

The Priory Catholic Voluntary Academy



Newsletter March 2022

IMPORTANT DATES: Term 4: Tuesday 1st March 2022 to Friday 8 April 2022
Thursday 7 April: Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Bonnet Parade
Friday 8 April: Mass at church – and Art Exhibition

Catholic Life

Weekend Mass Times in our parish: Our Lady of Good Counsel Eastwood – Saturday 5.30pm and Sunday 10.15am.

Responding to our Synodal journey: Beginning tomorrow (2nd March which is Ash Wednesday) the church will be open every Wednesday between 3-4pm for coffee and cakes. People can wander in and simply have a chat and some refreshments. There will also be the opportunity to say a quiet prayer or experience some easy prayer reflections around the church. Anyone willing to help, please contact Father.

St David's Day and Shrove Tuesday: Tuesday 1st March 2022 marks both Pancake Day and St David's day – it also marks the anniversary of the school becoming an academy ten years ago. Pupils throughout school will undertake learning in relation to pancake day and St David's Day; and learning about the beginning of Lent.

Ash Wednesday: There is our Ash Wednesday Mass at Our Lady of Good Counsel starting at 9.30am on 2nd March (Year groups 4 to 6). Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent. At this Mass there will be the blessing and distribution of Ashes. Everyone is welcome to come forward to receive the ashes regardless of their age or religion. It's a wonderful witness of our journey with Jesus to the glory of his resurrection. When pupils return to school, Year 5 will take on the role of distributing ashes to all pupils in Year 3 and below – Father Paul has provided us with a child-friendly service to share back at school.

Lent Family Prayer Card: This week, your child has been provided with a prayer card to use throughout Lent. Please complete the card with your child as soon as possible, and return it to school (and your child's class teacher) by this Friday – 4 March. These will then be displayed in each class and during class worship, your child will choose a different card completed by another family in your class. Your child will then take home this card and, each day throughout Lent, pray for the family whose card has been taken home.

Monday Exposition: Every Monday during term time the church will be open between 9.30 and 11.30am for quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. It's a great opportunity to take time out of the busyness of life for a few moments of quiet reflection. Call into church and be still and spend time in the sacred presence of the Lord. Our upper Key Stage 2 classes look forward to spending some time praying in church in this way, that is very similar to meditation.

Things happening during Lent in our parish: Parish events in place during Lent at Our Lady of Good Counsel include:

- Scripture evenings: Fr Jonathan Cotton will be leading us in two evenings of reflection on the Lenten scriptures. Wednesday 9th March 7.30-8.30pm and Friday 25th March 7.30-8.30pm.
- Passover celebration: discover how important the Passover is for us and share food and drink on Wednesday 13th April 7.30pm in the Social Centre.
- CAFOD Lenten Lunch: Sunday 20th March after 10.15am Mass in the Social Centre with soup and pudding. Tickets are on sale on the first two weekends in March. Adults: £3. Children: Free
- Stations of The Cross: This wonderful Lenten devotion will take place every Sunday during Lent beginning at 3pm.
- Children's Liturgy – Now that Covid restrictions are beginning to ease up, we are hoping to resume our Parish Children's Liturgy during the 10.15am Mass on Sundays. Would anyone like to be involved in leading the children or support in this Liturgy for our children? Please let Father Paul know.

A prayer for Lent: Dear Lord, as we enter Lent help us to draw near to you in praise, stripping away all that distracts us from worship. As Jesus resisted temptation by the devil in the wilderness, help us reflect on his faithfulness to God, his rejection of worldly values and hold these thoughts in our hearts throughout Lent and into our future lives. Amen.

A prayer for Ukraine: God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today. We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons. We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them. We pray for those with power over war or peace, for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at-risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

Ukraine: Teaching staff have been busy researching help for pupils about Russia's invasion of Ukraine – in readiness to discuss with children in language which is age and stage appropriate. We know from colleagues in other Nottinghamshire schools, it is older (mainly KS2) pupils who are talking about what they are seeing in the news and on social media. This issue was addressed in our KS2 assembly this morning – and all staff are aware that pupils may wish to talk to an adult at any time about what they have seen or heard about the war. What is lovely about our children, is their response in wanting to do something to help the situation.

Help for Ukraine: As part of our school's response, we already have a group of parents who are collecting blankets, clothes and toiletries in the entrance to school. These will be collected at the end of the school day on Thursday – so please be quick in sorting out items at home to bring into school. My thanks to Miss Kent and others for sorting this at such short notice. Miss Kent has been in this morning and dropped a couple of boxes off for donations to the Ukraine. These boxes will be collected at the end of the school day on Thursday 3rd March for her to take to the distribution premises in Kimberley to send off. The address of the premises is: 20 Main Street, Kimberley if you would like to donate straight to the centre – as our foyer is only so big!

Items to include in the boxes are:

Toiletries
Nappies
Dry Sanitary products
Shampoo
Soap
Toothpaste
Toothbrushes
Baby wipes
Quilts and blankets
Sleeping bags
Pillows and Pillow cases
Towels
Pens/Pencils and notepads
Batteries/Torches and candles
Dry food – Pasta rice
UHT Milk
Tea/Coffee
Tins
All with a good shelf life on them
Clothing and shoes for:
Men
Women
Boys and Girls
Babies

Statements to live by: The statements to be explored in school over the coming weeks are: 'I know that it is okay for me to make mistakes' (this week)
Monday 7th March: 'I try to appreciate the beauty and wonder in the world'
Monday 14th March: 'I can learn from my mistakes and failures'

Parking: I have recently received a concern from a local parent about cars parking on the pavements around the school. This is problematic for her and our neighbours. If you do park inconsiderately towards other road users and pedestrians, then I make a plea to you to please change how and where you park.

Staffing: The end of this week sees Mrs O'Malley leave us to concentrate on new interests and ventures in her life. Although she will leave the school on Friday in her role as Teaching Assistant, she will still be with us as a parent – a role that she also wishes to concentrate on in the near future. Mrs O'Malley will be sorely missed in school, as she has been part of our school community for five years. In this time, she has undertaken many roles: Volunteer Reader; Priory Play Group Leader; PTA Member; School Foundation Governor; and, Class Teaching Assistant. We wish Mrs O'Malley all the very best in her next stage of her life as we know she will be welcomed and successful in her next career move. In the meantime, we look forward to seeing her at the end of each day on the playground when collecting the children, and at church at the weekends. Good luck and God bless from all who work and learn at The Priory.

Congratulations to Mrs Helen Murphy who has been successful in applying for the recently advertised role of Teaching Assistant. She has not long moved into the area, and is a parent of a child in school. We warmly welcome Mrs Murphy to our school community as she joins the Key Stage 1 team – supporting learning mainly in Miss Singleton's class in Year 1. We wish her much happiness and success in the future as she works within our school community for the good of our pupils.

During our Inset Day on Monday 28th February, Mr Joe Campbell met with Miss Dobb in order to learn about the Year 4 curriculum. We wish Mr Campbell every success as he teaches our Year 4 children until interviews take place later this month on 15th March.

This week we have the pleasure in welcoming Mrs Emma Bunting to our school to work in the office alongside Mrs Emma Bailey, who was appointed to the post last month. Both ladies will share the job – which is a maternity post for Ms Cottrell.

Ms Cottrell: I have the pleasure to inform our school community that Ms Cottrell has given birth to a baby boy. We are over-joyed to receive such wonderful news – you will no doubt get to see Ms Cottrell as she comes to school each day in the capacity of parent! Take care Ms Cottrell and well done to you and Nancy-Rai.

Contact details: There is a lot of sickness going around at the moment – both Covid and non-Covid related. Therefore, we ask parents to update us with their contact details and telephone numbers so that we can speedily get in touch; we also need this information in case of an emergency.

Coronavirus update: This update is provided in the light of the announcement made by the Prime Minister on 21 February outlining the next phase of the Government's COVID-19 response. The Prime Minister confirmed domestic legal restrictions will end on 24 February as we are asked to begin to treat Covid like other infectious diseases. New guidance on Living with Covid is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>

Isolation: The remaining domestic restrictions in England will be removed. The legal requirement to self-isolate ends on 24 February 2022.

Positive Covid cases until 1 April 2022: The government still advises people who test positive to stay at home. Adults and children who test positive should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for at least five full days and then continue to follow the guidance until they have received two negative test results on consecutive days. Thereafter they can return to work and normal everyday life. From April, the Government has stated that it will provide updated guidance setting out the ongoing steps that people with COVID-19 should take to be careful and considerate of others, similar to advice on other infectious diseases. This will align with testing changes.

Vaccination: It has been recognised that vaccination provides a greater level of protection against serious illness arising out of Covid. Because of this, we continue to encourage our employees and families to take up the opportunity to have the vaccine and the subsequent booster jab.

Other Clinically Vulnerable groups: Schools should continue to monitor and update individual risk assessments, to minimise risks of infection for employees and pupils identified as vulnerable in accordance with local infection rates. We will monitor the guidance as it emerges and provide updates as necessary.

Medicine: If your child has a minor ailment and needs medicine, please remember to complete the school medical form, which can be obtained from the office or the school website (parents, general information). We do all we can to support children who have minor ailments in order that they are able to stay at school and continue to learn –we know to keep you informed and contact you if we see that a child needs to go home to rest and recoup.

Dogs: Unless a guide dog, under no circumstances are dogs allowed onto the school premises. Thank you to all for your cooperation in this matter.

School Volunteers: My thanks go to the growing number of parents and carers who give up their time to help in school with reading and assisting classteachers. If you are a parent or carer who thinks that you could lend a hand and regularly support the school in this way, then please contact Mrs Smith who is responsible for organising our helpers.

Pray, Fast, Give, this Lent: Our chosen charitable theme in school this Lent is to simply pray for the poor and needy around the world; think about the times when we can Fast in line with our Lenten promises; and give food to the poor in our local area. As a school, pupils in Year 5 will deliver donations of pasta, rice, tinned food and UHT milk to the local Food Bank in Eastwood, before we break up for Easter. The beginning of Lent is on 2nd March – when we will celebrate Ash Wednesday Mass as a whole school up at our parish church at 9.30am.

Walk against hunger: In response to CAFOD'S Walk Against Hunger initiative, classes will find time each week to use the school grounds to walk and talk about anything topical in their lives or issues brought out in class. Teachers will take opportunities to walk and then read literature and books to the children. As part of our efforts to raise money for CAFOD, each class has a coin-collection box. From time to time during lent, we ask that any spare change is sent into school to fill the boxes in each class. Small change can make a big difference.

World Book Day – Thursday 3 March: To celebrate these events, we are dressing up next week as characters from books. Ideas for children to dress up in on Thursday come from: Story books or novels; Comics; Nursery rhymes; The Bible; Nursery/traditional stories; Walt Disney stories; Super hero stories, and of course many more types of literature. In addition to these activities, we are asking the children to bring their favourite book to school, so that they can share it with their reading partners and classmates. If you have not got a copy of the book to hand, then please ensure your child brings in details of the book, (e.g. the title, author and storyline). Teachers and teaching assistants are busy preparing for what should be a really enjoyable day.

Lateness and Absence: An increasing number of children are arriving late for school. Children who arrive after the close of register (which takes place at 8.50am prompt) are recorded as being absent for the morning session. This in turn means that your son or daughter may well have an unexplained absence on their report at the end of the year. To prevent any absence, please ensure that your child is on the school drive at their allocated time. If your child is absent through illness and unable to attend, please leave a message on the school answer-phone.

Parent and Toddler Group: Our group is held every Tuesday –term time only in the church social centre from 9.15 -11.15am. We ask for a small donation each week to cover the cost of snack-time and craft activities. The group offers a very relaxed atmosphere where your child can happily interact with other children. Please pass this information on to family members and friends who have, or who care for, toddlers and babies.

Celebration Assembly: From next week – starting on Friday 11 March, parents are welcome to come into school to celebrate pupils' achievements. For children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 this will start at 9am each Friday morning – and for pupils in Key Stage 2 this will begin at 2.40pm. We look forward to inviting parents back into school to celebrate pupils' progress and hard work.

Sandwiches and snacks: We ask that you send only healthy meals and snacks for your children to eat in school. Also, only send snacks that do not contain any nuts, as some of our children have serious nut allergies. Finally, if sending sweets for birthdays, teachers will give sweets out only at the end of the day with the instruction that pupils are only allowed to eat sweets when you have given them permission to do so – I know some parents do not like their children to receive sweets at school and other parents do not mind. Again, some children have allergies or have a reaction to certain sweets.

Parents' Evening: Our parents' consultations will take place on Tuesday 29 and Wednesday 30 March. More information will follow nearer the time.

The Gospel Show: Our Easter story is being presented to grandparents, church parishioners, governors and wider family members on Monday 4 April 2022 at 1.45pm. Parents who will not be able to make the following days are also quite welcome to attend; as all parents are invited to see The Gospel Show performed by York and Assisi classes on Tuesday 5 April and Wednesday 6 April –again starting at 1.45pm. This will end the term with the Easter Story fresh in the children's minds and in preparation for Holy Week and the events leading up to Easter Sunday.

Food for Thought: Grant me, O Lord my God: A mind to know you, a heart to seek you; Wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you; Faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you. **Amen.**
Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas

God bless – Anthony Harrison