

February 2018 R.E. Newsletter



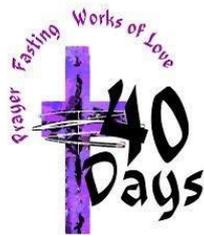
A message from Fr. Etienne

Lent is the forty-day liturgical season of fasting, special prayer and almsgiving in preparation for Easter. The name "Lent" is from the Middle English, meaning spring; or traditionally 'the forty days'. The number "forty" has always been seen as an imitation of Jesus' fast in the desert before His public ministry. There are many important ways we Catholics interact and embrace this season, given to us to realise how broken and wounded our humanity is and how in need of God's Grace we actually are. Let us take advantage of the many traditions we have to aid us. Days of Abstinence, no meat on Fridays and Days of Fasting, no unnecessary food eaten on Fridays, with only one main meal. Giving up something for Lent fosters self-discipline and controls our desires. It is a form of penance. It promotes spiritual growth and enables us to do something positive to bolster our relationship with God and His Church, making the world a better place. Look for ways that you can increase your knowledge of your faith through opportunities to strengthen your spiritual life by participating more often at Mass and other liturgical services taking place throughout Lent. You can also perform special acts of mercy and kindness at home, at work and in our community.

*God Bless,
Fr. Etienne*

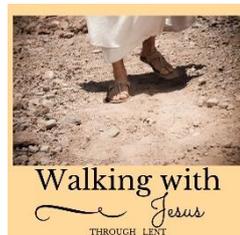
February – The start of Lent with Ash Wednesday

Due to an earlier half-term this year, Ash Wednesday was celebrated in the holidays. Through acts of collective worship during Spring 1st, we talked to the children about the start of this special season. Within both curriculum RE and Prayer & Liturgy sessions, we will continue to share Lenten experiences with your children as we embark on our faith journey of 'Pray, Fast, Give'.



Our Lenten Journey Packs

Similar to the 'La Posada' packs that were travelling around the families of St. John Vianney during Advent, we now have packs for Lent! These packs consist of footprints and a worship that you can share with your children, which are centred around the theme of



'Can you walk beside Jesus for the night during Lent?' Full details are provided in the packs – we look forward to hearing about your Lenten family worships and using your child's footprints to create a path for our Lenten display in school. If you are unable to print photographs out at home, please email them to:

admin@st-john-vianney.blackpool.sch.uk FAO Mrs Acton.

Lent Fundraising



This year, CAFOD celebrate their annual family fast day on Friday 23rd February, which is in aid of supporting families suffering from malnutrition in Zimbabwe. If you would like to make a donation, please find the CAFOD envelopes in a box in the main Reception.

The Good Shepherd

Jesus is the model of the good shepherd who guards His flock with a love so great that He is willing to lay down His life for even one sheep who is lost. In his role as a shepherd of God's people, the Bishop is called to serve as the living presence of Jesus Christ. As you are aware, on Monday 12th February, Pope Francis appointed Monsignor Paul Swarbrick as



the new Bishop of Lancaster. This year during Lent, we hope to raise money to support the Good Shepherd Fund. This fund is intended to provide the Bishop with a supplementary source of money for addressing pressing needs within our Lancaster Diocese. As such, we are collecting copper coins throughout the season of Lent and each class will use these coins to create a 'copper trail' or Lenten-themed pictures. All coins will be collated in House Teams within classes – house points being awarded each time copper coins are brought in. Thank you very much for your support with this – we really appreciate your donations and will keep you updated with the amount of money raised when it is collated at the end of Lent.



Sacramental Programmes Update

Reconciliation –

Congratulations to all of the Year 3 and Year 4 children who have now received the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Spring 1st. If your child was absent on the day; rest assured that there is another opportunity during Spring 2nd for them to

Sacramental Preparation



receive their First Confession. Children in Years 5 and 6 who are still awaiting to take this Sacrament will also have the chance to do so during school time in Lent. We will provide your child with an instruction sheet and discuss the process of Reconciliation with them; certificates are also awarded.

Confirmation – Thank you to all those of you who attended the welcome mass in January – it was lovely to see so many

of you there. The programme for this has now started – **please refer to your enrolment card for dates of all the sessions.** If you have lost this or require a new one, just call in at the school office for a replacement. For those of you who haven't yet purchased the Confirmation booklet, this is available at the office at a cost of £8.

Eucharist – the programme for First Holy Communion is starting at the end of this month, with different sessions for the Year 3 group and Year 4/5 group; dates for this are detailed below. Please also ensure you purchase the Eucharist booklet from the school office (*at a cost of £10*) prior to the first session starting. If you haven't



yet booked a date for your child's Holy Communion Sunday, see Mrs Acton.

First Holy Communion Celebration

As there are so many children receiving the sacrament of the Eucharist this year, we are delighted to be able to celebrate with all of them together after mass (*for approx. 1 hour*) on **Sunday 20th May** in the school hall. Children will have the opportunity to wear their dresses/suits once again to rejoice in this very sacred Sacrament. This special occasion is a celebration lunch for all children who have received their First Holy Communion this year. At this event, children will be given a certificate, lunch, cake and a keepsake, along with year group photographs. *Please note that due to the large numbers, we are unable to provide lunch for siblings or family members – thank you for your understanding.*

Holy Communion Sundays:

1. Sunday 29th April
2. Sunday 6th May
3. Sunday 13th May

Holy Communion Celebration:

Sunday 20th May - Mass at 11am followed by celebration in school hall until approx. 1pm.

Class Masses

The weekly class masses have been a great success – thank you to Years 3 and 4 who have started us off in 2018 – it was lovely to see some parents and family members at mass.



Next classes up:

- **Class 5BD** – Wednesday 28th February @ 11:40am
- **Class 5T** – Wednesday 7th March @11:40am
- **Class 6O'K** – Wednesday 14th March @ 11:40am
- **Class 6B** – Wednesday 21st March @11:40am

We look forward to welcoming all parents, grandparents and other family and friends. ☺

School Sunday Masses

Thank you to Year 6 who delivered the first school mass of the year for the Epiphany, followed by the February Mass which was also the enrolment mass for Confirmation. Details for the next school masses are as follows:

- Sunday 4th March – Year 3
- Sunday 15th April – Year 4
- Sunday 1st July – Year 5

Dates for your Diary!

- **Friday 23rd February** - Benediction for Y6 children, parents and families welcome in church at 2:30pm

- **Tuesday 27th February** – Lenten Service for all Catholic schools in Blackpool, hosted at St. John Vianney Church @6pm.



- **Tuesday 27th March** - Year 4 Passion Play in church at 4:30pm (children to stay in school and can be collected after the service at approx. 5pm) All are welcome.
- **Tuesday 24th April** – Y6 children receive the Sacrament of Confirmation

First Holy Communion Programme <i>(highlighting refers to sessions that parents are required to attend)</i>		
Order of Sessions	Year 3	Years 4 & 5
Session 1	Monday 26 th February	Sunday 25 th February
Session 2	Sunday 4 th March	Monday 5 th March
Session 3	Monday 12 th March	Sunday 11 th March
Session 4	Sunday 8 th April	Monday 9 th April
Session 5	Monday 16 th April	Sunday 15 th April
Session 6	Sunday 22 nd April	Monday 23 rd April

As always, thank you for your continued support. Please do not hesitate to contact a member of staff with any queries or concerns and we will be happy to help!

