



We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together

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21st October 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Autumn Half Term News

It has been a busy and fruitful half term – thank you for all that you have done in partnership with the staff team to make this half term so successful and exciting. Your children, as always, have been a credit to you and this has been commented on by various visitors to the school.

In September **Caroline Luck, a Herts for Learning EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) Adviser**, visited as we seek to ensure that our provision is the very best that it can be. Caroline gave us much to think about but commented on how well the children in Nursery and Reception had settled into new routines and how their relationships and behaviour were something to be proud of. Caroline has three further visits with us this year and we look forward to making use of her many great ideas.



In October we were visited by **Sarah Jane Ferguson**, a Herts for Learning Adviser, commissioned by Herts County Council to get a flavour of **wellbeing** in schools across Hertfordshire. Sarah Jane acknowledged the many issues that we, like other schools are dealing with in relation to wellbeing but was 'blown away' by the provision that we have in place for all pupils. She described our children as being 'wrapped in a carefully considered protective bubble' that allowed them to 'develop the necessary independent skills' enabling them 'to thrive and to deal with the issues of everyday life.' Sarah Jane suggested that we should be held up as an example of best practice locally in the promotion of positive wellbeing and mental health. The children were great ambassadors for the school on this visit as they guided her around the site, pointing out the things that helped.

Next week we look forward to welcoming two **RE Advisers** from the Diocese of Westminster on a pre-inspection advisory visit. We are looking forward to sharing with them all the amazing work that has been completed by pupils, carefully guided by staff. Our RE provision has been completely transformed over the past three years so that rigorous RE skills and creativity are at the heart of all that we do.



Children are keen to make connections between scripture, church teaching, worship and life and in a recent pupil voice exercise many articulated that they 'love RE because it helps them to live a better life'. The children are also keen to share the rich Catholic Life that they enjoy.



This term, anticipating the **visit of the relics of St Bernadette to Stevenage**, the children across the school have been learning about St Bernadette and Our Lady of Lourdes. On Monday, as the school closed to enable the Church to use our facilities during the relic visit, six members of School Parliament joined with sixty children from eight other schools and their teachers for a morning of vibrant activities and spiritual reflection. Twelve prayer stations were set up in the hall (thanks to Mrs White) which allowed the children to explore many of the themes of Bernadette's apparitions. The children also joined together in praying the Rosary (as Bernadette did with Our Lady) and each made their own reliquary to take away with them.

In the afternoon, the children became the official welcome party as the relics arrived at St Joseph's. Following in procession behind the relics, the children each venerated the relics before laying a yellow rose in front of an Icon of St Bernadette, which had been produced by our Year 6 pupils. It was a wonderful joining together of the children from schools across and beyond our Deanery and I pray that many fruits will grow from these special partnerships.



A special thank you is due to the Head Boy and Girl Team from St John Henry Newman School, who helped the children to engage throughout the day. Some of them, former pupils, enjoyed exploring their old school and even tried out their old Year 6 places in class! Our children were joined by Amanda Crowley, Deputy Director of Education for the Diocese of Westminster who was full of praise for the way that the children all engaged with such a special occasion. So many visitors commented on how



special it was for the children to be the first to greet the relics and that they set such a beautifully spiritual tone for the whole event.

The church was packed as it was over the course of the whole day and next morning. A film of this event will soon be released via Twitter and our school website for all to share in the special occasion. It was an incredibly special occasion and fills us all with many blessings and much hope. It was lovely to see many families represented at the different events at St Joseph's.

This term we have launched our '**Common Good Ambassador Award**' badges. These are nominated by pupils from the School Parliament who have noticed individuals going the extra mile in demonstrating 'a heart that sees' in their response to members of the school community. Congratulations to our first two award winners!



As we return after half term, we will be preparing for our **November remembrances**. A book of remembrance will be kept in each hall. If you would like us to keep a member of your family or a friend in our prayers throughout November, please add their name to the sheets which will be left on the main reception desk throughout November. We will also be engaging with the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal over the next few weeks and our **Poppy Appeal Committee** will be selling poppies and other RBL merchandise.



Please do support this worthy cause if you can. The committee have asked that all children make a simple poppy cross that could be left in our **Field of Remembrance**. The cross needs to be sturdy enough to be held in the soil. Please place your crosses here upon return to school. Our simple **Act of Remembrance** will take place on the KS1 playground at 11am on Friday 11th November. Please arrive from 10.55am if you would like to join with us. On Sunday 13th November, two children will represent the whole school community in laying a wreath at the War Memorial on Bowling Green. All are welcome to join us for this occasion too. The parade begins from 10.30am and arrives at Boling Green just before 11am.



On Friday, Y6 arrived back from three days of activities at **PGL Liddington**. The pictures on Twitter demonstrated the amazing time that they had. A sincere thank you is offered to Mr Crump, Mrs Glover, Mr Richardson, Mrs Mooney, Mrs Whitty and Mrs Adeyemi all of whom gave of their own time to support the children on this memory making residential trip.

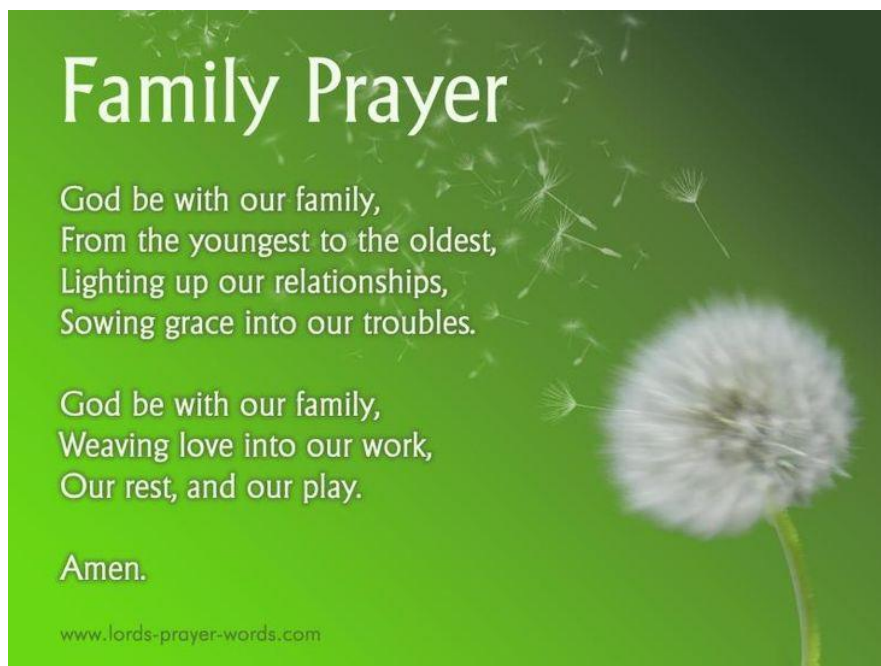


The Bedwell branch of the St Vincent de Paul Society approached the school last week, explaining that their cupboards would soon be empty. School Parliament representatives have agreed to hold a Food Bank appeal to fill their cupboards throughout the first week back to school as our Harvest offering. The trolley will be available outside St Joseph's workshop each day next week ready for your donations. Any food items that can be kept will be welcomed (tins, packets, cereals, sauces, pasta, biscuits, long life milk, squash, custard etc) as will toiletries and other personal items (deodorant, sanitary products, nappies, plasters, shower gel, shampoo) and cleaning items (polish, detergent, washing powder, washing up liquid etc). On Food Bank Friday (4th November), the children from our School Parliament will sort the items and bring them over to St Joseph's, filling the cupboards, ready for distribution.



Staff look forward to meeting you to celebrate your children's successes at the forthcoming **parent consultations** which occur during the first week back after half term. Appointments can be made via your Arbor account. If there are any problems with this, please contact the school office as soon as possible.

I am attaching to this letter a link to our **School Development Plan** for the year ahead, which has recently been approved by Governors. As you will see, we have much planned as we continue to ensure that we achieve the very best for each of your children academically, socially, spiritually, and emotionally. Thank you for your partnership in helping us to realise such great ambitions. The plan can be accessed here: [School Development Plan 2022](#)



Wishing you all a wonderful half term. I look forward to welcoming all the children back on Monday 31st October 2022 at 8.45am.

May God bless you and those most dear to you.

Yours sincerely

Jon White
Headteacher

