



3rd March 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Celebration of the Word – Half Term Four, Week Two

This week we focus on the start of Lent which begins this **Ash Wednesday**. We will be holding a unified Celebration of the Word for all forms on Wednesday morning- children from each form will lead one another in prayer and reflection, looking at the Gospel and the importance of this Solemn Observance. Fr Samuel from St Ann's Parish has kindly agreed to celebrate an Ash Wednesday Mass at lunchtime for our children. This year, our Prefects will distribute ashes to each child within form time- this is a wonderful way for our children to lead one another in their faith.

During **Lent** we think about three pillars, shown in this image:



This week we reflect on this thought provoking Ash Wednesday **Gospel from Matthew 6: 1-8** *“When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”*

Prayer can sometimes become a shopping list of desires, or an attempt to bargain with God. To counteract this, Jesus then teaches the disciples to pray, with words which still resonate with us today. The Lord's prayer reminds us to pray for God's will to be done. Why would we ask for our own desires, when God knows what we really need? God knows what will truly make us happy and fulfilled. The RE Faculty will be providing **Lenten workshops** allowing children time to reflect on this Gospel and their own prayer life throughout the Lenten season.

This Lent, as a Diocesan school we are asked to support Caritas. As part of our Lenten almsgiving- we will therefore be collecting for the **Caritas St Joseph's penny box appeal**. Caritas do fantastic work with schools, health and social care agencies and the voluntary sector. The Community Support Service supports children and families to overcome adversity and disadvantage they face, particularly where these are affecting their emotional well-being, mental and physical health. Caritas work holistically, helping families to overcome a wide range of daily challenges and they do this through one-to-one and group work or working jointly with other appropriate agencies. Whether it be counselling, listening ear, bereavement, or community support



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groups, the support offered empowers families to effect lasting change and enjoy a happier family life. Caritas relies on funding, and schools remain one of their most important sources of income, especially in their annual St Joseph's penny box Appeal, enabling them to continue their work helping those in need. The children will be asked to donate any spare pennies they have over the Lenten period, and this will culminate in a penny race within each year group! If you would like to support our Lenten St Joseph's penny efforts- you can do this through Parent Pay. Any donations to this worthwhile cause would be greatly appreciated.

We will also be organising an **Easter fundraiser** here in school and would be grateful for any donations of chocolate (chocolate bars, Easter eggs, boxes of chocolate) for a raffle we will organise. These donations can be handed in to your child's Form Tutor. If you wish to make a monetary donation, you may do so via ParentPay. As always, we are grateful for any support you can offer to the Catholic Life of our school.

This week, we are reflecting on the **Catholic Social Teaching principle of the Dignity of Work and Participation**, which emphasises that work is a means through which individuals can contribute to the common good and fulfill their God-given potential. It reminds us that everyone has the right to dignified work and the opportunity to participate in society. In school, we explore this teaching by discussing the value of meaningful work and recognising the importance of giving everyone a chance to contribute. Our children will discuss this in form time and look at the example of Dorothy Day and her story.

We are very excited to be working with the Shrewsbury Youth Mission Team to offer a small group of St James' children in Years 8, 9, or 10 the opportunity to travel to Lourdes this summer. Families of children in these year groups have received a letter from Mrs Pardoe regarding this- if you would like more details please contact Mrs Pardoe at h.pardoe@stjamesheadle.co.uk. This opportunity is usually only available to older children, and we are thrilled that, in this Jubilee Year, the diocese is supporting a **Junior Pilgrimage**.

As part of our commitment to deepening our school's prayer life, we have introduced a new approach to our end-of-day prayer. Instead of a single shared prayer across all year groups, each year group now recites a **prayer that is most relevant to their age and stage in their journey of faith**. This March, Year Eight are learning the Act of Faith:

O my God,
I firmly believe that You are one God in three Divine Persons,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
I believe that Your Divine Son became man and died for our sins,
and that He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches,
because You have revealed them,
who can neither deceive nor be deceived.
Amen

We also continue with our lunchtime prayer each day:

Lunchtime Prayer

*Bless us, Oh Lord,
and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty*





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*through Christ, Our Lord.
Amen.*

This week, we draw inspiration from **St. Hildegard of Bingen, the Form Saint for 10E**. A visionary, composer, and healer, St. Hildegard used her talents to serve the Church and her community, reminding us that we are all called to share our gifts for the greater good. One of her powerful quotes, "*The earth is alive with the songs of God*" reflects her deep love for creation. Let us follow St. Hildegard's example by using our own abilities to contribute to the common good in areas of our lives this week.

As always, I welcome any feedback you may have. Please feel free to reach out to me at h.purkiss@stjamesheadle.uk.

Yours faithfully

Miss H Purkiss
Associate Assistant Headteacher

