



"We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together"

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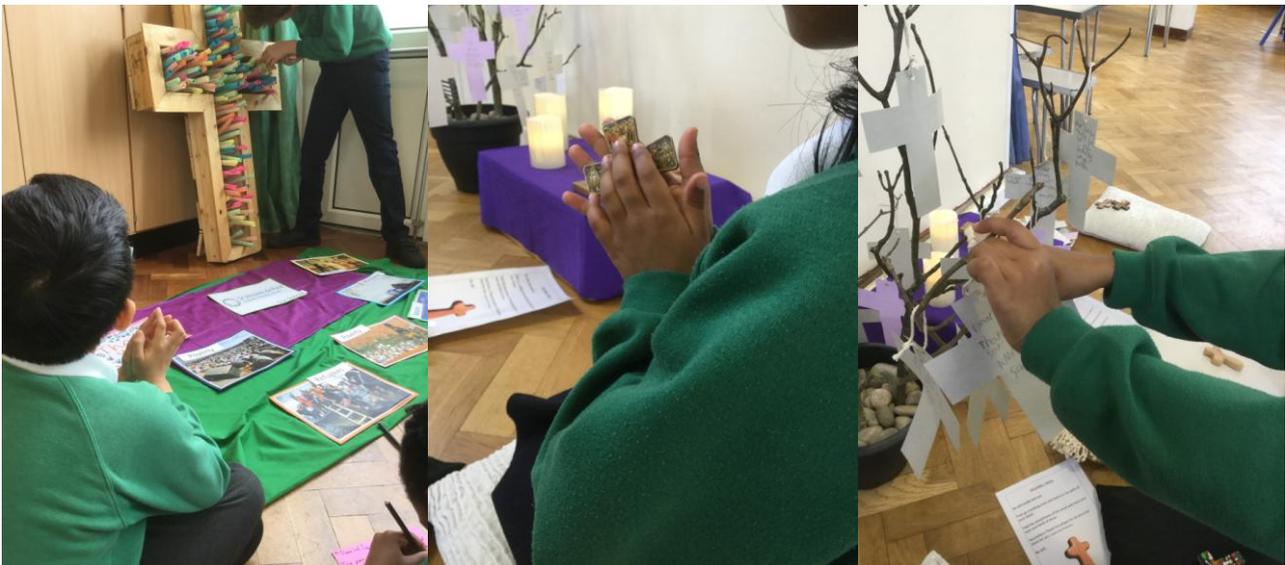
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5th April 2019

Dear parents and carers

It has been another busy term and your children have worked so hard and with such enthusiasm. Staff and children are all ready for a well deserved Easter break. It is strange to not be in school for the start of Holy Week this year; nevertheless, we have used this final week of term to deepen our Lenten preparations in a typically poignant fashion. During Lent we are called to focus on three pivotal aspects of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Be Spirited



It has been a real privilege to witness our children engaging so beautifully with the Be Spirited Prayer Stations which were set up in each hall for the first half of this week. Eight prayer stations in KS2 and six prayer stations in the EYFS & KS1 enabled each child in the school to spend an hour of still and peaceful reflection and prayer through such a range of creative and engaging activities. The sense of reverence and engagement was tangible when I joined classes for their Be Spirited time. Please do spend some time asking your children what they enjoyed about their time.

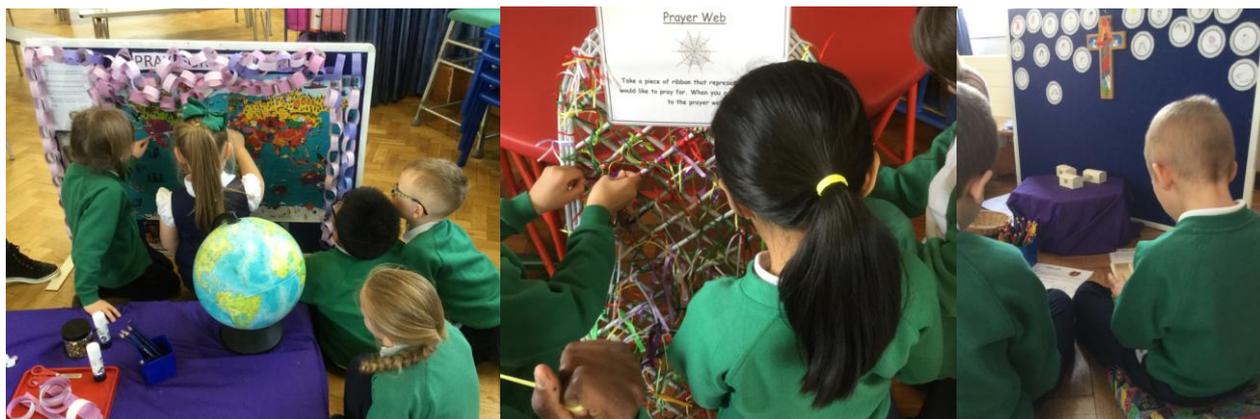
Way of the Cross

On Thursday and Friday of this week, Year 4 students brought our Lenten school preparations to a climax, leading the whole school and many parents in a moving Way of the Cross. To cater for the whole school, Year 4 led this liturgy on three occasions, each time allowing us to grow in a deeper appreciation of the Easter story. I have been particularly moved by the children's immersion in the characters they were portraying and their reverence in communicating so prayerfully the most



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important story ever told. They have certainly helped me to engage more fully with the Holy Week narrative and, as such, I am better prepared for Easter – thank you, Year 4!



Adoration & Reconciliation

Fridays during Lent have also seen the opportunity for Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament as well as the opportunity to partake in the sacrament of reconciliation at St Joseph's before school. Thank you to Father Brian for arranging this and to those of you who have attended. Today many staff were able to join with children and parents for this very special quiet time with Jesus. What a fantastic way to start a Friday!



Lenten Fundraising

Thank you for supporting our Lenten charity efforts this term. A non-uniform day and a Lenten Sponsored Walk have enabled the school community to raise a fantastic total of £2631.32. This will be shared between our nominated Lenten Charities: Comic Relief, CAFOD, Father Kakuba's Kanyike Project and our very local Red Shed Project. Food bank items continue to appear in the box on a daily basis and these are presented at the offertory at Mass in St Joseph's each Friday. Thank you for your commitment to supporting those most in need within our local community and beyond. Your efforts



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and that of your children will make a significant difference to the lives of so many. Thank you for supporting us in living the school's mission statement:

'We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together'.



Red Shed Project

Our association with the Red Shed Project will continue well beyond our Lenten Preparations. The trustees of this local charity have been developing an area of our top field with new raised beds and a large garden workshop. At different points during the week, volunteers from the charity work alongside individuals from the local community who have Dementia, as well as their carers, completing gardening tasks. When fully set up, this facility will also be used by the school. I hope in the long term that this will help our children to gain a better understanding of how we can all support the needs of those in our wider society. I know that a number of our families have connections to individuals who are living with Dementia and, as such, I hope that this charity will become one dear to our hearts. If you want to know more about the Red Shed project please visit www.theredshed.garden.

Smarties Challenge

The PSA are keen to find new ways to raise much needed funds for the school. Today your child will be sent home a tube of Smarties courtesy of the PSA. Please read the poem accompanying it with them. When the children have eaten the Smarties (the easy bit!), they are asked to carry out some jobs at home in exchange for some small change which can then be collected in the tube and returned to school. Maybe they will be able to wash the car, tidy their bedroom, fold the laundry for you or empty the dishwasher each day?



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Parental generosity – thank you!

In talking to parents about the current funding issues for schools I have been humbled to hear comments of 'how else can we help?' Our school has indeed been significantly hit by cuts to education funding at a time of hugely increased costs. We have recently been in communication with Stephen McPartland in relation to the impact of this on our school and on other schools locally. In the meantime, parents have been incredibly generous in supporting PSA activities and in supporting capital projects through the School Building Fund. Our appeal for tissues has been particularly successful and after Easter we will be extending this appeal to ask for donations of reams of white paper (80gsm). Some parents have suggested that they would like to find ways to support the purchase of other items in their child's class and, as such, after Easter we plan to launch an Amazon wish-list for each class which will detail books that would enhance the reading experience for our children ... more details to follow. We may also be looking for donations of time and skills at different points over the school year ... watch out for further details. Thank you for your customary generosity – it really is appreciated!

School Building Extension – fundraising

On Thursday evening a number parents, staff and governors met to discuss fundraising for our proposed extension to the KS1 building as a multi-purpose workspace. Others who were unable to attend sent ideas via email. Lots of ideas were shared and there was a sense of great enthusiasm to support this project. We look forward to seeing the ideas of this working group coming to fruition. We know that £70K is a huge target – however, nothing is impossible if we work together! Thank you for supporting us with this ambitious project.

Handwriting and pens – a slight change in policy

When children receive their pen license (often in Y2 or Y3), we provide each child with a pen to write with. This helps us to ensure that we can encourage good handwriting techniques with a 'learner pen'. As children move into Year 4 and onwards, they will be provided with a pen from school. If this runs out or is lost, we ask that it is replaced. A replacement pen can be purchased from the school office at a lower than cost price of 50p or if you prefer to purchase your own elsewhere, that is fine providing that it is a 'wet ink' (rather than biro) variety and is of the correct colour. This allows children to find a pen that suits them – most of us have a favourite pen!



Parking on Bedwell Crescent

Please could I remind all parents to consider the safety of pedestrians and other road users when parking and dropping off on Bedwell Crescent. On a number of occasions this week, I have seen individuals being dropped off by the school and church gates which leaves those being dropped off at risk and other road users inconvenienced. At other times I have seen cars parked, albeit with their hazard lights on, obstructing the flow of traffic as cars turn left onto Bedwell Crescent. I urge you to park safely and in accordance with the Highway Code. I would hate to have to report an accident



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occurring outside of the school, potentially involving a child or another pedestrian. Thank you to all who park considerately and especially to those who park considerately elsewhere and walk the last bit.

Parent Lite

We are pleased to announce that the new Parent Lite platform has now been launched and some parents have already managed to use it. This is a gateway to updating your contact details and other medical / dietary needs, ensuring that the school has the most up to date information. If you haven't already received an email about this, please do contact the school office.

Have you been receiving ParentMails?

If you have not regularly been receiving emails from the school via our ParentMail system, please check your 'junk', 'spam' or 'clutter' box and redirect a ParentMail from there to your 'inbox'. This should ensure that all future ParentMails are delivered directly to your inbox. ParentMail is our main method of communication and we are keen to ensure that all have access to the information that they need.

Every minute counts!

Every moment in school counts. Learning for children begins upon entry to the classroom as we like to maximise every minute! As such, being 10 minutes late each day (arriving at 9am) over the course of one week amounts to 50 minutes of missed learning; over one term, this adds up to 10 hours (2 days) of missed learning; and over the year, 30 hours which equates to 6 full days of missed learning! Thank you for encouraging punctuality – it has a significant impact on learning; children also worry about what they are missing when they are late. If on occasion you are late into school, it is essential that children are accompanied by an adult to the main office so that they can be registered.

Easter Blessings



Our Lenten preparations aren't quite over yet: there is still time for all of us to prepare. However, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a peaceful (if possible) Easter break and great celebration with family and friends when the Easter Sunday arrives. May you, and those most dear to you, be full of the joy of the Risen Christ at Easter.

Yours sincerely

Jon White
Headteacher



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Dates for your diary

Tues 23 rd April	8.50am	Back to school
Fri 26 th April	3.15pm	Y4 Cake Sale
Thursdays in May	8.40am	Rosary gathering in the Junior Hall
Fri 3 rd May	2.30pm	Rec O'Connor Class Assembly
Fri 3 rd May		PSA Film Night (change of date)
Mon 6 th May		Bank Holiday: school closed
Fri 10 th May	2.30pm	Rec Mozart Class Assembly
Mon 13 th – Thurs 16 th May		SATs testing week: Y6
Fri 17 th May	2.30pm	Y1 Stein Class Assembly
Fri 17 th May	TBC	Adult Quiz Night
Fri 24 th May	2.30pm	Y1 Mistral Class Assembly
Fri 17 th May	3.15pm	Y5 Cake Sale
Mon 27 th – Fri 31 st May		Half Term: no school

