

Religious Education Newsletter
September 2021

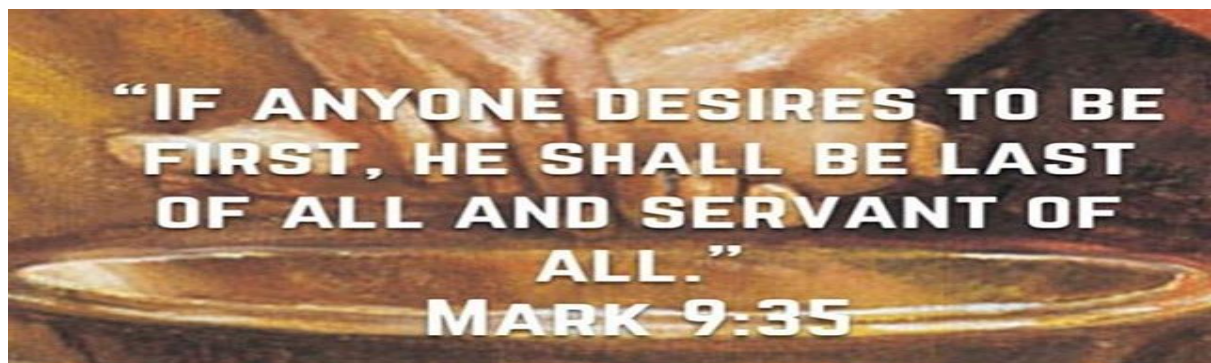


Dear Parents,

Welcome back to school! We hope that you've had a happy and restful summer.

Going back to school after the summer holidays can feel very busy! It's a time of new beginnings: new classrooms, new teachers, new lessons, new schools, new uniform...the list goes on. But this year, school is feeling a lot more normal. Bubbles have been removed and the children have the opportunity to mix! The beginning of the school year provides a perfect opportunity to focus on Jesus and to look forward to the school year ahead.

Every day in school there will be an opportunity for children to be participate in prayer through whole-school assemblies or class prayers led in the classroom by a member of staff or child-led prayer. These collective worship sessions are rooted in and follow on from the Sunday Mass readings or from the Religious Education theme the children are learning about in class. Children have the opportunity to reflect, share feelings, discuss and dramatize elements from Scripture.



Key Scripture:

"If anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all"
Mark 9: 30 – 38

In last Sunday's Gospel, Jesus' disciples argued about who is the 'greatest'. In the Gospel assembly on Monday this week, through a series of Taskmaster-style challenges, the children discovered that the most important things in life are not about winning, or being the best or most attractive. Instead, children learned what Jesus taught His disciples: to be the greatest in God's sight, we must put others first.

The children were invited to think about certain groups of people who are not always treated equally or put first. The children were able to list many groups of people: those living in poverty, refugees or those living without homes and those who face discrimination.

Children discussed how they could help some of these groups through acts of service and through prayer.

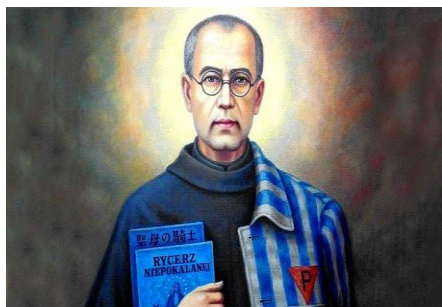
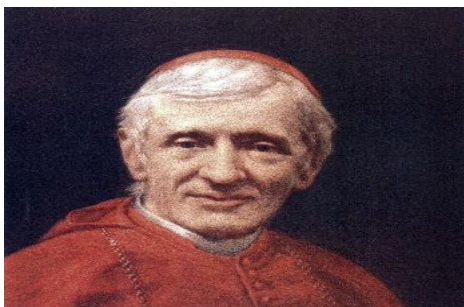
In Tuesday's assembly this week we had a focus on Pope Francis's call in his letter 'Laudato Si' for all of us to look after the world. The children were encouraged to take action to look after our 'common home' and the first step towards this was taking part in Car Free Day on Wednesday. This is a theme which we will be exploring throughout this term as we look towards the Cop 26 Climate Change Conference happening this November.

Mass: Celebrating the start of the new school year

I am delighted to tell you that children participated in our first in person Mass in school yesterday. The Mass was organised and led by Y6 A and it was very special to be able to celebrate together once again after so long celebrating Mass via Zoom. The children were prayerful, reverent and as always sang absolutely beautifully.

During this Mass the Chaplains were commissioned into their roles to serve. We would like to thank all those involved in the organisation of the Mass: Mr. Askin, Mrs Fitzgerald, Mrs Galindo and to all the children who participated. We would like to thank Fr. Peter, from St Thomas Aquinas church in Ham, for leading the celebration of Mass.

Our House Saints:



Classes have been voting for whom they would like to see as the new House Saints for our school.

The Saints that we have chosen are inspirational role models for us! All the children have been learning about these Saints. Please ask your child about the Saints. They should be able to talk about the lives of Saints Mother Teresa, John Henry Newman, Josephine Bakhita and Maximillian Kolbe.

Pupil Chaplains

Our Pupil Chaplaincy continues to be at the centre of the Catholic life of our school.

There is a new team of Chaplains. The Chaplains were commissioned into this new role at Mass on 23rd September.

The chaplains have been working hard organising a fundraising event to support the charity 'Macmillan Cancer Research'.

In addition the Chaplains have led a whole school assembly on 'Operation Warm Welcome' on 22nd September. This is the current governmental initiative to welcome and resettle Afghan refugees, and the children discussed how we can support this in our daily lives and as a school.

The focus of the prayer table in the hall is praying and writing prayers for the Afghan refugees.

More information and details 'Operation Warm Welcome' will be emailed out to you by the chaplains over the next weeks.



The Pope asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. We are invited to answer the Pope's request and to join with many people worldwide in praying for this intention each month.

The Pope has also dedicated this year to The Year of the Family.

September 2021 - Pope Francis' prayer request for September is for respect for the planet's resources: We pray that the planet's resources will not be plundered but shared in a just and respectful manner.

Parent Prayer Club



Now that Covid restrictions have eased, we would like to invite parents to attend a prayer club each Monday in school.

The prayer club will begin on Monday 27th September at 2:45 pm in the 'Environmental room'.

This will be an opportunity for parents to pray together and talk about their faith.



The start of the school year is always a busy time for all the family. As part of 'The Year of the Family', why not take some time to pause and pray to God as a family?

Our top tips:

- Sit down together. Light a candle if you want to. Play some gentle music.
- Make the Sign of the Cross together and invite Jesus to be with you.
- Take a few moments of quiet, to listen and be still.
- Say a familiar prayer or share highlights of your day.
- Finish with the Sign of the Cross and then share how it felt to pray to God. (Peaceful? Calming? Empowering?)

Kind regards,
Mrs Diver, Catholic Life Lead and Deputy Head