

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Newsletter No 4

December 2022

'Serving with Love; Striving for Excellence'



Dear Parents/Carers,

During this season of Advent, the children have had opportunities to reflect, through meditation and prayer, in preparation for Christmas. This has also been a very exciting and special time for the children, as they have taken part in their wonderful Nativities and in sharing the message of Christmas. It has been a pleasure to invite you to these at the end of this term.

Sadly, one of our long serving Foundation Governors, Mr Michael Brick, recently passed away very suddenly. Please continue to keep him and his family in your prayers.

On behalf of the staff and governors, I wish you a blessed and peaceful Christmas.

Mrs MJ Grabski

Headteacher



'Let us Walk in the Light of the Lord'

The theme of light figures prominently during the season of Advent and St Paul urges us to turn away from darkness and live in the light. But what in practice does this entail?

There was a wise and learned Rabbi who was asked, 'How can you tell when the night is passed and the day is on its way back again?' One said, 'When you can see an animal in the distance and you can tell whether it is a sheep or a goat.' Another said, 'When you can see a tree in the distance and you can tell whether it is a fig tree or a peach tree.' Another said, 'When you can see a person in the distance and you can tell whether it is a friend or an enemy.'

But the Rabbi was not impressed and he replied, 'When you can look at the face of any human being and see there the face of a brother or sister, because if you cannot do this, then no matter what time it is, for you it is still night.'

We are a people on whom the light of Christ has shone and still shines. We must, therefore, strive to walk in the light, the light of truth and life, the light of holiness and grace, the light of justice, love and peace.

Nevertheless, darkness still has power over us. Darkness can take many forms. Any kind of hatred or lack of forgiveness are forms of darkness. It takes courage to recognise the darkness in our lives. There is no joy in living in darkness but with God's grace we can free ourselves from the darkness and experience the joy of walking in the light of truth and goodness.

The most precious light of all is the light of love.

Love lights up everything and brings hope.

*Lord, may the radiance of your glory light up our lives and
bring us safely through the shadows of this world to everlasting light.*



CHRISTMAS CHOIR

Our school choir visited Rochester Cathedral on Tuesday 29th November to take part in the annual schools' Carol Service. They had a fantastic day joining voices with the other schools to create a very festive atmosphere.

Our children behaved beautifully and were a real credit to St Mary's. A huge well done to our children who sang and read beautifully. Thank you to Miss Brown for organising this.



CHILDREN IN NEED

On Friday 18th November the children helped to raise money for BBC Children In Need. We were able to raise a fantastic **£284**. Thank you to everyone for your kind donations. Thank you to Miss Morris for organising this.



Miss Morris, School Learning Council Lead

RETIREMENT



Mrs Charles is retiring after 24 years at St Mary's, as our cleaner, midday meals supervisor and road crossing patrol. On behalf of the school community, we thank Mrs Charles for her long service, dedication and commitment to St Mary's, she will be very much missed and we wish her a well deserved rest and happy retirement.

CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY



A huge thank you for helping us to raise a **£323.40** for CAFOD'S Family Fast day. CAFOD works with local experts in East Africa and across the world who know how best to respond and your donation means they can help stop this crisis getting even worse. Thank you so much for your generosity.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

Fr Dennis and Fr Pascoal extend their best wishes at Christmas time and invite you to attend the Christmas celebrations and Masses in the Parish which are listed below:



Confession (Sacrament of Reconciliation)

Saturday 17th December 10.30 - 12.30pm

Monday 19th - Saturday 24th 10.30 - 11.00am (daily)

Saturday 24th December

Vigil Mass 6.30pm

Knanaya Mass 8.00pm

Christmas Carols 11.00pm

Midnight Mass 12.00am

Sunday 25th December

Christmas Day Mass 9.30am

Christmas Day Mass 11.30am

STAFFING UPDATES

Mrs Reddin-Tasker begins her maternity leave in the new year and we wish her all the best for the arrival of her baby. This term, we bid farewell to Mrs Bennett, Deputy Headteacher, who will be taking a career break to be with her family and Mrs Mcleod, teaching assistant, who is also taking a break from work. We thank them for their hard work and commitment to St Mary's and wish them all the best.

We look forward to welcoming new members of staff to St Mary's: Miss Bond, as interim Deputy Headteacher, and Mrs Jones and Mrs Constant, as teaching assistants.

ATTENDANCE

Whole school attendance is currently at **94.48%**. Please remember that we do expect **ALL** pupils to achieve **96%** attendance across the academic year. When a pupil's attendance begins to drop below the expected **96%**, we will monitor this closely. If we continue to be concerned, then we will contact parents by phone or send a letter home. If it continues we will then inform the local authorities. If you are experiencing any difficulties with your child's attendance, please get in touch and we can discuss ways to support your family.

LATE

We expect all children to be in school by **8.50**. Gates are open **8.40-8.50** after this your child will be signed in to the late book. We advise that all children should be in class to register, as learning starts promptly every school morning.

On behalf of all at St Mary's we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

School closes at **2.00pm** on **Tuesday 20th December** and re-opens for children on

Thursday 5th January 2023



SCHOOL TERM DATES
SEPTEMBER 2022 - JULY 2023

Please note the additional INSET day on Friday 27th January 2023.

School closes at **2.00pm** on **Tuesday 20th December** and re-opens for children on **Thursday 5th January 2023**.

Term 1	INSET	Monday 5th September 2022
	Start	Tuesday 6 th September 2022
	Finish	Friday 21 st October 2022
Autumn Break		Monday 24 th October to Friday 28 th October 2022
Term 2	Start	Monday 31 st October 2022
	Finish	Tuesday 20 th December 2022
Christmas Break		Wednesday 21 st December 2022 to Monday 2 nd January 2023
	INSET	Tuesday 3rd January 2023
	INSET	Wednesday 4th January 2023
Term 3	Start	Thursday 5 th January 2023
	INSET	Friday 27th January 2023
	Finish	Friday 10 th February 2023
February Break		Monday 13 th February to Friday 17 th February 2023
Term 4	Start	Monday 20 th February 2023
	Finish	Friday 31 st March 2023
Spring Break		Monday 3 rd April to Friday 14 th April 2023
Good Friday		Friday 7th April 2023
Easter Monday		Monday 10th April 2023
Term 5	Start	Monday 17 th April 2023
May Bank Holiday		Monday 1st May 2023
May Bank Holiday		Monday 8th May 2023
	Finish	Friday 26 th May 2023
May Break		Monday 29 th May to Friday 2 nd June 2023
May Bank Holiday		Monday 29th May 2023
	INSET	Monday 5th June 2023
Term 6	Start	Tuesday 6 th June 2023
	Finish	Friday 21 st July 2023
Term 1	Start	September 2023