

ST MICHAEL'S

Spring Term

RESPECT | UNDERSTANDING | AFFECTION | HUMOUR

BRINGING STUDENTS TO THE FULLNESS OF LIFE THROUGH EDUCATION



Spring term, a time of new beginnings!

Year 11 students on their way home after receiving their Palm crosses in preparation for Palm Sunday

A new way of learning

We start the new year with remote learning. Unlike the first national lockdown live lessons are the new normal and students and staff are becoming well adjusted to learning in a completely different way. There have been so many positives to this way of teaching- and staff have made tremendous efforts in maintaining high level teaching during these strange times. So a very big thank you to all SLT, Middle leaders, Teachers and support staff for all your hard work and effort!

Wednesday Word

As we did in the autumn term, the Wednesday Word publication will be distributed remotely to all year seven pupils. We feel that this is an excellent way to connect School, parish and home. See Miss Hagan if you would want a hard copy.

New year 2021 -The year of 'Laudato Si'

Pope Francis urges everyone to take part in the just-opened Laudato si' Year, and releases a special prayer to accompany the celebration.

The Pope invited everyone to take part in the Laudato si' Year, which is promoted by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and runs from 24 May 2020 until 24 May 2021.

Friday Morning Mass

Whilst we cannot partake in liturgy, we are still celebrating the year of the word so Ms Hagan has recorded a Friday reflection and prayer session for each year group. Many thanks to year 9, 10 and 11 who have all taken an active part in these sessions.

World Religion Day

World Religion Day is celebrated every January on the third Sunday of the month. The aim of World Religion Day is to promote understanding and peace between all religions, encouraging people to learn about other faiths and their followers.

It may surprise you to know that there are over 4,000 recognized religions in the world. These religions consist of churches, congregations, faith groups, tribes, cultures, and movements.

Holocaust memorial:

A Reflection on Holocaust Memorial Day

On 27th January St Michael's commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day. I believe that it is important to reflect and remember the Holocaust annually because it helps those in modern society understand another form of discrimination (including

anti-Semitism). This helps our school and community by reinforcing humanitarian values, the need to protect others, and our responsibility to make everyone feel welcomed. It also helps us to understand how dehumanization and discrimination can lead to intolerance and even mass genocide.

I feel it important that people learn at a young age about the experiences of ethnic minorities to understand and connect with people from backgrounds that are not their own



The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day was 'be the light in the darkness.' In our assembly and House Competition we learned about the lives and experiences of those who resisted and rescued others from the Holocaust, such as Corrie Ten Boom, Dr Mohamed Helmy, and Father Jacques. We learned about how groups like the Uighurs are being persecuted today. We also examined how important qualities like determination and perseverance are, and how we can use them in our daily lives to help and support others.

Children's Mental Health Week was on the 1st -7th February.



"Express yourself" is about finding creative ways to share feelings, thoughts, or ideas... through things like art, writing, music, dance and doing things that make you feel good



Assessment week for Year 7-10 & 12 and Assessment point 1 for Year 11 and 13 W/C Monday 22nd March 2021



A reflection for Racial Justice Sunday on 31st January:

Last year, 2020, marked the 25th anniversary of Racial Justice Sunday (RJS) in Britain and Ireland. This significant anniversary also coincided with the tragic killing of African American, George Floyd and the re-emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement with its various protests on both sides of the Atlantic. All this coincided with the emergence of a pandemic that continues to wreak havoc in societies around world, ruining lives in the process. The COVID-19 crisis has also highlighted the existing inequalities in our society; the poorer, more marginalised communities are disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. In due course, all these events served to demonstrate the need for greater racial justice in Britain and Ireland.

These events also caused much soul-searching and anxious conversations within the Church, as to how it should respond to what has taken place. In the aftermath of George Floyd's killing, many denominations issued statements condemning the killing; some called for changes in society as well as the Church, while others had conversations about its significance.

This is a time for us to look to Christian scriptures which speak of a God who loves justice, and a Saviour who was "sent...to set the oppressed free". We also recognised that the journey toward racial justice would not be easy, but one that can be achieved with courage, conviction and faith. All journeys begin with steps, and for us, those steps involve the "Three 'R's" of Remembering, Reflecting and Responding:

Remembering the importance of racial justice

Reflecting on human diversity and thank God for it

Responding by working to end injustice, racism and ignorance through prayer and action.

A statement by Bishop Paul McAleenan from Westminster Diocese, who has been appointed Lead Bishop for Racial Justice:

Bishop Paul McAleenan, Lead Bishop for Racial Justice says in his message: "It's not enough to simply denounce racism. This is a time to act. In the words of Pope Francis: 'God asks us to dare to create something new.'"

Dismantle structures of injustice

These shameful reminders of racism demand meaningful action to confront and dismantle sinful structures of injustice. Our brother Bishops in the USA remind us that: *"all of us are in need of personal, ongoing conversion. Our churches and our civic and social institutions are in need of ongoing reform. If racism is confronted by addressing its causes and the injustice it produces, then healing can occur."*

Racism is a sin and a violation of human dignity in which we are all complicit. As Catholics we need to acknowledge and confront our own failings, as individuals and as a Church.

health



Every single one of our parishes, schools and organisations has a responsibility to actively practise anti-racism in all aspects of our mission.

We need to address the lack of visible diversity at every level, so that people can see themselves, their race, their culture and their history in the Church's life.

We need to engage suppliers and businesses from all parts of the community, seeking out those which promote diversity and inclusivity.

Most importantly we need to actively invite people from different ethnic communities to share their experiences and genuinely listen to their voices, however challenging this may be.

A Time to Act

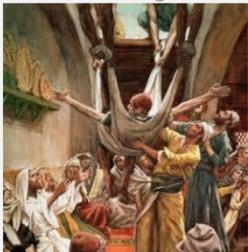
It is not enough to simply denounce racism. This is a time to act. In the words of the Holy Father: *"This is a moment to dream big, to rethink our priorities – what we value, what we want, what we seek – and to commit to act in our daily life on what we have dreamed of. God asks us to dare to create something new."*

Bishop Paul McAleenan

Lead Bishop for Racial Justice

Remote Friday Mass at St Michael's

This term, because we were all home Ms Hagan continued the practice of liturgy by sending out an interactive powerpoint as a temporal replacement for Friday Mass. It was received well by all the year groups who took part.



In line with the year of the word, we focused on the Gospels and moments of stilling and reflections to enhance our knowledge of scripture. Student spirituality is very important and this student led experience allows the nourishing of the Catholic faith.



A message from Ms Hagan:

I encourage you all to partake in creating or sending through prayers to be added to the St Michael's prayer book.

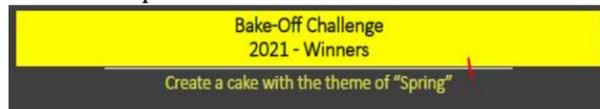
We ended the Autumn term with the Christmas doors and Christmas jumper competitions- Please see below for the winners:

Christmas Door Competition. The judges faced a difficult decision as they had to make a choice between the inspired and innovative doors on display, nevertheless, after a little wrangling, congratulations go to:



HOUSE COMPETITIONS

This term, we enjoyed observing several remote house competitions-



SEARCH FOR A STAR!

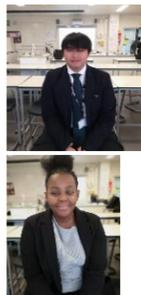
A Music Talent House Competition Brought to you by St Michael's Catholic College!

Select one song from the list provided, record your version of singing the song and upload the video to google classroom
Backing tracks available for all songs by clicking on the attached link

Song Choice List	
Step by Step - Whitney Houston	Blinded by Your Grace - Stormzy
Mamma Mia - ABBA	Don't Worry be Happy - Bobby McFerrin
This is Me - Greatest Showman	A Million Dreams - Greatest Showman
Don't Start me Now - Dua Lipa	See You Again - Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth
Let it Go - Frozen	Dynamite - BTS
Make You Feel My Love - Adele	Budapest - George Ezra

Amazon Vouchers and House Points for 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place. Entries due by Friday 29th Jan 12pm

Young Leadership for Global Justice



A Prayer

From Ms Corcoran (Headteacher)

Dear Lord,
In this time of uncertainty,
Be my rock in a world built on sand,

The year 12 chaplaincy team have been undergoing a leadership training programme with CAFOD our international charity.

What is the CAFOD Young Leadership programme?

At CAFOD they recognise that young people can make a huge difference, which is why we want to equip young people to be leaders in their local and global communities. The programme offers sixth formers an opportunity to take the lead and make a difference, as well as a chance to meet new people, gain confidence, skills and experience.

Throughout the year you will receive training in and develop several leadership skills such as team building, project management,

problem solving and presentation and communication. Students gain a deeper understanding of CAFOD and its mission, vision and values. At the end of the academic year you will receive a certificate to show you have completed the programme, listing the skills you have covered.

Creative Ideas – students can utilise the different creative ways to produce their pieces. Some examples to share with the students



Be my oasis of grace and peace in a world of tension and turmoil;

Help me to carry my cross gracefully and to remember that you Lord never gave up, even when you found it most difficult.

Help me to fast from those things that threaten the wellbeing of body and soul.

Help me to follow your beam of light in the midst of this darkness and to be a light to others in both my words and deeds.

Amen



Don't forget, you can purchase a St Michaels facemask via parent pay: see website for info

A covid-19 ASH Wednesday

The community of St Michael's Catholic College in Berrymondsey found a way to celebrate the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday 2021 by having palm ashes, blessed by our own Fr Alan, then posted out to families and staff to allow them to mark the beginning of Lent.

Staff at St Michael's prepared and sent out over 950 small bags of palm ash, along with instructions of use and prayer cards, before the half term break.

The gesture was very well received with this photograph of Imani David in Year 7 being sent in, a great demonstration the strong faith community that exists even while we are apart.



Attached with this leaflet is a pouch of Ash. It has already been blessed and require a small drop of oil for it to be administered. Before you ASH your forehead recite the following:

"Remember, Man is dust, and unto dust you shall return." "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

Ashes are a symbol of penance made sacramental by the blessing of the Church, and they help us develop a spirit of humility and sacrifice.

For further guidance, please do enrol yourself in the Ash Wednesday course

<https://www.catholiconline.school/courses/religious-education-family-education-lent-ash-Wednesday>



A COVID-19 Ash Wednesday

The beginning of Lent 2021 is mere weeks away, raising questions about how to approach Ash Wednesday during a pandemic.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a season in which the faithful are called to reflect on the Paschal Mystery more intently. It is a time of spiritual renewal and to examine one's relationship with God and others more carefully. It is also a time in which catechumens prepare to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. The Church calls everyone, therefore, to a spirit of penance through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Walk with Me Prayer

Lord God,
our light and salvation, we praise you for your gifts
of life and faith.

We thank you for the desire that you have planted
in our hearts, our yearning to see your face.

Help us to meet you in prayer, to walk in your
ways, and to speak to others of our joy and
consolation in your presence.

Give us faithfulness in this present life so that we
may come to know and praise your beauty, with all
our brothers and sisters, in the life to come.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Our International Charity:



Walk for Water

Are you ready to change your life and transform someone else's this Lent?

Sign up now

Walk for Water is the only Lent challenge you need: 10,000 steps a day - done your way. Every day. For 40 days. Go the distance this Lent and help to end water poverty.

You don't have to get tied in a knot about how to do it: whether you hop it; skip it; slide it; run it; jump it; dance it; stamp it; stomp it. It doesn't matter how you do it, just as long as you put your heart and soul into it.

This lent, CAFOD are calling out for solidarity to raise money and do something different to fight poverty.

In the autumn I shared with you, scripture that forms as encouragement with giving, so I continue to share this with you below:

As expressed in **Luke 6:38**

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

May you all be blessed 1000-fold!

A remote Reconciliation



We are reminded of the need to repent and believe the gospel and also of our mortality and human frailty.

Lent is a season to dream – of change, conversion and transformation – through the gift of prayer our dream of overcoming sin, living in the power of the Holy Spirit and knowing God's new life and life to the full (John 10:10) become reality.

The pandemic shed light on how we cope in times of trial and crisis and presented an opportunity for us to examine our lives, re-evaluate our priorities, purposes and goals. Self-examination and reflection is never easy, and change is often painful and difficult. We take comfort in prayer and from reading the Scriptures, 'Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him' (James 1:12).

Lent, then, is a season to dream of change and conversion but also of cleansing, purification and the love of God poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. For it is in prayer that we encounter the overflowing of God's love, which gives us the grace to reach out to our brothers and sisters, especially those on the margins, the very edges.

May God's love be poured out upon us, falling like morning dew, and may the healing balm of the Father's mercy wash away our iniquity, cleanse us from our sin and put a new song of joy and new life into our hearts.

The Sacrament of Penance is the method of the Church by which individual men and women may confess sins committed after baptism and have them absolved by a priest. Although it is not mandatory, the Catholic rite is traditionally conducted within a confessional box or booth. This sacrament is known by many names, including penance, reconciliation and confession. While official Church publications always refer to the sacrament as "Penance", "Reconciliation" or "Penance and Reconciliation".

PRAYER:

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.

PALM SUNDAY AND EASTER SERVICE



The people were so excited that their promised Saviour was riding into Jerusalem that they did what?

They waved branches from the palm trees and cheered "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" The crowd had listened to Jesus teach them with love, and they watched as he treated all people with respect, welcomed the



lonely, and showed great care to the sick. Jesus revealed a better, kinder way to live. He had brought people hope. On the 31st March, 2021 we partake in whole school worship as we partake in the remote Easter service. This year our theme is 'Living with the virtues'. KS3 all had a lesson on the four cardinal virtues led by the RE team to best prepare students through the lentern period towards the celebration that Easter brings.

Faith in Action



Led by Ms Stanley, the Faith in Action team took part in their first reflection session this year.



Remember to stay safe and have a wonderful Easter break

An Easter Blessing:

Alleluia!

Praise God for the Blessings
of his Son's Resurrection.

Alleluia!

Praise God for the Blessings
that we have received
throughout our Lenten journey.

Alleluia!

Praise God for the Blessings
that this Life means
for the world
Amen.