



11th March 2022



Dear Parents and Carers,

Following our appeal in last week's newsletter for donations to support the people of Ukraine, all the staff at Holy Cross have been overwhelmed with your generosity. The daily sight of the requested items being brought in to school is testament to the caring community which exists within our school and parish. On behalf of those who will receive your donations, we thank you.

Have a peaceful weekend.

Commonwealth Choir

Members of the Commonwealth Choir were busy this week. On Tuesday they visited St. Edwards School in Upton Park for rehearsals. This was followed by a trip to the Guards' Chapel at Wellington Barracks on Wednesday where they recorded three songs for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. They will all be performing again at Horse Guards Parade on Monday for Commonwealth Day. Marian, Aidan, Lucia Katie, Maame-Yah, Ella, Lilly, Mmasi, Morayo, Ena and Isla did us all proud. Thank you to Mrs. Slater, Mrs. Laporte and Mrs. Cater for supporting this trip.



Visit by Diocese

Our Diocesan Link-adviser, Mrs. Harwood, visited our school on Monday. She was very complimentary about the children, the work of all the staff over the last two terms, pastoral care and the initiatives put in place to enhance the children's learning.



As part of Pope Francis' Synodal process' views are being sought about the Catholic Church. The concept of synodality refers to the involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church.

Bishop Alan asked the children in our school to contribute their vision. Over the last few weeks, the children at Holy Cross have done just that and we are now ready to present these to him.

Our Mini-Vinnies; Lilly, Isabella, Louis and Bree met with the Mini-Vinnies from St. Luke's and St. Alban's on Monday afternoon at St. Luke's Primary School. Following a sharing of views, the children presented them on video. This tape will now be sent to Bishop Alan.

Further information about the Synod 2021-23 can be found in the following link:

<https://theconversation.com/what-is-the-synod-of-bishops-a-catholic-priest-and-theologian-explains-168937#:~:text=10%2C%202021%2C%20Pope%20Francis%20formally,the%20world%20will%20consult%20>



Mrs. Steel

We said goodbye to Mrs. Steel today who is moving to a new post in education, closer to home. Her cheerful demeanour has made us all smile over the last few years and she will be missed. We wish her every success and happiness in her new role.

St. Patrick's Day

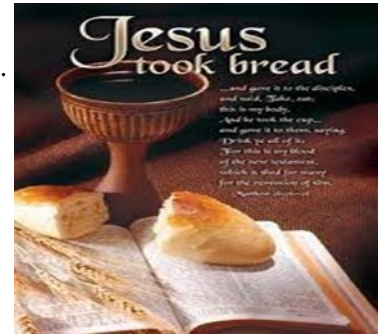
All those children in St. Patrick's House can come in to school on Thursday in non-uniform. They will also have an opportunity during the day to decorate biscuits.



Year 3 Class Mass

This was celebrated on Monday and the Gospel read was from Matthew 26:26-28. The theme of the Mass was 'Listening and Sharing'. This has been so much in evidence by our school and parish community in their response not only to our appeal last week but also through the many donations of books which we have received for our school library. Thank you to all in Year 3 for preparing this Mass which can be viewed online if you were unable to attend.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW4b-mJCVSd1UQiXmkemDJw>



SATs Meeting

Thank you to the Mrs. Noonan, Miss Clark and Mrs. Ennifer for the SATs information session which was held on Wednesday. The Year 6 SATs this year will take place on the week commencing 9th May and the timetable for this is below.

Date	Activity
Monday 9 th May 2022	English grammar, punctuation and spelling papers 1 and 2
Tuesday 10 th May 2022	English reading
Wednesday 11 th May 2022	Mathematics papers 1 and 2
Thursday 12 th May 2022	Mathematics paper 3

Tag Rugby Tournament at Harlow RFC

A group of children from Years 5 and 6 have travelled, this afternoon, to Harlow Rugby club, for a tag Rugby tournament.

All the best to the children and we look forward to hearing their news.



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about WINK

AGE RATING

13+

Wink is a messaging app which allows children to connect and communicate with other users. In a similar style to Tinder, Wink uses the swipe method for browsing profiles and accepting or declining them. Once two users have accepted each other by swiping on one another's profile, they can then communicate and play games online together. The fact that Wink allows children to share photos, personal information and their location with other users has caused significant concern.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

POTENTIAL FOR GROOMING

Wink accounts can't be made private – so when a young person uploads images and shares their social media usernames, it's easier for potential groomers to stalk and locate them online. The fact that children prioritise having an abundance of friends is also a concern: they're more likely to accept someone just to build their friend count – possibly including users with sinister intentions.

ACCIDENTAL OVER-SHARING

Many young people don't consider privacy when they choose to share their social media usernames on their Wink profile. This allows other people to connect with them on multiple platforms, strengthening their online presence and reputation. Some children post photos which reveal aspects of their personal life to other users – showing their house, school, friends and family, for instance.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Many popular messaging apps contain profiles featuring profanity, nude or semi-nude photos and users openly looking for a "wifey" or "hook ups". Users can send messages anonymously, which engenders a sense of power and freedom. Children often engage in inappropriate behaviour more willingly when it's anonymous, even if it's not the sort of thing they would take part in normally.

CYBERBULLYING

Being anonymous online provides some users with an incentive to bully others through toxic private conversations. Anonymous bullies can send hurtful messages or pressure young people into sending inappropriate content. Being a victim of cyberbullying can result in children becoming depressed and showing low self-esteem. If your child is exhibiting these signs, it's time to step in.

EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

Wink encourages repeated engagement through signing in daily, making connections, building up a message 'streak' and publicly sharing stories. The reward is 'gems', which allow users to connect with more people, play games and edit their profile background. This can lead to children spending an excessive amount of screen time on the app, which of course can be detrimental to their health.

Advice for Parents & Carers

DO YOUR RESEARCH

If you do decide to allow your child to have a Wink account – or you find that they already have one – it's vital to talk to them about how to use the app responsibly and keep themselves safe. You could also consider exploring Wink yourself and becoming familiar with the app before letting your child download it, as there are no security settings or parental controls that can be put into place.

OFFER YOUR SUPPORT

While it's not always easy to talk about inappropriate content with your child, it's crucial that they understand the impact of sending or receiving it. They also need to feel that they can speak to you about it without worrying about consequences. Emphasise that, if your child receives any messages that make them feel uncomfortable, they can block the sender and report them to the app.

BE WARY OF SHARING

It's important that your child stays aware of what they're sharing online. Remind them about the importance of not posting personal information like their full name or which school they go to. Many users share their other social media account details on Wink to build their friend count, but we would recommend advising your child not to give strangers multiple avenues to contact them.

DISCUSS LOSS OF OWNERSHIP

It's essential that young people understand that once content goes online, the sender no longer has any control over where it will end up. While your child may feel like they can trust their online 'friend', that person is still a stranger. Even sharing one inappropriate image, for example, could then be used as leverage – as their 'friend' threatens to release it publicly unless the child sends more.

BALANCE SCREEN TIME

Before having a chat with your child about screen time, ask yourself if you're being a positive role model. Get your child thinking about how much time they spend on the app: is it healthy? Is it affecting their offline relationships with people? Is it impacting their mood? If so, you could suggest some activities you can do together which aren't so reliant on digital technology.

BE CAUTIOUS OF NEW CONTACTS

Remind your child that not everyone online is who they say they are, and some users have harmful intentions. If someone on Wink is asking them lots of personal questions or suggests meeting up in real life, these are definite red flags. Encourage your child to ask for help if they're unsure about a particular profile. Remember, the app has a block button: your child shouldn't be afraid to use it!

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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Source: <https://www.getwinkapp.com/>



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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about YUBO



Yubo is a social networking platform where users can chat and livestream with up to 10 friends at once. People can connect with others based on location, with a Tinder-style 'swiping' mechanism to accept or reject someone based on their profile pictures. The app has approximately 50 million users worldwide – but despite its popularity, Yubo has not been free from controversy. While the app claims to monitor inappropriate content, a newspaper investigation in early 2022 found young users being exposed to sexual harassment, racism, bullying and conversations with adult themes.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

FLIMSY AGE GATES

Yubo states it is only for over 13s, but there is no credible age-gate to prevent an even younger child joining the platform. An undercover journalist investigating dangerous content reported spending 10 days posing as a 15-year-old on the app without any age verification. This flaw, and the fact that it's impossible to verify a user's true identity on Yubo, raises serious concerns over potential grooming.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Yubo has experienced problems with inappropriate content being displayed to children and teens. Although the app's developers claim to monitor profiles and messages for adult-themed or unsuitable material, a *Sunday Times* investigation found young users being exposed to sexual harassment, racism and bullying, with many chats referencing self-harm, suicide and drug use.

LIVESTREAM RISKS

Due to Yubo's lax age verification, children are able to launch live video streams which strangers can then view and interact with via real-time text chat. Not only is the thought of strangers watching children's livestreams extremely worrying (they could also use these as a means to establish the child's location) but text chats might result in a young person disclosing personal information.

ON AIR

BULLYING POTENTIAL

Yubo users 'swipe' to accept or decline the chance to talk with each other. These decisions are entirely based on someone's profile picture, raising the potential for children to be left with low self-esteem if declined repeatedly. Negative feedback about their appearance can seriously damage a child's emotional wellbeing, causing a loss of confidence in how they look or how interesting they are.

EXTENSIVE ACCESS

Users of Yubo, no matter what their age, are required to grant access to their device's microphone and GPS. This means they are potentially revealing highly sensitive information, including their exact location. In addition, new users of the app are asked to provide personal details such as their name, date of birth and phone number, which – in the case of young people – represents a clear risk.

'GATEWAY' EFFECT

Yubo's swiping system (right for 'yes'; left for 'no') works much like Tinder and various other dating apps. This could lead to children exploring similarly designed apps that aren't intended for a young audience. Users can also link their Yubo account to social media such as Snapchat and Instagram, making it easier for a stranger to track them down on various platforms.

Advice for Parents & Carers

DISCOURAGE USE

We don't often advise totally avoiding an app, but due to the concerns that Yubo has generated of late (the February 2022 *Sunday Times* exposé and a recent abduction case in which the alleged perpetrator met a teenage girl through the app) and the fact that inappropriate content has been proved to be circulating on the platform, you may decide that the safest option is to dissuade your child from downloading it altogether.

STAY AWARE

It's important to stay attuned to how your child is using social media. If they only access Yubo in private, for example, you might reasonably question what they're potentially using it for. It's also important to watch for warning signs that they may be over-using the app: prioritising it over everyday routines like meals and homework, for instance, or showing signs of irritability and a lack of concentration.

DISCUSS IN ADVANCE

If your child is absolutely determined to join Yubo (perhaps their friends all use the platform, for instance), then it's essential to talk to them about the dangers of this type of app before they install it. It's vital they understand not to disclose personal information to people they don't know, for example, and that they're warned about the type of mature content they may be exposed to on the app.

ALTER THE SETTINGS

After the recent high-profile controversies surrounding the app, Yubo's developers have increased its security controls. Users can now choose to block profiles, screen out nudity in live streams and keep their location private. There's also an option to report inappropriate content, so make sure your child knows that they can now flag up anything they find disturbing via the app's Safety Centre.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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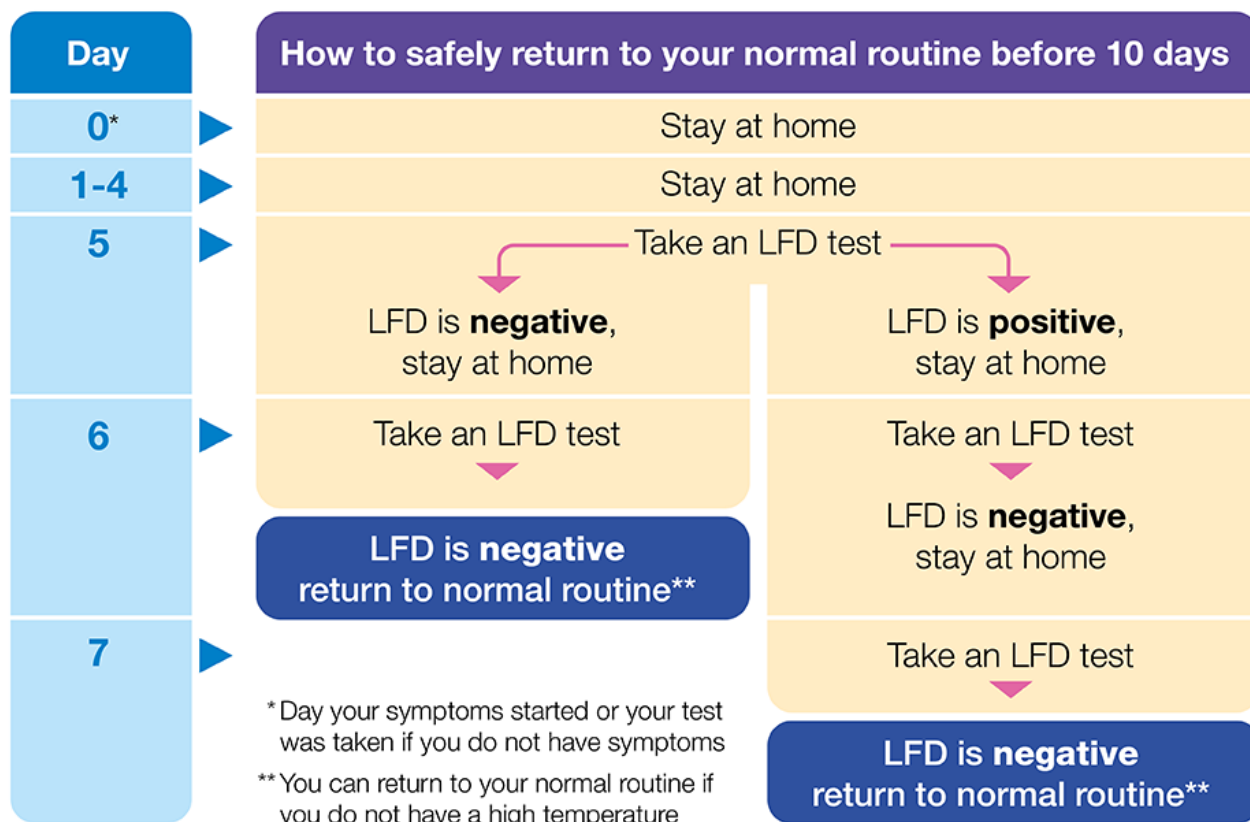
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@nationalonlinesafety

New COVID Guidelines

If testing positive for COVID the guidance recommends that those who test positive stay at home and avoid contact with others for at least five full days. We will continue ask all children, testing positive, to stay at home for 5 days and not return to school until they have had 2 negative LFD results.



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

The winners of the KS1 Attendance Award are 2PT attaining 98% attendance. Well done! The winners of the KS2 Attendance Award are 3R and 6CN, achieving 99%. 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**.

Familiarise yourself with the symptoms of COVID 19. If your child displays any COVID 19 symptoms they must have a negative test before they may attend school. There is no need to keep your child off with a common cold, if they are well enough to come in.

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

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

R B	96%
R L	92%
1DG	96%
1S	96%
2HD	94%
2PT	98%
3N	98%
3R	99%
4C	95%
4E	98%
5G	98%
5S	91%
6CN	99%
6E	96%



Times Tables Rockstars

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



2HD: Livia Mazurek

2PT: Luna Milciute Blynovas

3N: Aurora Boyce-Grace

3R: Faustyna Liszka

4C: Amelia Randle

4E: Josie Ogbonze

5G: Teddy White

5S: Julia Magryta

6CN: Isla Kent

6E: Albie Knowles

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.

Butterflies: Elliot Ziya

Ladybirds: Lottie Peters

1DG: Isla McNamara

1S: Luka Yamgoue

2HD: Oliver Danel

2PT: Joshua Puddefoot

3N: Nayt Mashumba

3R: Tehilah Sambo

4C: Nicholas Nikolov

4E: Thomas Hyde

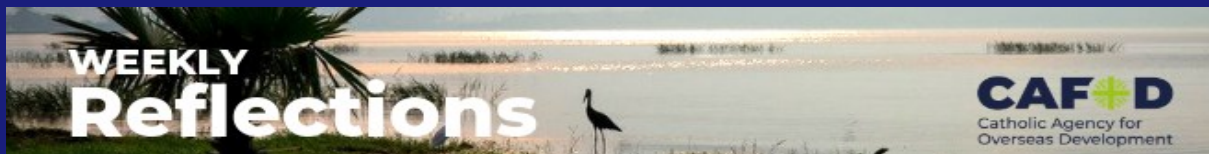
5G: Athena Harrison

5S: Damien Andersen-Hamm

6CN: Lucy Richardson

6E: Xavier White

RELIGIOUS LIFE AT HOLY CROSS



Based on the gospel for 13 March, Second Sunday of Lent: Luke 9:28-36

"As he was praying, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became sparkling white"

In the gospel that we hear at Mass this weekend, Jesus is completely transformed while praying. The disciples finally catch a glimpse of him in his full glory and come to understand that he is the Son of God.

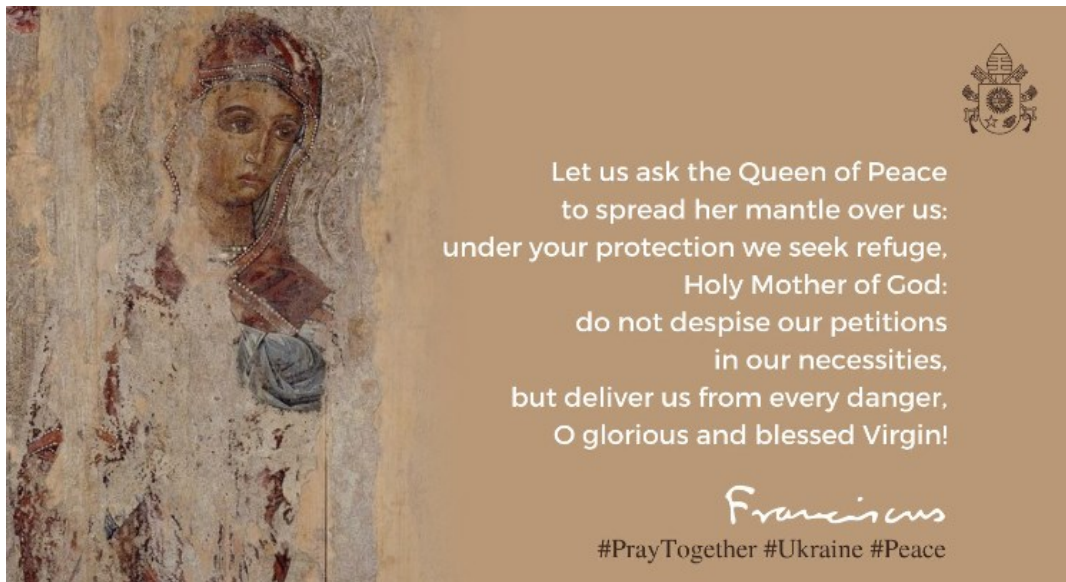
When baby Lombeh was seriously ill with malnutrition in Sierra Leone, both Amie and Sister Anthonia prayed that she would have the chance to grow into a happy and healthy child.

Speaking about her daughter now, as an energetic four-year-old, Amie says: "Lombeh is the kind of girl who loves to play... She's very bold and very lively. She attends nursery school... She loves to play with her dolls."

Amie bought Lombeh a bracelet from the market when she was one month old. It shows just how tiny her arm was. When Lombeh sees the bracelet now she says, "Uh, uh, that was not me!" Amie keeps the bracelet as a record of her daughter's transformation.

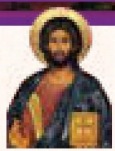
Through our prayers this Lent, we too can hope for wonderful changes. As we pray, let us open our hearts so that God may lead us to live differently, as we change our own lives and the world around us. May we find strength in prayer to get us through the difficult times. And may we be inspired to share hope and love with others.

Ever-loving God, may my prayers lead me to a spirit of openness to others and a determination to make a change in the world, so that your glory may be reflected here on earth. Amen.



Connecting Home, School and Parish through Sunday's Gospel

THE WEDNESDAY
WORD



Sharing Sunday's Gospel with Parents & Families

Dear Parents and Carers,

There are times when we all need encouraging: that is, to be inspired with courage and to have our hope renewed, especially when we are going through difficult times.

The snapshot of Jesus' glory in this Sunday's Gospel was an encouragement to the three disciples. For the first time they received a glimpse of the awesome divinity of Jesus. But soon they would go through difficult times and see Jesus crucified.

Wednesday 9th March 2022

So beforehand, God tells them to listen to Jesus and allows them to see Jesus for who he really is.

Following Jesus isn't easy: it never was. But if, like the disciples, we too listen to Jesus, we will experience the encouragement that God offers freely to each one of us - today.

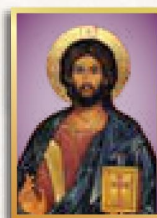
Enjoy exploring this Sunday's Gospel and this Wednesday's word, which is ENCOURAGEMENT.

Dom Henry Wansbrough



To see this week's Parish Version of The Wednesday Word: wednesdayword.org - Parents' Pages - Lectio Divina with Fr Henry.

Adapted from **THE GOSPEL IN CHURCH** SUNDAY 13TH MARCH 2022



Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the appearance of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing over (his death, his resurrection and his ascension) which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with him. As Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." As he spoke, a cloud overshadowed them; and the disciples were afraid. Then a voice came from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him".

*Taken from the Gospel of Sunday 13th March 2022
Luke 9:28-36 (The 2nd Sunday of Lent, Year C)*

Everyone can learn more about this Gospel in Church - all are warmly invited.

"The invitation at the Transfiguration is to listen to Jesus and to follow him, laying down our lives as a gift of love for one another." Pope Francis

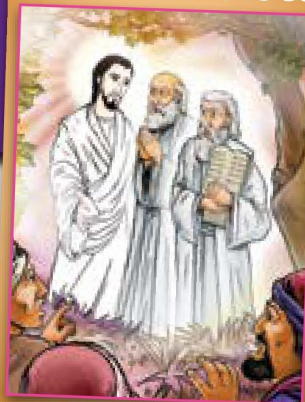


You can find out more about the Catholic faith at: wednesdayword.org & catholicchurch.org.uk



In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus knew that he was soon to be arrested and put to death, but the change in the way he looked (his transfiguration), the extraordinary appearance of Moses and Elijah and hearing the Father's voice from heaven, would have encouraged Jesus to continue his mission - to spread the Good News.

Luke 9:28-36



1 Enjoy reading the Gospel

praying, Jesus' face shone and his clothes became as brilliant as lightning. Then Moses and Elijah appeared and began to talk to Jesus. They were two great prophets who had lived many centuries earlier. Peter said, "It is good to be here." But then a cloud covered them and a voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him".

How did Jesus look when he was transformed? Which word or words stood out for you in this Gospel, and why? See the Gospel picture opposite. What does it make you think about?

2 Wednesday's Word is ...

ENCOURAGEMENT

3 Loving God & Each Other

"If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!" *St Catherine of Siena*

By showing them his inner glory, Jesus encouraged the disciples. Today, when we listen to and follow Jesus, our lives are transformed and we are filled with words of encouragement. Ask your child what 'to encourage someone' means to them. Who encourages them and keeps them going when they find things difficult? How does it feel to be encouraged? Has your child ever encouraged anyone? What did they do?

"If God can work through me, he can work through anyone." *St Francis of Assisi*

There are times when we all need encouragement. Do you know anyone who may need encouraging? Each of you choose a way to encourage someone during this Lenten season. Perhaps you can: offer words of support; let someone know when they are doing something well; help someone if they are struggling; support each other in keeping CAFOD's Lent Fast Day this Friday.



Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for encouraging us. Please help us to be more like you - to be an encouragement to those around us. Amen.

Gospel Gallery

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

WEDNESDAY WORDSEARCH

SMARTSEARCHERS FIND THESE 8 WORDS EITHER ACROSS OR DOWN



JESUS
CHANGED
FACE
SHONE
MOSES
ELIJAH
CLOUD
VOICE



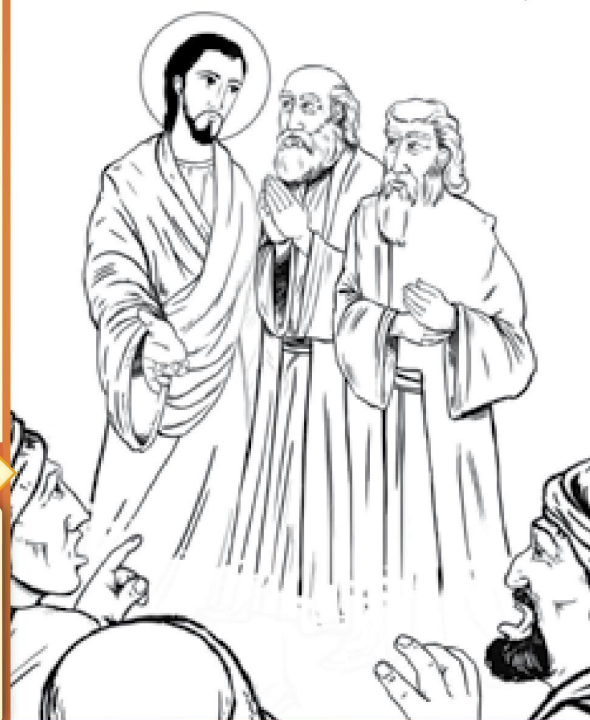
SUPERSEARCHERS FIND THE WORDS BACKWARDS OR DIAGONALLY

Whilst thinking about this week's Gospel, search for at least three differences between this picture and the colour one. Then draw them in before colouring.

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

culodthmes fudacem lidguhtnming burilmlidant

Jesus' _____ shone and his _____ became
as _____ as _____.



This Friday is CAFOD's Family Fast Day.

Why not join in so that some of the world's poorest children and families can be helped and encouraged? Discover lots of ideas including

CAFOD's '2022 Walk Against Hunger':

cafod.org.uk/primary

This week I will try my best to ...

.....
.....
.....





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



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 13th March 2022 - The Second Sunday in Lent

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 13th March 2022 - The Transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:28-36)

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah," – He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid. And a voice came from the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him." And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.

3

Reflect

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

The gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Lent is always the account of the Transfiguration, preparing the chosen three disciples and ourselves for the coming Passion of Christ. It is a scene of Christ's heavenly glory, his clothes bright as lightning, his glory extending even to the appearance of Moses and Elijah: these two Old Testament personalities are here privileged to speak to Jesus because they each had a vision of God on the holy mountain, called both Sinai and Horeb (in the Old Testament these are two names for the same mountain). The Voice from heaven at the baptism had been addressed to Jesus himself (in Mark and Luke); this time the Voice is a public declaration of Jesus' Sonship, and presents him now as the Chosen Teacher for all people. Luke foreshadows the Passion when he mentions Jerusalem – the place where Jesus is to suffer and die on the cross. The fact that the disciples are praying, and are the same three disciples as are present at the Agony in the Garden, makes a strong link with the Passion of Jesus. This gospel also highlights the importance of prayer in Luke's gospel, for Luke mentions Jesus' prayer and the significance of prayer on several occasions and in several parables (e.g. in the Unjust Judge, the Friend at Midnight, and the Pharisee & the Tax-Collector).

What do you find the best form of prayer? What commitment to prayer can you make this Lent? Jesus was transfigured on the 'Holy' Mountain. What makes a place 'holy'?

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 13th March 2022



First Reading: *The Covenant with Abraham*

Genesis 15:5-12. 17-18

Taking Abram outside the Lord said, "Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants," he told him. Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified. "I am the Lord," he said to him, "who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to make you heir to this land." "My Lord, the Lord," Abram replied, "how am I to know that I shall inherit it?" He said to him, "Get me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon." He brought him all these, cut them in half and put half on one side and half facing it on the other; but the birds he did not cut in half. Birds of prey came down on the carcasses but Abram drove them off. Now as the sun was setting Abram fell into a deep sleep, and terror seized him. When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, there appeared a smoking furnace and a firebrand that went between the halves. That day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram in these terms: "To your descendants I give this land, from the wadi of Egypt to the Great River."

There are different stories of exactly how God's pact with Abraham (or Abram) was made. There is no doubt that it was a promise of lasting protection for Abraham and his descendants. This version takes the form of an ancient sacral covenant, of a kind known from other ancient New Eastern sources. The offerings are cut in half, and the parties making the pact pass between the halves, as a symbol that they will observe the pact faithfully until the two halves come together again. Such covenants were frequent between equals, or between overlord and vassal, but no such covenant is known between a deity and a human being. It perhaps marks the inequality between God and Abraham that only the wondrous symbols of God (the furnace and firebrand) here pass between the halves of the offering: Abraham cannot impose conditions on God! Nor can Abraham do anything to earn or justify the promise God makes: he can only trust in God, for he himself remains a nomad without a settled territory to call his own. Only his descendants will inherit the land and become as the stars of heaven. The awesome mystery of the scene is increased by the deep sleep (the same sleep as fell on Adam for the creation of Eve) and by Abram's terror.

What covenant does God make with us Christians? What must we do to keep our part of the Covenant?

Second Reading: *Citizenship of Heaven*

Philippians 3:17 - 4:1

My brothers, be united in following my rule of life. Take as your models everybody who is already doing this and study them as you used to study us. I have told you often, and I repeat it today with tears, there are many who are behaving as the enemies of the cross of Christ. They are destined to be lost. They make foods into their god and they are proudest of something they ought to think shameful; the things they think important are earthly things. For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe. So then, my brothers and dear friends, do not give way but remain faithful in the Lord. I miss you very much, dear friends; you are my joy and my crown.

Last Sunday's second reading (from Paul's letter to the Romans) built on the first reading (from Deuteronomy); the Israelite profession of faith in God becomes the Christian's profession of faith in Christ as Risen Lord. So this Sunday Abram's promised ownership of the land is transfigured into the promise of citizenship in heaven to the followers of Christ. In this world we are aliens rather than citizens: neither our fundamental values nor our final aim are those of this world. We cannot rest in contentment except in the expectation of the Risen Lord coming in triumph to assume lordship of all things. This, rather than food or any material goods, must be the basis of our whole system of values. To modern conventions Paul's repeated encouragement to follow his rule of life or to imitate him may seem boastful and complacent. But Paul asks us to imitate him not for his own glory, but because he sees himself as the servant of Christ, suffering for Christ, just as Jesus suffered as the Servant of the Lord. Paul's sufferings are the badge of apostleship. In other passages, Paul shows that he is as aware as any of us of his own failings and of his inability to live up to his ideals.

Who are "models" for us? How can we follow Christ more closely?

“We cannot rest in contentment except in the expectation of the Risen Lord.”

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...

Rhea Baker, Harry Tupper, Diona Sulaj, Sammy Stevenson, Arnas Gavutis, Jeremy Cox and Hector Onwurah



Merit Certificates:

Butterflies:	Arnas Gavutis, for excellent participation and attitude in all activities.
Ladybirds:	Kayla Shafi-King, for settling so well into Ladybirds class.
1A:	Roman Kelly, for his excellent hard working attitude
1S:	Blousey McQuillan-Clark, for a great piece of work using exclamation marks
2HD:	Naya Kruszniewska Quental, for working hard on her shape activities
2PT:	Margaret Oregbhemhe, for demonstrating resilience in a week full of changes
3N:	Ella Tanu, for always working hard
3R:	Aniyah Adenuga, for her great effort in maths, especially reasoning problems
4C:	Joey Uzeqbuna, for his super acting in Macbeth
4E:	Nathan Kwey, for excellent enthusiasm for Macbeth
5G:	Gilda Bosompem, for making excellent contributions to our class discussions
5S:	James Harten, for excellent enthusiasm during the class reading sessions
6CN:	Emilia Marsham, for her excellent effort and enthusiasm in literacy lessons this week
6E:	Finley Fitzgerald, for his great maths work
Learning	Lilly Dundridge, for being so kind and helpful to all staff and her peers
Mentor:	

House Points

**Congratulations to the
winning house St Patrick**

Menu Week 2

Diary Dates

Monday 14th March

Year 6 Reconciliation
1S Library Visit 9:30

Tuesday 15th March

Bikeability
Year 6 Crucial Crew
Year 5 Reconciliation 10:00
Year 4 Reconciliation 1:30
Choir 3:15 - 4:15

Wednesday 16th March

Bikeability
1A Library Visit 9:30
Years 2 & 3 Karate 3:10 - 4:10
Years 5 & 6 Football 3:15 - 4:15

Thursday 17th March

St Patrick's Day
Karate 4, 5 & 6 3:15 - 4:15
Years 1 & 2 Football 3:10 - 4:10
Years 3 & 4 Football 3:15 - 4:15
Years 3,4,5 & 6 Boot Camp 3:15 - 4:15

Friday 18th March

Cross Country Competition 1:00 3:00
Years 1 & 3 Multisports 3:10 - 4:15
Years 4 & 6 Multisports 3:15 - 4:15

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