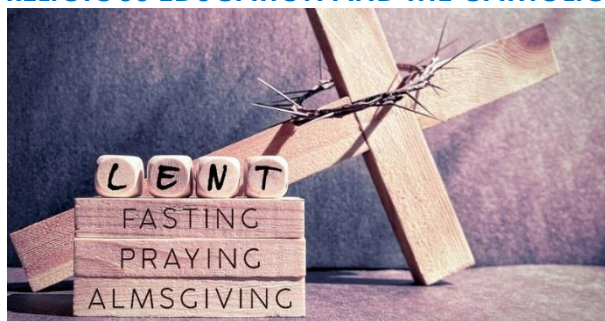




RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL



In our collective worship this week, we have looked towards Jesus, our hope, and invite Him to be at the centre of our lives and our Lenten journey. Through a game about spring cleaning, children learnt that now is the time for a fresh start in our relationship with God. The children were also introduced to the words **GIVE**, **ACT** and **PRAY** as ways we can focus our attention on God and renew our commitment to the way God wants us to live.

In the Gospel, Jesus showed us that as we **GIVE**, **ACT** and **PRAY**, we should not be the focus, expecting praise from others for our good deeds. Instead, we should make Jesus the centre of all that we say and do! Year 1 will lead our Monday collective worship next week at 2:30pm. All are very welcome to attend.

As an additional way to live out our **PRAY** focus for Lent, each class will attend the parish Mass at St Mary's on a rota basis until the Easter break. Reception and Year 6 attended this week and displayed beautiful and reverent behaviour; enjoying spending time with Our Lord. All are welcome to attend these Masses. Please see the diary on page 3 for class dates.

CAFOD LENT CALENDAR

Each year CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) produce an interactive calendar to support the children's faith journey through Lent. Each day there is a focus for the children to think reflect on focused on the themes of give, act and pray. You can download the calendar [here](#).

WEDNESDAY WORD

[Here is the link](#) to this week's Wednesday Word.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

During Lent, Father Emmanuel will be visiting school and giving children in Years 4, 5 and 6 the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession). This of course is optional but we hope as many children as possible will take the opportunity to receive God's love and forgiveness in this beautiful Sacrament and help them to prepare for the great Feast of Easter. During the Sacrament the children are invited to pray an Act of Contrition. It would be helpful if they could practise the following prayer at home in preparation (they will have a printed copy available to use during Confession if they need it): *O my God, Because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace, I will not sin again. Amen.*

HOUSE POINTS

Please see the latest house point totals for February. It's certainly a close run thing with Yellow team leading the way. Keep up the good work everybody!

Green	873
Red	856
Yellow	921
Blue	777

YEAR 3 AND YEAR 4 EASTER PRODUCTION

We are delighted to announce the dates for the Year 3 and 4 Easter performances. They will be taking place on **Wednesday 29th March 2023 at 10.00am and 2.00pm**. Further details to follow soon.

CROSS COUNTRY

The School's successful cross country season at Woodbank Park has now come to an end. We had a regular attendance of 12 children at each event. Congratulations to Lucy who consistently came 1st in her Year 3-4 girls' races. Well done also to Isaac who achieved an overall position of 9th in the Year 5-6 boys' races. Applause also goes to the 10 children who attended 5 or all 6 races gaining themselves Endeavour Medals. Overall our school came 3rd in the Year 3-4 Girls Races and 4th in the Year 5-6 Boys Races. Mrs Ashton reports that it has been a pleasure watching these children taking part in the cross country events. Special thanks to Mrs Ashton for her enthusiasm and dedication to our cross country team. Let us now look forward to next September to continue our very successful cross country running squad.

PTA NEWS

As we go to press, we would just like to once again extend our 'thank you's' to the PTA for tonight's World Book Day themed fancy dress disco. There are still a few tickets available (at the moment) for the late disco: 6-7pm. Tickets can be purchased [here](#) and cost £3.

Sponsored Bounce update - We continue raising money for the 'class wish lists' - so you can either send cash in or donate online via [this link](#). So far a superb £1,745 has been raised via online donations alone! Thank you for all of your support which further enhances the educational opportunities and experiences of the children at St Mary's.

The next event will be the Easter Raffle. We'll be launching our Online Raffle soon, with some incredible chocolate hampers to be won! Please watch this space for further details.

WORLD BOOK DAY 2023



The children had a wonderful day celebrating their favourite stories, books and reading. Thank you for your support in enabling the children to come dressed in their pyjamas! We enjoyed sharing our favourite bedtime stories and being visited by different adults to share in story time. We had quizzes and book-related activities galore across the school!

Each week, Mrs Groarke-Booth is kindly coming into school and leading story time with a class. The children have been engrossed with her magical story telling skills.

PEG CHARACTER COMPETITION

We set the challenge to be creative and decorate a peg to look like their favourite book character and our children certainly did that! The children who entered really let their imaginations run wild! We were delighted to see the children's happy faces as they proudly brought in their character. Great work! We had the difficult decision of picking a winner from each year group - a big well done to all the children for their brilliant entries!



AUTHOR VISIT TO THE EARLY YEARS

Today, our Nursery and Reception classes had a visit from a local author, Jenna Bennett, (her pen name is Jenna Anderson). Jenna shared her latest book, published today with the children and led some fun reading based activities. The children loved listening to the story. Should you wish to purchase a copy of Jenna's book, 'Squiggly Diddly', it is available to buy from Amazon via [this link](#).

WOW BADGE DESIGN COMPETITION



We had an amazing response to this competition and the standard of entries was extremely high. We have now sent the entries to the competition judges and fingers crossed one of our designs will feature on one the WOW badges next year. We will keep you posted. Well done to all our competition entries; your artistic and creative talents are truly amazing and you should be very proud of your designs. More details of our walk to school challenges will follow in the coming weeks after this is launched with the children during next Friday's assembly.

MY FAMILY COACH

Whilst being a parent is a joy and a great privilege, there are times when we all (myself included) need help with parenting. My Family Coach is a free online service with a wealth of videos and advice on how to support children at each stage of their development. If you think this would be of use to you, please take some time to view the excellent resources available to support with the many challenges parenting can throw at us. You can access the resources [here](#).

SCHOOL MEALS SURVEY

In January the Trust introduced a new catering service across the 25 schools in the MAT. The School Council have compiled a survey and are asking all children at St Mary's, regardless if they have a school lunch or not, to spend a few minutes giving their views on the new provider. The survey can be accessed [here](#). I will be taking the results of the survey to my next meeting with the CEO and the Central Team later this month.

PARENTS EVENINGS

The Lent term parents evening meetings will take place in person on **Wednesday 8th March** and **Tuesday 14th March** from 3:50pm with the last appointment at 6:50pm. Appointments are ten minute slots and give you the opportunity to meet with your child's class teacher discuss their progress, look at their books and celebrate their many achievements. As last term, appointments are to be booked online and can be booked by following [this link](#). Please can you ensure you select the correct teacher for your child. Any questions, please contact the school office.

A PAUSE FOR THOUGHT AND PRAYER



Lent gifts us the perfect opportunity, especially with older children, to think about behaviours that get in the way of our friendship with God. Lent provides us with the perfect opportunity to reflect on how we treat other people and say sorry for times when we have caused hurt or upset. Saying sorry can be hard, but when God forgives us, our sin is washed away. Here is a prayer that you might like to use in family prayer times during Lent. It includes those Lenten practices **GIVE**, **ACT**, and **PRAY** and encourages us to remember to place Jesus at the centre of all we say and do:

Jesus, be the centre as I journey through Lent, I welcome you into my heart.

Be my guide as I **GIVE** to others. Be my strength as I **ACT** by making good choices. Be my friend as I **PRAY** and get to know you more. Amen.

THE MONTH AHEAD...KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Date	Event
	<i>Please note the dates and times detailed below are provisional and may be changed if necessary.</i>
3 March	World Book Day and PTA Fancy Dress Disco (5:00 – 6:00pm or 6:00 – 7:00pm).
5 March	Gardening Task Force 9:00am -12:00pm. All very welcome!
March TBC	Opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) for Y4-Y6 with Fr Emmanuel.
6 March	Y1 Collective Worship (2:30pm in the hall). All welcome!
8 March	Nursery and Y5 attend the parish Mass in church at 10:00am. All welcome!
8 March	World Maths Day Parents' Evening (3:45 – 7:00pm) Booking details to follow.
13 March	Y6 Collective Worship (2:30pm in the hall). All welcome!
14 March	Parents' Evening (3:45 – 7:00pm) Booking details to follow after half term.
15 March	Y3 and Y4 attend the Lenten parish Mass in church at 10:00am. All welcome!
17 March	Mothers' Day Assembly led by Reception (10:00am in the hall). All welcome!
21-24 March	Y6 residential visit to PGL Boreatton Park, Shropshire.
22 March	Y1 and Y2 attend the Lenten parish Mass in church at 10:00am. All welcome!
27 -31 March	Stations of the Cross led by Year 5 (9:05am each day in the hall.)
29 March	Holy Week & Easter Production (10:00am and 2:00pm). All welcome!
31 March	Celebration Assembly (2:30pm in the hall). All welcome!
31 March	School closes for the Easter break.
17 April	School reopens following the Easter break.

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend.

Mr John Nish and Miss Alice Poole.