



ST JOHN PAYNE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Be it known...

6TH MARCH 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

In addition to our usual celebration of World Book day, in this Year of the Word of God, tutors have shared their favourite Bible story.

The story of the Apostle Thomas is of personal interest. As with many of the Bible's most familiar figures, Thomas is often understood only by his preceding epithet, regarded as something of a flaw in his character. Yet Thomas possessed that quality upon which all learning and growth in faith is founded - the inherent need to question, even to doubt.

Doubt is vital if we are to grow in faith. Without it we grow not in faith, but in knowledge. Faith requires that we accept our limitations and the bounds of our understanding, making ourselves vulnerable, trusting what must remain always a mystery throughout our earthly life. In contrast, knowledge asks nothing of us beyond the efforts we exert to attain it. Knowledge places us on solid ground, leaves us certain and assured, strengthened by fact and evidence. Faith asks that we place ourselves into the hands of our Father - an increasingly counter-cultural instinct to accept His will in an age that encourages us to become ever more individualistic.

It is always interesting to be reminded how so many Bible stories, and particularly of the parables that Jesus used in his ministry, remain pertinent today, and how Christ's triumph over darkness continues to influence popular culture. Stories of good overpowering evil abound in literature and film, from Tolkien & C. S. Lewis to Star Wars to Harry Potter; whilst we will be familiar with the many tales of tortured romance rooted within conflict such as Romeo & Juliet that might take their inspiration from the discord and division Christ counselled against, urging listeners to focus not on that which divided them, but to be united in their common humanity.

Similarly, much of the Bible's language is embedded within our daily reference. When a matter becomes clear to us we see *'the writing on the wall'*, we remark upon significant events as *'a sign of the times'*, and we are careful to avoid *'putting words into one's mouth.'*

Last Sunday's Gospel saw Christ tempted by the devil in the wilderness. Challenged to turn stone to bread, Christ replied, *'Man does not live on bread alone.'* In our age of plenty and 'All mod Cons', we can easily feel adrift when faced with the most minor inconvenience - *'First World Problems'*. Our lives are enriched and enhanced by so much: our homes and gardens; our leisure activities and friendships; our devices, holidays, possessions and interests; our offspring. Rewarding as these are, we cannot live on these alone. The life that Christ promised we would enjoy to the full is complete only with God's graces and blessings.

I encouraged students to reflect upon temptation, and to regard guilt and sin not as yokes under which we must labour, but as anything that keeps us distant from God. It is through relieving ourselves of distractions, of the allure of material gain or popularity, of any uncharitable act that might see us fall short of the best versions of ourselves, that we come ever closer to Him.

Our efforts to be worthy of God's love are vital, yet we cannot attain true happiness unless we are reconciled to the fact of our permanent imperfection - our human condition that we witness as we say, *'I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.'* God does not want us to live lives of permanent mortification, forever admonishing ourselves. He made us, He loves us, and if we ask, He will always say the word.

Thomas Coen, Headteacher

SJP is a proud Teacher Training Partnership School to Billericay Education Consortium and West Essex Teacher Training School Alliance. Please contact us if you are interested in a career in teaching and/or work experience.

SUNDAY 8TH GOSPEL, MATTHEW 17: 1-9

And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
Matthew 3:17

Brentwood Catholic Children's Society's Annual Charity Ball is at The Rayleigh Club, Hullbridge, Saturday 7th March from 7pm to midnight. £55 per person, including drinks reception and three course dinner with entertainment. Tables of 12 make it the perfect opportunity for a fantastic evening with friends, family or colleagues whilst raising vital funds for our work supporting children's emotional health and wellbeing.

Contact Julie 01268 784544/
07912277413 / jabbott@bccs.org.uk

60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MASS

FRIDAY 19TH JUNE 7.00 P.M.

ACTIVITIES SATURDAY 20TH

OFFERS OF SUPPORT TO

MISS COOK

rco2@sjp.essex.sch.uk

COVID-19: We receive daily updates from the Department for Education, and will communicate any changes. Thank you for your continued support in encouraging your children to maintain the practices advised in Monday's letter and the accompanying poster.

We have secured 50 advertising boards for volunteers to have placed at their home for 6-8 weeks prior to our 60th anniversary celebrations on Saturday 20th June, giving £500 for the PTA! If you are willing to volunteer please register at https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=kYSpV6ElkSWTUFwqH4Y8dnaavNlwyFB0GgH_vX0pcNUQk9MMVpYOUw0SEc5N0lGNkU4RUJWUEs2NC4u

HOUSE POINTS

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|--------------|------|
| AUGUSTINIANS | 7019 |
| BENEDICTINES | 6964 |
| CARMELITES | 7064 |
| DOMINICANS | 6575 |
| FRANCISCANS | 7520 |
| SERVITES | 8445 |

The Full Governing Body has voted in favour of the motion that St. John Payne Catholic School will engage in discussion with the Diocese of Brentwood and members of the proposed Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) to influence the final structure and determine whether in the view of the Full Governing Body it is in the best interests of the school to join the MAT. Governors continue to assure parents and carers that no MAT decision involving SJP will be taken without consultation with all parties.



...to all who enter here that Christ is the reason for this school.

