

10th December 2021



Dear Parents/Carers,

It's been another busy week at Holy Cross. We've had Christmas lunches, the Year 2 Carol Concert, our Christmas jumper day today and Greek day in Year 5. Children in Reception and Year 1 sang the Nativity with great enthusiasm and the Year 2 children were wonderful in the carol concert. Thank you to the children who made it so special and all the staff and parents who have also worked so hard to prepare them. We were very proud of the children who helped us to continue in our preparations during this season of Advent.

Reconciliation

Years 4, 5 and 6 celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation with Father Bernard this week as part of their preparation for Christmas. We are very grateful to have our Parish Priest so involved with our school.

Year 2 Carol Concert

What a fantastic Carol Concert by Year 2 on Tuesday. They sang beautifully and captured the essence of Christmas through their retelling of the birth of Jesus. This took a lot of planning and required plenty of support from parents so thank you to all involved.

Christmas lunches

Children throughout the school enjoyed a sumptuous Christmas dinner this week. There were plenty of smiles and laughter and a great seasonal atmosphere as the children pulled crackers and listened to Christmas music. A big thank you to Denise and her team of catering staff and the mid-day assistants who did a great job in ensuring that it all ran smoothly.

Reception 2022 Applications

Applications for Reception September 2022 must be made by 15th January 2022. To apply go to <https://www.essex.gov.uk/apply-for-a-primary-school-place>. A Supplementary Information also needs to be completed. These are available from the school office

Year 5 Greek Day

On Wednesday 8th December 2021, Year 5 dressed up and travelled back in time to experience activities inspired by life in Ancient Greece. We enjoyed a variety of craft activities, including painting the shields we made during our trip to Burwell House, decorating them with patterns influenced by Ancient Greek artwork. The class learned about the architecture of the Ancient Greek temples and made Ancient Greek facades. As well as the complexities of the Greek alphabet, writing our names in Greek. Meanwhile, groups of children prepared delicious Greek food in the cooking room. A wonderful Ariston (Greek lunch) was enjoyed in the afternoon.





CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT



Christmas JUMPER DAY



Christmas JUMPER DAY



Christmas Calendar of Events

Monday 13th December

Reception Christmas panto (12pm to 3pm)

Year 3 bring Pyjamas in to school

Year 4 wear Pyjamas to school

Tuesday 14th December

Year 5 and 6 Christmas panto (12pm to 3pm)

Wednesday 15th December

Year 1 and Year 2 panto (12pm to 3pm)

Thursday 16th December

Year 3 and Year 4 panto (12pm to 3pm)

Friday 18th December

Last day of term.

Finish times are as follows:

Reception at **1.15pm** from the Reception playground

Rest of the school **1.30pm** from the main playground



Christmas Cards

The Christmas card post box will open on Wednesday 1st December and will be located outside the school office door. Please remind your children to post their cards here and not to hand them out in class. They will be collected, sorted and delivered to the correct classes. Please remember to write the name of the child and the class they are in on the envelope.

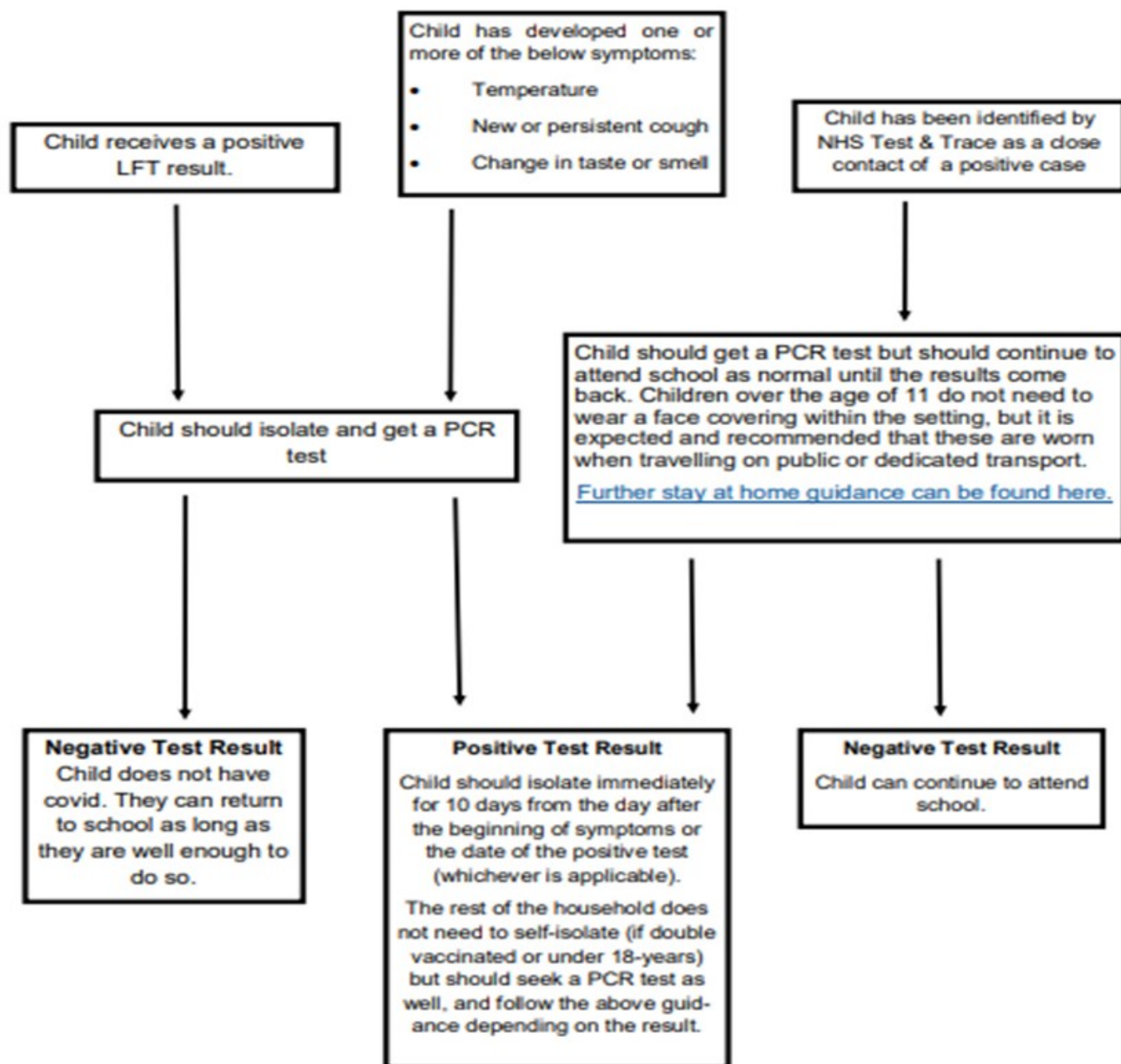
CATHOLIC CHURCH CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES IN HARLOW

		24th December		25th December
Church	Location	First Mass of Christmas: For Family / Children	Early-Midnight Mass	Christmas Day
 St Thomas More	CM20 1TN		10.30pm	8.30am
 Our Lady of Fatima	CM20 2NS	6pm	11.30pm Polish	10.30am - 12.15pm in Polish
 The Assumption of Our Lady	CM17 0HA	5pm	10pm	10am
 Holy Cross	CM18 6JJ	6.30pm	11pm	11am

COVID-19

The way that Covid is managed in schools has changed from September. Please find a flowchart below which illustrates the self-isolation and testing guidance for children.

Self-Isolation and Testing Guidance





Times Tables Rockstars

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

2HD: Liliana Smaglo

3N: Ella Tanu

4C: Olivia Jarczewska

5G: Lehna Ajong

6CN: Otto Colussi

2PT: Diale Ebhabha

3R: Sean O'Connor

4E: Helith Alkegamage

5S: Marian Marti

6E: Lily Vetori

Gospel Values Awards

The Gospel Value this week is...

Integrity

- honesty, truth-telling

"You will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify." (21: 12-13) "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup" (11:39)



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

1DG: Joshua Agboola

2HD: Riley O'Sullivan

3N: Mahayla Hackett

4C: Vicky Portaro

5G: Lucia Pintilei

6CN: Ronel Sofuwa

1S: Medeina Kucinskaite

2PT: Feodora Benghea

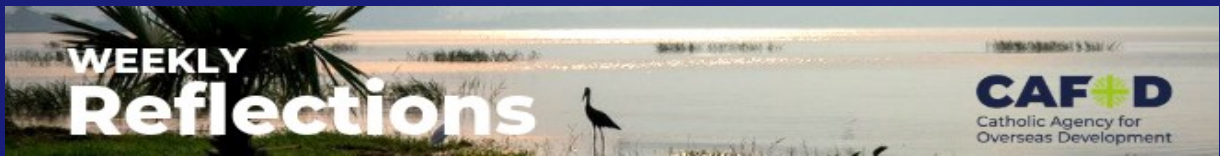
3R: Ella Thorpe

4E:

5S: Caitlin Masambique

6E: Lily Vetori

RELIGIOUS LIFE AT HOLY CROSS



Based on the gospel for 12 December, Third Sunday of Advent: Luke 3:10-18

"If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same."

John the Baptist places a demanding expectation before the people of his day. His words are direct, clear and explicit: share what you have, be honest, do not oppress people.

Bissajit lives in Bangladesh with his mother Nomita and sister Sonia. The family live season-to-season, always in fear of losing their home and crops to the cyclones, storms and floods so common in their area. Yet Bissajit lives just the kind of life of open-handed generosity that John the Baptist speaks of today. As his sister Sonia says:

"If he earns one taka and he hears about someone else who need one taka, he'll give it away. He puts other people first. One winter my mother bought him a t-shirt to protect him from the cold weather. The very next day he came across a boy who was trembling in the cold without enough clothes. So my brother took off the t-shirt and gave it to the boy."

This coming Sunday is *Gaudete* Sunday (Latin for 'rejoice'). As we dwell on the words of John the Baptist and the example of Bissajit, we are reminded of the joy that is offered to us in living out the gospel, in the concrete actions of sharing and loving that bring new life to the world and to us.

Gracious God,
we thank you for your gifts.
Teach us to trust you
more than possessions or wealth.
Give us generous hearts,
inspire us to share what we have
and work for justice,
so that all people may flourish
and live in dignity.
Amen.



The Words of Pope Francis

Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem. May we let ourselves be drawn by the light of God made man

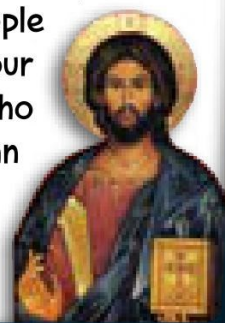
Wednesday
8th December



Good News
for Families

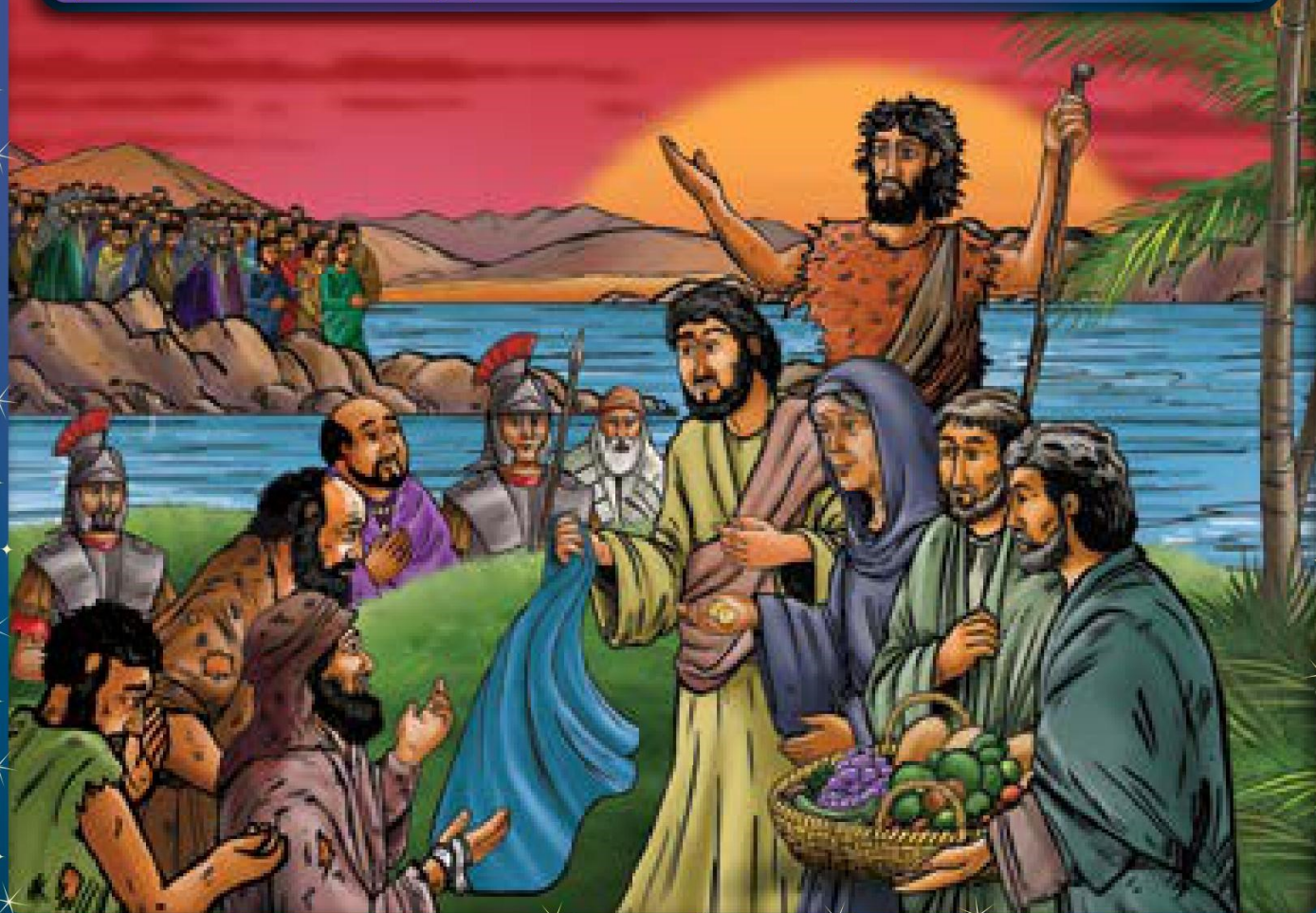
Enjoy reading this Sunday's Gospel

When the crowds asked John the Baptist, "What must we do?" He answered, "If anyone has two coats they should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same." There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and they said to him, "Master, what must we do?" He said to them, "Don't collect any more than you should." Then he said to some soldiers, "Don't force people to pay money to make you leave them alone, but be satisfied with your pay." By now, a feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John the Baptist might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not good enough even to untie his sandal strap."



From the Gospel of Sunday 12th December 2021 Luke 3: 10-18 (the 3rd Sunday of Advent, 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 **MERCY**.



2

Wednesday's Word

MERCY



"Read the gospels! This way we will learn what is most essential in our lives: love and mercy." Pope Francis

Who did the people think that John the Baptist might be? In this Sunday's Gospel, John the Baptist prepares the people for the coming of Jesus. He tells them to share with others and to show mercy – to put people (not money or power) first; to feel for those who suffer and to do something to help. Within the Catholic Church, these actions, attending to people's basic needs, are known as Corporal (or physical) Works of Mercy. Ask your child what the word 'mercy' means to them. You may want to share with your child what the word 'mercy' means to you. Can you or your child remember a time when you were merciful and gave someone another chance?

"God is merciful towards us. We too should learn to be merciful." Pope Francis

The Church also encourages us to perform Spiritual Works of Mercy. These include: being compassionate; being patient with others even if we are being treated unfairly; forgiving others (even if we feel they don't deserve forgiveness); sometimes giving people more than they deserve. Merciful people do things out of their love and care for others and this helps make the world a better place. Who do you know to be a merciful person? Each time we show 'mercy', we open ourselves to receive mercy from God. Each of you say if there is someone to whom you could show mercy this Advent.



Dear Lord Jesus, please help us to grow in the virtue of **mercy** – to be open to receiving your **mercy** and showing **mercy** to others. Amen.

WEDNESDAY
WORDSEARCH

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

JOHN
BAPTISTENCOURAGES
MERCYCOATS
FOODSHARE
OTHERS

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

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

Cross out the letters **u d w** in the 4 jumbled words to find 4 real words.

umodrew Jowhund tuhwand Bawptistud

_____ the _____ said, "Someone is coming, someone who is _____ powerful _____ I am."

The Catholic Church encourages us to prepare for Christmas and experience God's mercy through the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). During Advent, many parish churches also offer special Reconciliation Services for us to experience God's love, mercy and forgiveness. All are warmly invited. Pope Francis reminds us, **"Don't be afraid to ask God for forgiveness. God is pure mercy."**

Wednesday 8th December 2021 - 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 12th December 2021 - The Third Sunday of 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 12th December 2021 (Luke 3:10-18): John the Baptist's Counsels

When all the people asked John, "What must we do?" he answered, "If anyone has two tunics, he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same." There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, "Master what must we do?" He said to them, "Exact no more than your rate." Some soldiers asked him in their turn, "What about us? What must we do?" He said to them, "No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!" A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out." As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.



3 Reflect

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

In this second of the two Advent Sunday gospels about John the Baptist we first hear details about how to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Luke is always aware of the dangers of wealth and money, so he concentrates on avoiding its misuse. First he teaches equal sharing with the needy, no hoarding but generosity. Then he turns to financial exploitation. Tax-collectors had to pay for the right to collect taxes, and would be tempted to extort a nice margin to cover their own needs. In the same way soldiers could be tempted to abuse their power by bullying those they were meant to protect. The second half of John's task is to point away from himself towards Jesus, who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Luke's gospel and the Acts of the Apostles are full of the Holy Spirit. Luke must have been vividly aware of the working of the Spirit in the Church, in its ministers of all kinds and in the life of the Christian communities. He warns also of the fierce fire which will purge away impurities; for John the Baptist the Messiah is a stern figure who will burn away the rubbish in human hearts to make room for the Spirit.

What is the "rubbish" in my life which needs to be burnt away to prepare for the coming of Jesus?

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 12th December 2021



First Reading: *Rejoice, Daughter of Jerusalem!*

Zephaniah 3:14-18

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion; Israel, shout aloud! Rejoice, exult with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has repealed your sentence; he has driven your enemies away. The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your midst; you have no more evil to fear. When that day comes, word will come to Jerusalem: Zion, have no fear; do not let your hands fall limp. The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult with joy over you; he will renew you by his love; he will dance with shouts of joy for you as on a day of festival.

Zephaniah prophesies that Jerusalem, the Holy City, sacked by the Babylonians, will be restored. That day will be a day of overwhelming joy, when the Lord will truly be king in Jerusalem. After the exile in Babylon the Jews returned to Jerusalem, but they were continually dominated by one set of foreign rulers after another, tossed from one to the next as the plaything of their powerful neighbours. They longed more and more to be free, to have God as their only ruler. When Jesus came, the kingship of God dominated his whole horizon, but the people failed to recognize the kingship of God in his proclamation and his way of life. He was not the conquering hero they expected, and the citizens he gathered into his kingdom were the hungry, the poor, the persecuted, the disadvantaged, the alienated, the lost, the despised, the crippled and the sick. It was to these that he brought joy and rejoicing 'as on a day of festival'. If people failed to see God at work in Jesus' life, it was because they were looking for the wrong sort of God. If we want to share Christ's joy at Christmas, we must focus on the right kind of kingship of God.

How may I joyfully prepare for the coming of the Lord?

Second Reading: *Be joyful in the Lord!*

Philippians 4:4-7

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

“Place your worries before the Lord and leave the rest to him.”

This third Sunday of Advent, halfway through the preparation for Christmas, is traditionally known as Gaudete ('Rejoice') Sunday. The encouragement which begins our reading from Philippians ('Be joyful!') underlines this message. However, it is all very well for Paul to tell us not to worry, to be happy and to place all our desires before God. Easier said than done! Moreover, how can we be sure that all our prayers and petitions made to God will be answered? How can they be, if you pray for rain while I pray for sunshine? The true prayer of petition is Jesus' own prayer, an embrace of the Father in loving confidence that God is just that, our loving Father. We can think we know what will make us happy, but the only true recipe for happiness is to leave it to God, in the knowledge that our human perception is limited and incomplete. Any further prayer must be provisional. It is almost a game: I think I know what will make me happy, but on another level I know that I don't know – but I trust that the Lord knows what will bring me true happiness. So, in prayer, I place my worries before the Lord and leave the rest to him.

Should I pray for any specific thing, or leave it all to God?

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

Happy Birthday this week to...

Sarah Ciotoi, Paris Goddard, Lucian Rogozinski, Nana Prempeh, Zachery Timbrell, Vicky Portaro, Miles Agyei-Frimpong.



Merit Certificates:

- 1DG: Eddie Cox, for working so hard especially maths and R.E.
1S: Christabel Nyarko-Mensah, for lovely work using 3D and 2D shapes
2HD: The whole of 2HD, for an amazing Year 2 Nativity performance!
2PT: The whole of 2PT, for lovely singing in our Carol concert
3N: Toby Marsh-Gray, for his amazing progress in reading
3R: Hector Onwurah, for always working hard and participating in class discussions
4C: Jermaine Ondiege, for his super basketball skill in P.E.
4E: Thomas Hyde, for writing words for a song in his own time at home after our Cine-Literacy in class
5G: James Jeffrey, for his enthusiasm and fantastic effort during our Greek Day
5S: Luciann Henry, for her fantastic attitude to learning
6CN: Andrew Burns, for his amazing effort and enthusiasm with her argument writing
6E: Evilijia Kucinskaite, for brilliant work about the evolution of Galapagos tortoises

New Christmas Menu Week 2

Diary Dates

Monday 13th December

Reception Panto

Years 3 and 4 Hot Chocolate -
Polar Express Party

Tuesday 14th December

Year 5 & 6 Panto

Wednesday 15th December

Years 1 & 2 Panto

Thursday 16th December

Years 3 & 4 Panto

Friday 17th December

Last Day of Term

Reception finish at 1.15

Rest of School finish 1.30

House Points

**Congratulations to the
winning house St David**

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