



Dear Parents,

Welcome back to the spring term, we look forward to another successful term ahead. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the staff and myself to thank you for the many cards and gifts the we received at Christmas.

#### Survey Feedback

Many positive responses were identified through analysis of our recent Trust-wide pupil and parent surveys (undertaken in October 2023), the headlines and actions are summarised below:

#### Pupil Survey (82 respondents)

100% of pupils enjoy school

96% of pupils said they felt safe (remaining 3 pupils said there wasn't anything that made them feel unsafe)

98% of pupils said bullying doesn't happen

99% of pupils shared that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and treat everyone equally

**PSHE Pupil Voice Objective:** Who can I share my worries with? A small number of children were unsure about who they could share their worries with. As a result, the whole school have worked on their 'network hands' of five key people they can talk to if they have a worry. The School Council are also relaunching the class 'worry monsters'.

#### Parent Survey (34 respondents)

94% of parents surveyed said their child was happy and safe in school

97% of parents said the school helps their child to behave respectfully

94% said the school is well led and managed and has high expectations for their child

**Parent Voice Objective:** to develop further communication with parents on children's progress and how best parents can support with their child's learning. Each class teacher will give a weekly summary of the week's curriculum learning focus via Seesaw or Tapestry and we are planning a summer term parent Maths workshop to clarify key aspects of the maths curriculum.

#### Section 48 RE Inspection

As you are aware on Monday, the school received notification of a two day Section 48 RE Inspection on Wednesday 31st January and Thursday 1st February. You are invited to complete the [Parent Survey](#) by Thursday lunchtime, thank you - your feedback is important to us. We will update the outcome of the Inspection in due course.

#### Catholic Life

Fr John Cunningham has begun his termly class question and answer sessions. The sessions build upon the children's prior learning and religious knowledge, see page 2. Also on page 2 there is further information on the Year of Prayer, designated by the Pope for 2024. We also reflect on last Sunday, Racial Justice Sunday through coming together as a Trust, see page 3.

#### Sporting Achievements

Please see page 5 for our sports round up, we are particularly proud of our Thomas Tigers Football Team who are going from strength to strength this year - well done!

#### O2

A huge well done to all the children who took part in the 'Young Voices Choir' at the O2 on Monday evening, a truly memorable experience for all involved! Thank you to Mrs King, Mr Booth, Mrs Healy and Mrs Smith and parents for supporting the children for this event. See page 5 for photos.

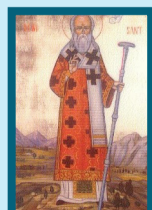
Thank you for your ongoing support.

Best wishes,

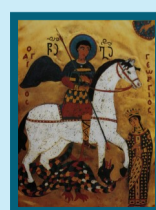
Mrs Keating, Executive Head

## House Points

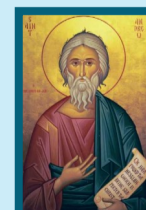
St David: 65



St George: 87



St Andrew: 107



St Patrick: 109



# Catholic Life of the School



## Epiphany Mass

Father John led us in celebration of the Epiphany for our first Mass of the term. Early Years proudly wore their specially made crowns and presented Father John with some beautiful Epiphany cards.



The feast of the Epiphany is celebrated 12 days after Christmas on 6th January. It is an important Christian feast as it reveals Jesus as saviour for the world. The Wise Men represent peoples of all nations who did not know the God of Israel, but whom God invited to share in the joy of Christ's birth. God leads the Wise Men with a great light – the star – by which is revealed a new life for all.



## The Year of Prayer

In preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year “Pilgrims of Hope”, 2024 has been designated a Year of Prayer by Pope Francis. He asks us all to join in a great “symphony” of prayer, “to renew our desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to him and to adore him.”

Throughout the year, we will be focusing on different aspects of prayer to enable us to deepen our relationship with God both at school and at home. There will be a particular focus on The Lord's Prayer.



You can listen to The Lord's Prayer in multiple languages here: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/the-lords-prayer-in-the-worlds-languages/>

For guidance on prayer at home, please refer to our school website or visit <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/family-prayer-ideas>



## Racial Justice, Equality and Diversity

***By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (Jn 13:35)***

This week, we have been exploring racial justice in both key stage and whole school acts of worship. All pupils completed a reflection and added their thumbprint to postcards produced and co-ordinated by St Mary's, Bishops Stortford. This comes from the idea that each child in our care is a unique thumbprint of God. The postcards will become a piece of a huge collage at St Mary's that will spell out 'Imago Dei' (Image of God).

This is just a small part of the work we have started on racial justice, equality and diversity. As a school we have pledged to make our curriculum more representative of the community we serve and will soon be sending a short survey asking families for ideas about how we can best represent the cultures and traditions of the St Thomas of Canterbury family.



### Racial Justice Sunday

***"Seeing one another in the life of the Church".***

When turning their hearts to racial justice, Catholics are encouraged to pray the words of Pope Francis taken from his encyclical letter Fratelli Tutti – on fraternity and social friendship:

***Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,  
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,  
so that we may discover anew  
that all are important and all are necessary,  
different faces of the one humanity  
that God so loves. Amen***



# Catholic Social Teaching



This half term our Catholic Social Teaching focus is 'Solidarity and Peace'. Solidarity is a word which can be overused and little understood. However, it is fundamental to the way in which we treat one another. If we truly believe that we are all sisters and brothers of one another, made in God's image and likeness as seen in the guideline of human dignity, then seeking the good of one another cannot be ignored. Solidarity is not just feeling sorry for those who suffer. It is a commitment to action. "We are all really responsible for all" – all of us. Wherever we are. Whatever our age. Whatever our circumstances. We are all responsible for one another, those close by, and those far away. All of our actions have consequences locally and globally. From how we treat people we meet in the street, to the coffee we buy in the supermarket. God has created us to live peacefully with one another. Sadly, this is often not the case and many people live lives that are not peaceful, due to the actions of others. God calls us to be peacemakers in the world – to stand in solidarity with those in need. Through CST lessons and assemblies, the children have been thinking about how they can stand in solidarity and become peacemakers.



## Solidarity Prayer

Loving God and Father of all,  
Through you we learn that we are all  
your children  
and belong to your one global family.  
Help us to act as sisters and brothers,  
supporting each other and working together,  
so that with your help, we can  
build a world of mercy, kindness, justice  
and peace.

We make this prayer through Christ,  
our Lord,

Amen



# Young Voices - an exciting trip to the O2!



A huge “well done” to our choir who performed at the O2 Arena on 29th January! They represented the school impeccably and really enjoyed the experience. Thank you to the staff who accompanied them and to the parents for coming along to watch this truly memorable experience!



# PE and School Sport



## Triumphant Thomas Tigers Through to Next Round!

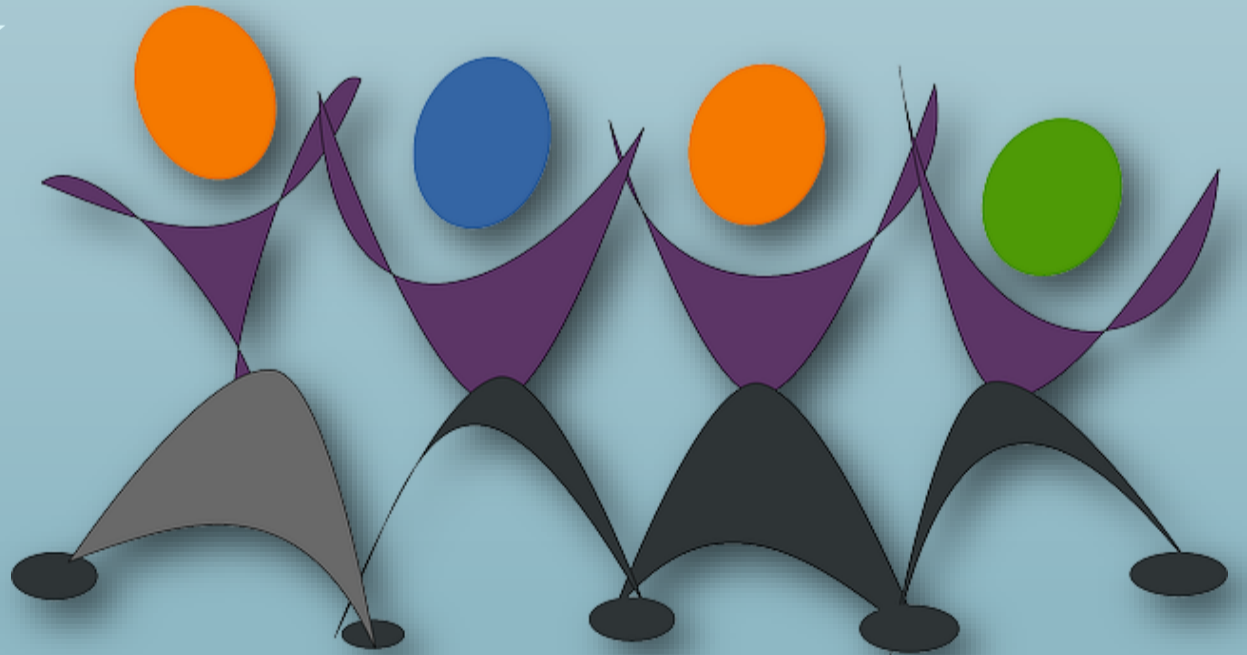
Despite the very chilly temperatures, The Thomas Tigers won 2-1 against Morgans School, Hertford. They are through to the next round in the Hope Cup, with their next fixture against Hollybush Primary School. Mr Fitzgerald and Mrs Gilbert are delighted with their progress!



## Sportshall Athletics

Year 5/6 enjoyed a 'Sportshall Athletics' workshop with Lisa Robinson, lead of the Hertford and Ware Sports Partnership. They had the opportunity to take part in relay races, chest throwing, high jump, obstacle relays and javelin. This was to help prepare for an upcoming Sportshall Athletics competition on 7th February. Pupils selected for the competition will be notified soon!

**Reminder: Our first Sports Celebration Assembly is being held on Friday 9th February!**



**Our Sports Survey will be coming out next week!**



# Bishop’s Message for Racial Justice Sunday: 28 January 2024

Bishop Paul McAleenan, Lead Bishop for Racial Justice, offers a short message for Racial Justice Sunday. This year’s day is celebrated in England and Wales on Sunday, 28 January 2024. Bishop Paul explains the theme and offers Catholics suggestions to mark the day.

*“Hello. My name is Bishop Paul McAleenan. The theme of Racial Justice Sunday in England and Wales in 2024 is ‘Seeing one another in the life of the Church’. There are different ways that the theme could be approached. I would like to suggest one particular way.*

*In the history of the Church, there have been those who looked at the society in which they lived, and responded to what they saw. They looked, made a decision based on what they saw, and acted. Alert and sensitive as they were to the commandments of Christ, when they saw justice being denied to someone because of their racial origin or colour, they were prompted to act. Their actions of opposing racism, promoting equality and justice, became their life’s work. Following this path, sometimes they encountered hostility, rejection, and attempts to overturn what they were doing. However, they persevered and became instruments of change, agents of progress, and some are acknowledged as saints of the Church. There are many, many saints in the Church. Each is different. Each chose to follow a particular aspect of the person of Jesus”.*

God of our past, present and future,  
you created each one of us in your image and likeness,  
help us to recognise you in each person.

As we pray for end to suffering caused by racism  
lead us this day to walk with one another,  
pray with one another and work together,  
so that we create a future based on justice and healing,  
where all can fulfil the hope you have for all peoples.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



## FORTHCOMING DATES:

Date	Event
Monday 5th February	Question Time with Father John (Key Stage Two)
Wednesday 7th February	Year 5 Sportshall Athletics Event at Wodson Park
Thursday 8th February	PTA Disco
Tuesday 13th February	Shrove Tuesday ~ Pancake Races
Wednesday 14th February 09:00	SEND Coffee Morning
Wednesday 14th February 14:00	Ash Wednesday Mass - parents welcome
Monday 19th - Friday 23rd February	Half Term
Wednesday 28th February 15:30 - 18:30	Parent Consultations (Year 6)
Thursday 29th February	Year 3/4 Rapid Fire Cricket