



11th December 2020



Dear Parents

This will be the last newsletter of the autumn term and what a term we have had! Thank you to all staff, parents and children who have shown such resilience and coped so well with the ever changing climate which has beset us all. We now have some light at the end of the tunnel but will need to remain diligent, particularly over Christmas and New Year; you have been sent details regarding track and trace over this period and I would ask that you follow these guidelines, particularly in relation to informing school of any positive results. This information will be vital in helping us to prepare for January to be as safe as possible for us all and to this end, as you are aware, children will have a home learning day on Tuesday 5th January to enable us to properly assess the situation before their return on Wednesday 6th January 2021.

Year 6 children will take part in a special Epiphany Mass on Wednesday 6th January which will be live streamed to each class in school so we can all celebrate this important feast together. We are in the process of setting this up but as soon as we can, we will give you details so that you can log on and join us as well.

Sr Jude

Many of you will know the name. Sr Jude is the Primary RE advisor for our diocese and has been a welcome visitor and support for so many years but will be retiring from 31st December. Our children were able to watch a Mass this week in celebration of Sr Jude and Mrs Wolff has embroidered a special gift to her which will be given next week. We give thanks for Sr Jude and her many years of selfless work for the good of others and wish her a very long and happy retirement.



Advent

We were reminded in assembly on Monday that we are in the second week of Advent. We continue to prepare ourselves for Christmas day. Children celebrated Mass and Christingle in their year groups as part of this celebration and we thank all concerned for helping to make this possible.

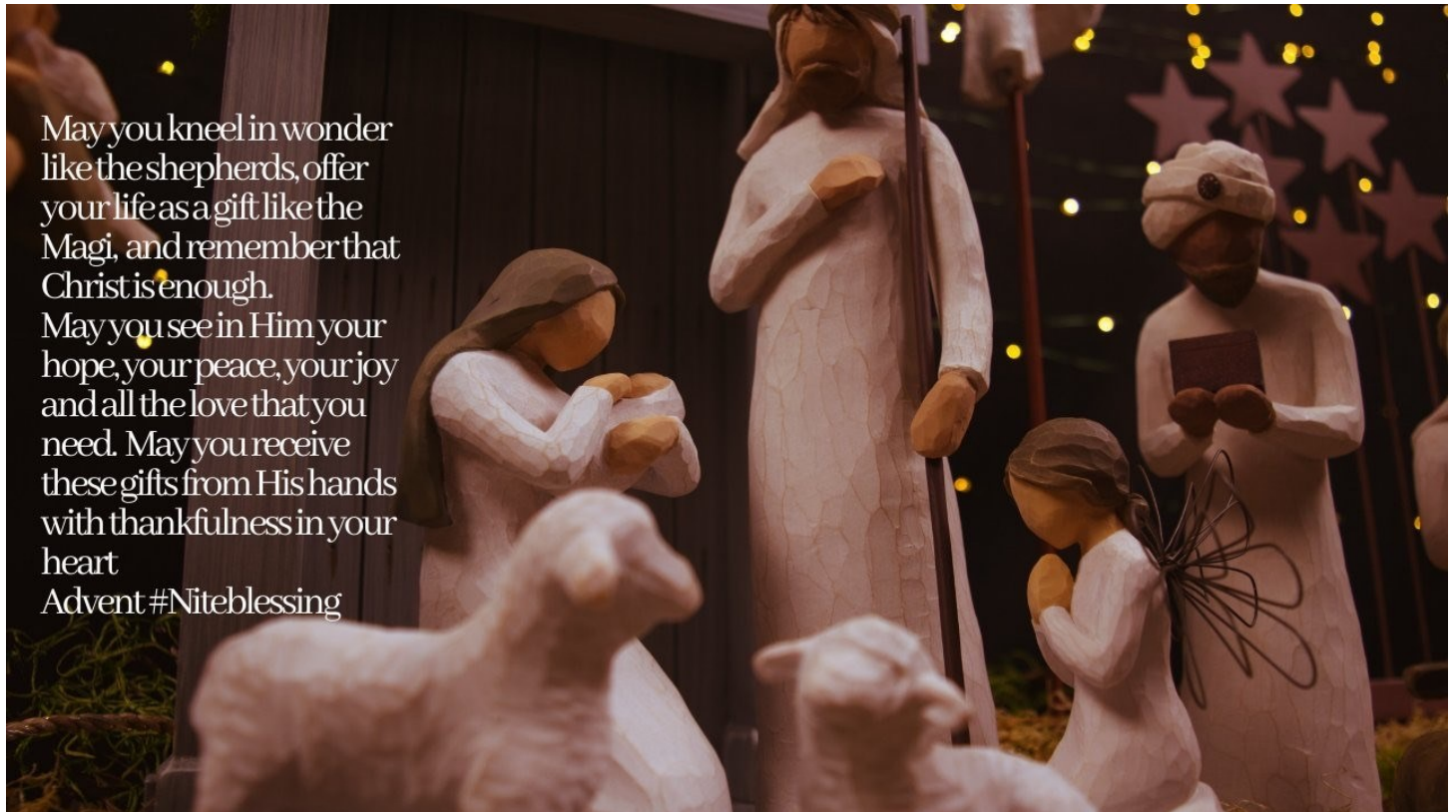
Children also enjoyed their Christmas lunch, again in year groups. Thank you to all staff who have worked tremendously hard to enable this to go ahead; you will appreciate the difficulties involved in maintaining these traditions in the current climate. Well done to all.



On behalf of all staff, thank you for your kind messages and gifts. We hope that you are able, in some form or the other, to enjoy this very special season and to have a very happy and holy Christmas. We also pray that 2021 will be a year where we are able to move forward, renewed in the love of Christ and with all of the joy that brings.

Happy Christmas!

Miss S McGuiggan Mr S Kelliher



May you kneel in wonder
like the shepherds, offer
your life as a gift like the
Magi, and remember that
Christ is enough.
May you see in Him your
hope, your peace, your joy
and all the love that you
need. May you receive
these gifts from His hands
with thankfulness in your
heart
Advent #Niteblessing

Prayers Please

Can you please remember Olpha Selepe RIP, her family and wider family of Regina Coeli Parish in South Africa. Olpha was a founding member of the twinning committee which established the flourishing links that we have today with our twin parish. She will be sorely missed. Eternal rest grant unto her O Lord And let perpetual light shine upon her May she rest in peace Amen



School Council Christmas Poster Competition

The winners of the competition are: Maya Kluza, Isabella Tyson, Medhaj Bachoo and Ife Ihekaigbo-Iwuaba (joint entry) and Lemaya Adjaye-Kwofie.

Well done and congratulations. Prizes will be given out on Monday.

Gospel Values Awards

The Gospel Value this week is Humility

Humility - Trust in God

"God be merciful to me a sinner." (18:13)

"I am among you as one who serves." (22:27)

For next week's Gospel Value we will be looking at Love



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

1D: Harry Tupper

1S: Fabian Jozefczyk

2F: Olivier Slawikowski

2HD: Stevie Ginn

4A: Kingsley Udeagha

4C: Shauden Sesay

5G: Bobbie White

5S: Mya Matunge

6CN: Summer Leagas

6E: Molly O'Donovan

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

The winners of the KS1 Attendance Award are 2HD, attaining 99% attendance. Well done! The winners of the KS2 Attendance Award are 4A, for the fifth week running, achieving 99%. Well done!

Please ensure you are sending your child into school everyday, unless they are not well enough to attend. Familiarise yourself with the symptoms of Corona Virus. There is no need to keep your child off with a common cold, if they are well enough to come in. Please refer to the flow chart on the previous page.

Attending school is so important and makes a huge difference to your child's learning.

It is essential you notify us of your child's absence by 9am either by telephone or using the Parentmail report absence option. 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.

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

R B	98%
R L	98%
1D	95%
1S	96%
2F	93%
2HD	99%
3N	
3PT	
4A	99%
4C	92%
5G	
5S	
6CN	97%
6E	97%

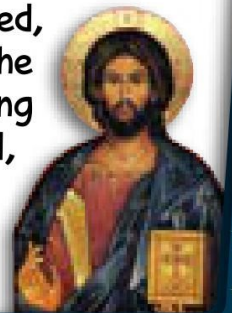
Wednesday
9th December



Good News
for Families

Enjoy reading this Sunday's Gospel

A man came who was sent by God. His name was John, John the Baptist. He came as a witness – as a witness to Jesus Christ. Priests were sent from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?" John replied, "I am not the Christ." "Are you the prophet Elijah then – or the Prophet?" they asked. He answered, "No." "So, who are you?" they asked. "What have you to say about yourself?" John replied, "I am the voice of the one who cries in the wilderness: 'Make the Lord's way straight.'" Finally they asked him, "Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John said, "I baptise with water. But someone is coming soon who is more powerful than I am." This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the River Jordan, where John was baptising.



From the Gospel of Sunday 13th December 2020 John 1:6-8. 19-28 (the 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year B)

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 **JOY**.



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



2

Wednesday's Word

JOY



"Dear young people, if we are close to Jesus, we will have joy in our hearts and a smile on our face." Pope Francis

Who did John the Baptist come to tell the people about? This weekend we celebrate the third Sunday of Advent which is known as 'Gaudete Sunday', and we light the pink candle on our advent wreath. The word 'Gaudete' in Latin means 'Rejoice!'. We joyfully celebrate that Christmas is near - we rejoice that Christ is coming. Ask your child what the word 'joy' means to them. Each of you say who or what makes you feel joyful. When do you feel joyful? When was the last time you brought joy to others and what did you do? God wants us to be filled with joy - Jesus came to make our joy complete. Happiness comes and goes, but the joy that comes from close friendship with Jesus stays forever.

"Joy is very infectious; therefore, always be full of joy." St Teresa of Calcutta

Joy is something we all desire. We don't have to search around for joy: it comes from within. When we follow Jesus by loving God and others, we are filled with joy! A joyful heart is a sign of God's Spirit within us. What can you do to help bring joy to others in this coming week? Perhaps you can: give lots of smiles; give someone a gift; remind someone that they are loved by God; cheerfully do what our parents or teachers ask us to do. In these ways we prepare our hearts to be filled with a joy that lasts long after the Christmas festivities have passed.



Dear Lord Jesus, please help our family to experience the joy that you bring, and to share your joy with all those that we meet. Amen.

**WEDNESDAY
WORDSEARCH**



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



**PRIESTS
ASKED**

**JOHN
REPLIED**

**SOMEONE
SOON**

**JESUS
CHRIST**



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

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

Cross out the letters **c d a** in the 4 jumbled words to find 4 real words.

dasocon podwerdfaul Jochand disca

_____ the Baptist said, "Someone _____ coming
_____ who is more _____ than I am."

In this Sunday's Gospel, the humble witness of John the Baptist gave people a sense that something exciting was about to happen. John delivered the joyful news of God's arrival into our world in the person of Jesus - he recognised Jesus as the Christ. We often don't recognise Jesus when he comes, when he is standing among us. But be assured: Jesus is always with us, waiting to fill us with joy.

Wednesday 16th December 2020 - A WEEKLY PRAYER CUSTOM



Encountering Christ
*Prayerfully preparing for the
Sunday Mass and praying in
particular for our school families*



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 20th December 2020 - The Fourth Sunday in Advent

1 Relax & Remember

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



2 Read

Taken from the Gospel for Sunday 20th December 2020 (Luke 1: 26-38): The Annunciation

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you,' the angel answered, 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your cousin Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary, 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.



3 Reflect

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

As we prepare for the birth of Jesus, the final Sunday of Advent always focuses on Mary. What was the young girl Mary doing when the message came? Kneeling in prayer? Feeding the sheep? Fetching water? Sweeping the mud floor? What was she thinking? Engaged to be married, surely about her approaching wedding to Joseph and about the children she would mother. Then came the message which she could accept or refuse, the message on which hung the future of the world: her child would be different from all others. How 'different'? Her thoughts were turned back to the promise to David. It had been read to her so often in the Bible, and now the words echoed in her mind as she listened to the angel say, 'His reign will have no end'. This would all be the work of the Spirit which she had so often heard about in Isaiah: 'the Holy Spirit will come upon you', the Spirit which was to come upon the Servant of the Lord, the Spirit of Emmanuel, 'God with us'. Her young body was to grow, nourish and develop this child. Then she would have the child in her arms to cherish and shape as both Son of God and her own son.

What sort of person was Mary? Would you have liked to get to know her? What is God's plan for you?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

4 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. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



**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**

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS +

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 20th December 2020



First Reading: *A King for Ever*

2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.' But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established forever."

At the height of his powers King David wants to thank God for his lavish favours by building him a house. No human being patronises God, and David was not allowed to build the Temple. But God replies with the promise that he will build David a House. In one sense David's House crashed into ruins when the last king of Judah was blinded and taken off into exile in Babylon. But the promise of an eternal kingship still stands. It is fulfilled in the eternal kingship of the Son of David who is also Mary's Son, and this fulfilment begins at the Annunciation. This is why so many phrases from the prophet Nathan's promise are echoed in the annunciation of the angel to Mary. 'Your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever', says Nathan. 'He will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end', says the angel.

What is the "House" that God promises to build for David?

Second Reading: *The Last Secret*

Romans 16:25-27

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ forever and ever. Amen.

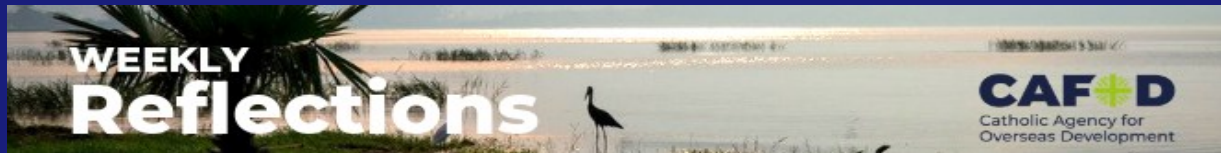
“Our celebration of Christmas is not just of a baby born at Bethlehem. It is of the climax of God's plan for the world.”

This reading gives the final cry of excitement and triumph at the end of Paul's great letter to the Christians of Rome. His task is to reveal to the nations (not just to the Jews) God's secret plan, which has been brewing all through human history and now comes to its climax in Christ. God has offered his friendship and his divine wisdom in Christ. Human beings respond with the obedience of 'faith', a keyword of the letter: we need only trust God's promises for all our weakness to be buried under God's glory. Ultimately, all we need do in this 'obedience of faith' is simply hang on by our finger-tips, accepting God's promised help. Our celebration of Christmas is not just of a baby born at Bethlehem. It is of the climax of God's plan for the world, the keystone of history. So we do not merely look back on it as a great event. Christians must see it as the anchor of God's design for the whole of history and for the course of each day.

What is God's plan for the world? What is his plan for me – in my life and on this day?

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*
w: www.wednesdayword.org e: info@wednesdayword.org

RELIGIOUS LIFE AT HOLY CROSS



Based on the gospel for Sunday 13 December – John 1:6-8, 19-28

"He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light, so that everyone might believe through him."

John the Baptist came as a witness to the light, to prepare the people for the coming of Christ. He baptised them with water, but he also let them know that someone else was coming who was far greater than him.

Because he bore witness to his faith through his actions, many people came to believe.

Particularly in times of uncertainty, we need those, like John the Baptist, who lead the way. Those who shine their lights for us to follow, filling us with confidence, and helping us to believe that better times are coming.

At the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, Mustapha, a lab technician at the Handmaid's Catholic Health Clinic in Sierra Leone, didn't feel safe working. He didn't have adequate PPE. Patients stopped visiting the clinic because they didn't feel safe receiving treatment either. However, things are changing for the better. Since receiving PPE from local experts supported by CAFOD, staff like Mustapha feel far more confident in their work. Encouraged by this, patients have also started to return.

In these uncertain times this Advent, let us all look out for those who can inspire us with their faith, their witness and their actions. And let us think about how we can bear witness to the light in our own lives and to those around us.

God of all,
John the Baptist came to bear witness to your light.
Fill us with faith and the courage to act upon it,
so that we may shine a light
in the darkness of these uncertain times.
Amen.

The Words of Pope Francis



Accompanied by the Mother of Jesus on the journey towards Christmas, in these times that are difficult for many, let us make an effort to rediscover the great hope and joy brought to us by the coming of the Son of God into the world. #Advent

Happy Birthday to...

Jonjo Hanifin-Flynn, Zachary Timbrell, Vicky Portaro,
Miles Agyei-Frimpong, Jaxon Bender, Cian Hanifin-Flynn



Merit Certificates:

- 1D: Luke Kimmins, for his great attitude to learning
 1S: Freya Bown, for being a brilliant friend
 2F: Justin Nguyen, for growing in confidence and enjoyment with his learning
 2HD: Ella Tanu, for working hard on her cine-literacy work
 4A: Mischa Hyde, for her excellent attitude towards her learning
 4C: Bree Onwurah, for excellent work in cine-literacy on the Grinch
 5G: Marcel Sereda, for showing excellent map skills
 5S: Otto Colussi, for working hard and trying his best in all subjects
 6CN: Erin Barker, for her fantastic R.E. work this week
 6E: Summer Moss, for fantastic literacy work

House Points

**Congratulations to the
winning house St George**

Diary Dates

Menu Week 1

<u>Monday 7th December</u>		<u>Tuesday 8th December</u>		<u>Wednesday 9th December</u>		<u>Thursday 10th December</u>		<u>Friday 11th December</u>	
Reception	Start 08:30 Finish 14:45	Reception	08:30 - 14:45	Reception	08:30 - 14:45	Reception	08:30 - 14:45	Reception	08:30 - 12:45
Years 1 & 2	Start 08:45	Years 1 & 2	08:45 - 15:00	Years 1 & 2	08:45 - 15:00	Years 1 & 2	08:45 - 15:00	Years 1 & 2	08:45 - 13:00
	Finish 15:00	Years 3 & 4	09:00 - 15:15	Years 3 & 4	09:00 - 15:15	Years 3 & 4	09:00 - 15:15	Years 3 & 4	09:00 - 13:15
Years 3 & 4	Start 09:00	Years 5 & 6	09:15 - 15:30	Years 5 & 6	09:15 - 15:30	Years 5 & 6	09:15 - 15:30	Years 5 & 6	09:15 - 13:30
	Finish 15:15	Christmas Panto afternoon							
Years 5 & 6	Start 09:15 Finish 15:30								



S. McGuigan

Miss S McGuigan

Headteacher

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

Seew Kelliher

Mr S Kelliher

Deputy Headteacher