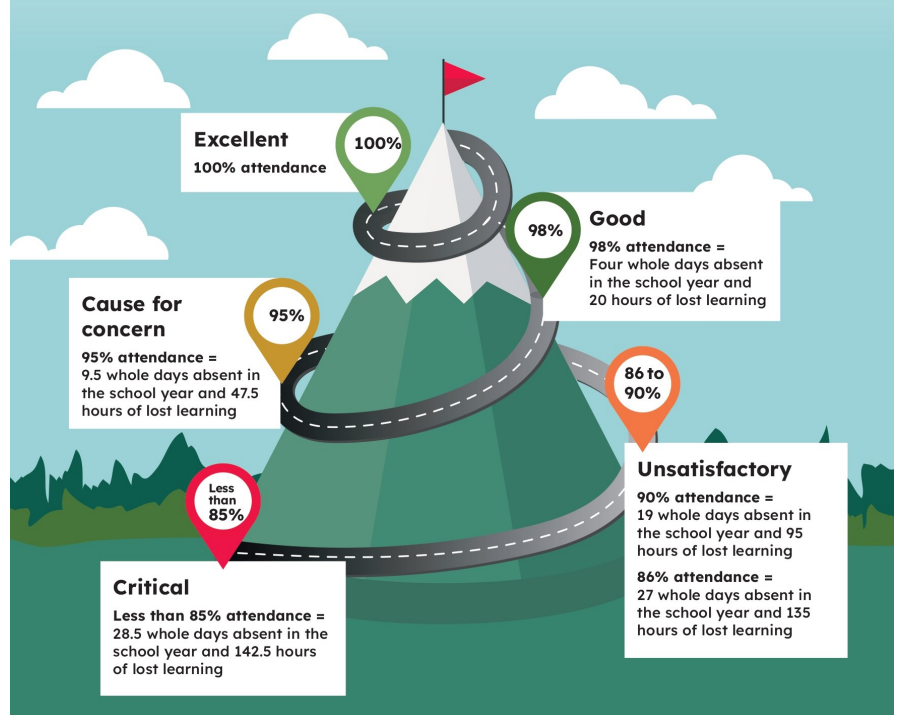
Absences over 3 days require supporting medical evidence, for the additional absence to be authorised. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, antibiotics and medical appointments.

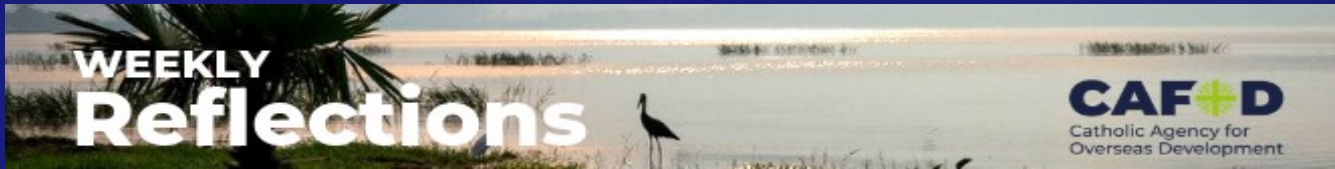
Parents of children below attendance targets will be invited in for a meeting with the Educational Welfare Officer.

Butterflies	95%
Ladybirds	98%
Dragonflies	94%
Grasshoppers	97%
Hedgehogs	92%
Squirrels	88%
Badgers	98%
Foxes	99%
Hares	94%
Rabbits	92%
Kingfishers	98%
Robins	89%
Eagles	97%
Owls	96%



## Where does your child sit on the attendance mountain?





Based on the gospel for Sunday 15 February, Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time: **Matthew 5:17-37**

## "But I say to you..."

This Sunday, Jesus invites us into a deeper understanding of justice. It is not enough that we know what is right; we need to live in a way that is right, that transforms who we are.

Jesus acknowledges the 'letter' of the law as something we can follow but takes a step further. He asks us to consider the attitudes that give birth to injustice in the first place. Anger, contempt, lust, dishonesty - human flaws, yes, but these can become social forces. They affect both our relationships and the wider society and can lead to a lack of compassion and our understanding of human dignity.

This gospel challenges us to look honestly at how our inner lives shape the world around us. Anger becomes discrimination and even violence. When people are viewed as objects, then exploitation and prejudice may follow. Jesus reminds us that we are called to justice just as we are called to faith. Right relationship with God is inseparable from right relationship with one another.

This passage also offers hope. If injustice begins in the heart, then transformation can begin there too. By seeking reconciliation, by choosing integrity, by committing to the common good, we participate in building communities rooted in dignity and peace.

### Prayer

God of justice and mercy,  
guide our hearts  
so our lives may reflect you.  
Heal what is broken within us,  
that we may become instruments of reconciliation  
in a world that needs your love.  
Amen.



### The Words of Pope Leo XIV

We live surrounded by so many words, but so many words are empty! At times we even listen to wise words, which do not however affect our ultimate destiny. On the contrary, the Word of God responds to our thirst for meaning, for the truth about our life. It is the only Word that is always new: revealing the mystery of God to us, it is inexhaustible, it never ceases to offer its riches.

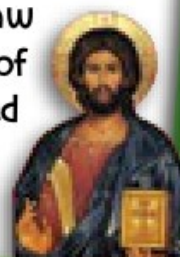
**Wednesday**  
**11<sup>th</sup> February**

**Good News for Families**  
**TOGETHER TIME** 

**1**

**Enjoy reading this Sunday's Gospel**

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not imagine that I have come to destroy what the Law or the Prophets taught. No, I have come to make them complete - to show you what they meant. I tell you truly, until heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke of a pen, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practises and teaches these commands, will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."




Taken from the Gospel of Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2026. Matt. 5:17-37 (the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of 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 **TEACHER**.

Jesus said, "Whoever practises and teaches these commands, will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." *Matthew 5:19*



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



**"The true teacher is within; Christ is the inner teacher of every soul."**

*St. Augustine of Hippo*

What did Jesus say that people who practise and teach God's commands would be called? In this Sunday's Gospel (taken from the Sermon on the Mount), Jesus teaches us how important it is to follow God's laws; our Catholic schools and parishes try very hard to do the same. Ask your child what the word 'teacher' means to them. Ask them which people teach them about God - at home, at school or in the community. What have they recently been taught about God? Who is their favourite teacher, and why? Perhaps you can tell your child about a person you know who is, or was, a good teacher, and say why.

**"The family is where parents become their children's first teachers in the faith. The family's strength lies in its capacity to love and to teach how to love."** *Pope Francis (Pope from 2013-2025)*

It's important to have good teachers. Parents are the first and foremost educators of their own children - others can also teach us so much about what really matters in life. Each of you choose someone who teaches you good and right things, and say a prayer for them. How can we show our appreciation to all those who teach us? Perhaps we can: be a good learner by really listening to what they have to say; do the good and right things they have taught us; simply thank them for being a good teacher.



Dear Lord Jesus, please bless all the people in my life who **teach** me. Thank you for being my friend and **teacher**. Please help me to learn and grow in your love. Amen.

## WEDNESDAY WORDSEARCH



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

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- 
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**JESUS TEACHING**  
**COMPLETES LAW**  
**PRACTISE COMMANDS**  
**GREAT HOLINESS**

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

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

Cross out the letters **o d m** in the 4 jumbled words to find 4 real words.

owimldl    gormedat    dotmhe    tohmesed  
 "Whoever teaches \_\_\_\_\_ commands, \_\_\_\_\_  
 be called \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ kingdom of heaven."

### Jesus stood out as a teacher.

Seeing the power and authority of God at work in Jesus' words and actions gave people confidence in his teachings. When we have Jesus as our teacher, we are being taught by God.

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

This week I will try my best to...

.....  
 .....





**Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2026**  
 The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Matt. 5: 20-22. 27-28. 33-34. 37

**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 :  
 JESUS TEACHES THE TRUE MEANING OF THE LAW**



Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court. You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all. All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'

**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 is the completion of the Law of God, given to Israel through Moses. He has come not to sweep it away but to perfect it. In this part of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew has gathered together six instances (four this week, two in next Sunday's Gospel) of the ways in which Jesus brings the Law to perfection. The first factor to notice, however, is that Jesus does not hesitate to adjust the divine Law on his own authority, for he too has divine authority. Each amendment begins with a statement of the Old Law and boldly goes on, 'But I say this to you...'. Each of the alterations has its own character. The first is about enmity, the sixth about love. About enmity, it is not enough merely to forego violent injury; we must even expel enmity from our hearts, positively seeking reconciliation, whether the offence is our fault or not. About lust, it is similarly not enough to forego acts of lust; we must not even harbour such thoughts in our hearts. About truth, it is not enough to keep a legal oath; we must be people whose every word can be relied upon. These are Jesus' demanding standards.

**Have I allowed any enmity to fester? Can I solve it now? Am I a person whose every word can be trusted as true?**

*Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB*

**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 **TEACHER**  
 (To see the Family Version, please visit: [wednesdayword.org](http://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: *Contrasts*



#### Ecclesiasticus 15: 15-20

**If you wish, you can keep the commandments; to behave faithfully is within your power. He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer. Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him. For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing. His eyes are on those who fear him; he notes every action of man. He never commanded anyone to be godless; he has given no one permission to sin.**

*Readings from Ecclesiasticus are rare occurrences in the Sunday cycle: it is good to remind ourselves of the origin of the book. It is one of the Wisdom Books of the Bible, written towards the end of the Old Testament period, when prophecy had come to an end. The fierce corrections of the prophets and their inspiring promises of coming salvation were no more, and the word of*

*the Lord came in collections of wise sayings to guide conduct, inspired by acute awareness that the Lord was the source of all wisdom. This collection of wisdom was brought together by a sage and experienced scribe of the Law at Jerusalem named Ben Sira. It was taken by the author's grandson to Alexandria in Egypt and translated into Greek for the Greek-speaking Jews there. Only recently have manuscripts been discovered containing most of the Hebrew original. In today's passage Ben Sira sets out the contrasting choices which face us, to which we can freely reach out our hands. It is one of the chief passages in the Bible which stresses our own free will. Of our own volition we may turn to good or to ill. God calls for our love and response, but does not force us, for love must be a free act.*

**How can I freely express my love for God and for his loving plan?**



### Second Reading: *The Hidden Wisdom of God*



#### 1 Corinthians 2: 6-10

**We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him. These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.**

*Among the recipients of this letter of Paul's were philosophers who prided themselves on their wisdom, the Greek understanding of the nature of things and the structure of the universe. The wisdom which Paul teaches is beyond human understanding. What, then, is the point of it? Firstly, it concerns the mystery hidden throughout*

*the earlier history of the world and of humankind. The plan of God has been working itself out throughout the history, throughout the affectionate, the tender, the forgiving dealings of God with human beings. But it has been made clear only by the coming of Christ into human history as the keystone which makes sense of the whole structure. Secondly, we can still not fully understand it. We still have not fathomed the meaning of life and all its strange and unpredictable twistings and turnings. And yet we are assured by the Spirit of God that there is a meaning, and that this meaning is for our glory. Whatever goes wrong, as well as whatever goes right is, by God's grace, so arranged for our glory. Thirdly, this same Spirit which penetrates the meaning of everything, even the depths of God, is the divine Spirit which lives in us and informs us as Christians.*

**What seeming disasters in your life have in fact turned out to be part of the saving plan of God for you?**

**“We are assured by the Spirit of God that there is a meaning [to life], and that this meaning is for our glory.”**

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

Happy Birthday this week to...

**Rufus**

Happy Birthday in half term to...

**Luca, Leo, Albert, Jayden,  
Isla, Aria, Isabella, Lucas,  
Harley, Malakai & Maliyah**



*Mother's Day  
gift sale*

*£3 for a wrapped gift*

*Monday 9th March (Reception, years 1 and 2)*

*Tuesday 10th March (years 3 and 4)*

*Wednesday 11th March (years 5 and 6)*

*cash or card payments*

**Menu week 1** **Diary Dates**

\* External club, fees apply

Monday 23rd February

- Rabbits swimming
- \* Drama club
- Girls football team
- Boys football team
- Year 1 booster
- Year 3 booster
- Year 6 booster

Tuesday 24th February

- Year 3 reading zone 9:00 am
- \* Multisports club
- \* Dance club
- Year 6 booster

Wednesday 25th February

- Year 3 reading zone 2:45 pm
- \* Football club
- \* Karate - Years 2 & 3

Thursday 26th February

- Bikeability
- Year 3 reading zone 9:00 am
- Cafod club
- Year 2 booster
- \* Football club
- \* Karate - Years 4, 5 & 6

Friday 27th February

- Bikeability
- Cross country competition
- Celebration assembly 2:15

Wishing everyone a lovely weekend.

Mrs A Kerrell

**House Points**

**Congratulations to the winning house this week, St Patrick's**