

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

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Newsletter 25

3rd July 2020

At St Bernadette's we are fully committed to safeguarding our children. We expect all staff, parents and visitors to share this commitment.

Phase 3 return to school – 13th July

At this time, only those parents of children in Years 2, 3, 4 who indicated on the last questionnaire, that they would be sending their children back to school, will be able to do so. We are unable to offer any additional places to other children as all classrooms will be utilised. This will increase our numbers by an additional 60 children. We plan to operate a transition week at this time which will allow the children who are in school to meet their new teacher for September.

Online Work

All staff will be returning to school on Monday 6th July, therefore, the online work that has been set by staff, will cease on this date. Those children who remain at home after this date, will be able to access a project for their year band to complete. Please look out for the details of these on their class pages.

Asthma and Allergy

If your child suffers with asthma or a known allergy please ensure that when they return to school in September that they have the necessary medication in school which is in date. Most of the medication in school has now expired and has been disposed of, so replacements will need to be sent on your child's return. It is your responsibility as parents to ensure that school has the necessary medication in case of an emergency.

School Closure

School will be closed to children in **Year 6** the week commencing **13th July**. The **nursery** will also be closed this week, however, those children who are in our nursery and are transferring to Reception in September, will have the chance to meet their new teacher in the last week of term. Parents have been sent dates for their transition meeting with their child's Reception teacher, so please take note of the date and time of your meeting. School will close to all pupils on Friday 17th July for the

Reflection

"We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace." - Pope Francis.

Autumn Term 2020

Term Starts: Tuesday 1 September 2020

Half Term:

Monday 26 October to Friday 30 October 2020

Term Ends: Tuesday 22 December 2020

Spring Term 2021

Term Starts: Wednesday 6 January 2021

Half Term

Monday 15 February to Friday 19 February 2021

Term Ends: Thursday 1 April 2021

Summer Term 2021

Term Starts: Tuesday 20 April 2021

Half Term:

Monday 31 May to Friday 4 June 2021

Term Ends: Wednesday 21 July 2021

INSET DAYS:

Friday 25th September 2020, Monday 2nd November 2020, Monday 22nd February 2021, Monday 19th April 2021, Friday 30th April 2021

May Bank Holiday: Friday 3rd May

(Please note the inset days may be subject to change)

Re-opening of Holy Family Church

The Church will reopen for public Masses on Saturday, 4th July. The first public Mass will be on Saturday evening at 4.00 pm.

Please note the following instructions for those who wish to attend Mass at Holy Family:

- Please **wash your hands** thoroughly before leaving home, and **use hand sanitiser** when you arrive at the Church.
- You must **wear a mask** whilst in Church.
- You must follow the **one-way system** to enter and leave.
- You must maintain **2m social distancing** at all times.
- **The toilets will be closed**
- All Masses will be said (i.e. No singing)
- If you pick up a leaflet, take it home – **DO NOT** return it to the boxes in the porch.
- **Do not touch** the statues, crucifixes etc.
- To receive communion, please follow the instructions given at the time.
- After Mass, please **do not gather to talk in the porch**; go outside to chat and maintain good social distancing.
- The piety shop will be open, but do not go in! Ask the person on duty or Fr Philip to bring out to you any items you require.
- Please leave doors open to improve air flow and ventilation.
- Do not come to the sacristy (this includes servers, who are asked not to assist, and sacristy team).

All these measures are designed to keep everyone safe whilst in Church and minimise the possibility of viral transmission.

The obligation to attend Sunday Mass is still suspended – public Mass is for those who wish to attend, and for whom it is safe to do so.

Weekday Masses will be celebrated publicly at 10.30 am Tuesday to Saturday, as usual, from Tuesday 7th July.

An extra Mass will be celebrated on Sunday mornings at 9.00 am, to relieve the numbers at the 10.30 am Mass. This may be useful for those who travel by public transport, as buses are unlikely to be busy at that time.

For further information, please see the parish website:

www.holyfamilyparishbirmingham.co.uk/

School Meals

We are hoping to introduce our new school lunch menu when we return to school in September. Many of you have already completed your choices and we thank you for responding to this so quickly. For those of you who have not yet made your choice, we would urge you to do so by Monday 6th July, otherwise your child may not receive their first choice of meal. <https://www.stberns.co.uk/school-meals>

We have received some information from our school meal suppliers to say that they are struggling at the moment to get everything they have ordered from their suppliers, therefore we may not be able to provide all meal options in the first week back in September and a temporary menu may need to be provided initially.

Library Books and Home Readers

At the start of lockdown all children took books home, either from our school library or home reading books. Please search for books around your home and return them to school – there is a box in the foyer at school where these books can be placed. It would be helpful if these are returned on the same date that parents are invited to collect PE Kits. (See below)

PE Kits

We have a large number of PE kits that were left in school at the start of lockdown. These kits will be available for collection from the school playground at the following times.

Year band	Date
Reception & Year 6	Monday 6 th July 2.45-3.00pm
Year 1 & Year 5	Tuesday 7 th July 2.45-3.00pm
Year 2 & Year 4	Wednesday 8 th July 2.45-3.00pm
Year 3	Thursday 9 th July 2.45-3.00pm

If PE kits are not collected on these dates they will be donated to charity.

‘Keeping in touch’ phone calls

Those families who have not returned to school should have been receiving a ‘keeping in touch’ phone call from a member of staff since lockdown began. As school closes for the summer holidays on 17th July, these calls will cease on this date. Should you require any support please see the pastoral support section of the school website for further information:

www.stberns.co.uk/pastoral-support

September 2020

As a school we are committed to a normal opening from Tuesday 1st September, following government guidance which is to be release at a later date. Pupils will be expected to return to school on this date wearing full school uniform. We will expect all children to return unless there is a medical reason they cannot attend, in these instances parents should follow normal protocol for reporting an absence. From September, children's attendance at school will become statutory again and therefore fines may be issued if attendance becomes a concern.

Free School Meal Vouchers

The government have announced that the Free School Meals Voucher scheme will be extended to cover the summer holidays. These vouchers will continue to be supplied by Edenred and will be emailed directly from Edenred as normal.

Volunteers needed for Computing & Science

We are looking to create and develop a 'real-life' curriculum, where we give children the opportunity to apply what they do in class and relate it to a real-life working environment. For example, Year 5 are studying 3D modelling in Computing and we would love the chance for those children to be able to visit a company that will allow them to make their designs. Working with companies and manufacturers would be an amazing way to bring their educational experience to life and help them to understand that the skills they learn in school are important to them when they are older and entering employment.

If any parents/carers have links with companies or manufacturers that fit the topics listed below and would be able to offer the children the opportunity to bring their learning to life, we would love to hear from you to discuss our ideas further.

Computing

- Events
- Animation
- Film
- Programming
- Radio
- 3D Design/Modelling

Science

- Dentistry
- Fitness
- Gardening/botany
- Veterinary care
- Healthcare (Doctor/Nurse)
- Engineers
- Lab technicians

Confirmation – Autumn Term

If your child is currently in year 5 and you wish your child to be confirmed you should complete the attached form and return it to school or email it to enquiry@stberns.bham.sch.uk before **Friday 17th July**.

KIDS COVID-19 Surveillance Swab Testing

I have been asked to communicate with you regarding how you will be notified regarding the results of the nasal swab that have been undertaken in school.

Public Health England (PHE) have advised that they receive the results of the swabs taken 24 to 48 hours after they receive the unprocessed swabs taken from school.

If the swab is positive, PHE will contact the school, the individual and their GP in that order with the results. They will instruct all concerned what needs to happen next.

If you have not heard after 72 hours after the swabbing session has concluded, it is likely that all swabs taken are negative. PHE will not routinely contact schools or participants to inform of negative results for the swab tests.

Stars of the Week

Nursery

Miss Lavin would like to say well done to George for his fantastic phonics and wonderful number sentences and Ruth for her enthusiasm during phonics sessions and always working so hard on her letter formation. Mrs O'Brien would also like to mention Maya (green group) for fantastic phonics and Jude (blue group) for great gardening in our mud kitchen.

Reception

Miss Deards has been impressed with Dolce's beautiful reading and handwriting. Miss Fullerton would like to say well done to Vinnie for creating a wonderful Rainbow Fish. Miss Finnegan would like to mention Leia and Olivia for completing wonderful home learning projects.

Year 1

Mrs McGrath was very pleased with Janelle for her fantastic work on fractions. Mrs Jones was really impressed with Eleanor for her wonderful writing based on the story 'Dragons and Knights'. Miss Fiddler would like to say a huge well done to all of the children in 1SF who created some fantastic character descriptions this week and all the children at home who are working hard on their projects.

Year 2

Miss O'Toole has been impressed by Renihya, Kayden, Kai, Callie-Mai and Ava for their effort and enthusiasm in their Topic work. Mr Wayne would like to mention Nathan, Qasim, Adrija and Niamh for consistently completing all of their online maths learning come rain or shine. He is very impressed with their dedication and commitment to their own learning - a big well done. Mrs Harston would like to thank all of the wonderful children in her Maths and English sets who have tried so hard with their online lessons and continually produced work that never fails to make her smile. She feels very lucky to teach such talented and hardworking children and would just like to thank them all (and their grown-ups) for their dedication throughout this period. This week, she would like to share elements of a range of warning stories written by her English set. She hopes that you enjoy reading them as much as she has! Mrs Lennon would like to say well done to Alysia, Georgio, Charlie, Izabella and Eva-Clair for their amazing time work.

2KH The Warning Story!

Don't go into the woods – By Charlie

"Don't go into the woods because there might be dangerous animals in there!" shouted Mum as she was vacuuming the cobwebs from the corners of the living room. Ben, who was usually a well-behaved boy, whispered to his little brother Tom, "That sounds fun!" Ben was 10 and Tom was 8 and they were excited about going on their bike ride, so they got on their bikes, shouted goodbye to their mum and rode along the smooth, grey path.

As quick as a flash, Ben and Tom arrived at the deep, dark woods. Slowly, they got off their bikes and crept in. All of a sudden they saw a gloomy, pitch black cave in front of them. Ben looked at Tom and whispered "Let's go in and explore." Scared, but excited they tip-toed into the small, dark cave. Slowly, Tom walked behind Ben feeling terrified. The cave was silent.

Just then, they heard a growling sound echoing further inside the cave. Tom wanted to turn back, but Ben kept on walking towards the horrifying noise. Suddenly, they saw a hairy, huge animal looking right at them.

"Run!" shouted Ben. The boys turned and started to run. They could hear the animals feet thumping behind them. Tom tripped over a rock and fell to the floor. Petrified, Ben looked back and saw that Tom needed help. What was he going to do?

As quick as a flash, Ben ran back towards his brother. He could hear the growls from the animal getting closer and closer. Suddenly, it appeared over them. It was a bear! Quickly, Ben grabbed Tom's hand and pulled him up and they ran out of the cave as fast as lightning. Finally, they were back in the woods, so they got onto their bikes. They looked back and could see the bear was still chasing them, but they sped away towards their house.

Eventually, Ben and Tom were home. They told Mum all about what happened on their scary adventure, but she was furious and sent them to their bedrooms for two hours to think about what they had done. They should have listened to Mum's warning. They were very lucky!

Don't go into the forest – By Is'haq

"Don't go into the forest, because wild animals live there," warned dad as he washed his truck with bubbly water. Billy and Angela were the best of friends but also brother and sister. They had always wished that their normal day would have something exciting happen in it. They always go to the edge of where the forest starts but dad always catches them before they go in. Today, they made a plan to escape to the forest without dad catching them. Hopefully, they would be able to see the wonders that they knew lay within the forest.

"I can't wait to explore the forest and finally have our own adventure!" yelled Angela. Billy was also excited. He was packing everything they needed for their journey. He packed food, water and spare clothes especially underwear! They began to walk into the forest without being seen by dad. Their boots sunk into the mud on the floor as they walked deeper into the forest. Suddenly they saw butterflies swarming to a bright light in front of them. Billy decided to follow them and Angela followed. They arrived at the bright light and they saw huge mountains covered in snow and frost. Massive rocks made the path hard for them to get down. Then all of a sudden, a loud BANG echoed in the mountains. Billy was not sure what that was but he was sure to find out!

Angela led the way following the noise through the forest floor. Leaves rustled between their feet and trees stood tall beside them. All of a sudden, they came across a ferocious scary, scaly dragon, which showed itself hiding by the trees. Ben stared from top to bottom. Angela took one daring step forward towards the dragon. She lifted her hand and tried to see if the dragon was friendly. She touched its face as the dragon knelt down. She stared into his bright green eyes. The dragon roared under Angela's hand and tried to bite her hand off! Ben came forward and dragged her away and they began racing out of the forest but they got lost trying to find their way home. Falling and tripping over fallen branches Angela and Ben found themselves stuck with a big, angry dragon.

"WAIT!" shouted Angela. "Maybe we can be friends with the dragon?" Ben thought about this. "Maybe, but we will have to have a plan to get out of here in case the dragon attacks again" suggested Ben. So they both came up with a plan to get away from the dragon if he tried to bite them again. Then they both were brave and slowly walked towards the dragon. Both of them lifted their hands and touched the dragon. Before his eyes were scared of them, but now he had calmed down Angela thought. He purred under their hands and opened his beautiful green eyes. They were both overjoyed!

Ben and Angela became very good friends with the dragon so they decided to take it home. They hopped onto the dragons back and flew home. When they landed, their dad rushed out and froze. He stared at the dragon, then Ben, then Angela. They ran to dad and hugged him so hard like they never have before. "Where have you both been? I thought I told you NOT to go into the forest! You could have been in lots of danger" he said worriedly. Then he looked up again "Wh...who is this? Wh...what is this?" said dad looking scared. Ben and Angela both said "WE MADE A NEW FRIEND!" They invited the dragon to live with them. They built him a nice comfy home in the barn and the dragon never attacked them again.

Don't go near the cave – By Qasim

"Don't go near the dangerous cave! It is very dangerous." warned dad as he was busy fixing his car. The children wanted to explore the cave. They really wanted to see what it looked like, so the children grabbed their bags and ran out of the building.

Eventually, the children arrived at the dangerous cave. Afraid, but amazed the children stared into the dark, scary cave. The children then slowly walked in. It was dark! Suddenly they heard a roar, from the deep end of the cave. The children carried on walking slowly, scared, shaking and worried, but they wanted to see what was at the end of the cave.

When they got to the end of the cave, they saw a big bear sleeping. Then one of the children sneezed loud and the bear woke up. What will happen next?

Quickly, said the children, "We need to get out of here!" The bear got up and roared. The children were scared and shaking. They then started taking steps back and they ran as fast as they could. They finally escaped from the bear. "PHEW!" said the children.

When they got back home, their dad was very cross with the children. He sent them to their rooms. Dad had warned them not to go to the dangerous cave. They were shocked that they had survived!

Don't go into the woods (the opening) – By Niamh

Once, there were a big, brave hedgehog named Sonic. He had a brother named Tails, a sister named Cream and a mom named Amy. One day, when they had breakfast, Amy said calmly "Don't go in the woods you three." "Ok" said Sonic so they packed their bags and off they went.

Don't go near the cooker (the problem) – By Nathan

Nathan went into the kitchen where the floor was wet and he could not stop, he was heading to the glass door. What was I going to do to stop him? All I could do was yell!

Don't stroke the dog (the problem) – By Eleanor

Suddenly the dog moved and Rosie and Eleanor got scared. They went downstairs and watched tv in the lounge, then Dexter the dog came over and turned around and bit them both. Rosie and Eleanor were upset as it hurt. Mom came down the stairs, saw they were upset and said I told you not to stroke the dog. Oh no what will happen to Dexter?

Don't Go Near the River (the ending) – By Adrija

Half an hour after Grace and Ben had got home, their mom was mad and she grounded them for a week because their mom had seen that Grace was wet. Grace was cold and they did not go back to the river again. They went to their rooms but Grace went to Ben's room to see him. She said thanks for helping me Ben.

Don't play with the knife (the ending and the book cover) – By Joshua

John's plan worked! Tom called Dad again. John was hiding in Dad's room. This time Dad came upstairs and John was faced with Dad. Then John got grounded for a week. Now Dad is going to take care of Tom.

Don't Play with the Knife!



An exciting story from a brilliant Author

Joshua

ParentPay

<https://www.parentpay.com/>

Dinner money – please check ParentPay for any outstanding balances and keep your account upto date. Thank you.

Join The Biggest

**THANK
YOU
EVER!**

**5th July 5pm
On your doorstep
And across the country**

Year 3

Miss Gibbs is particularly proud of Alexander, Zachary and Thea for their continued effort and dedication to their maths online learning, Jakub, James and Greta for continuing to use spelling shed weekly and Jack for a great attitude to his English online learning and response to comments.

Mrs Kelly would like to say well done to Thea, Justin, Zachary, Joyce, Tommy, Tilly-Bleu, Della, Jaeden, Alexa, T'Yana and Daisy from her English set and Kaiden, James and Megan from her Maths set for their outstanding commitment to their online learning and the amazing quality of work that they have produced while they have been at home.

Mrs Hill would like to thank all of the children in her English and Maths sets who have regularly logged on and completed their online learning. They have remained motivated and positive throughout the summer term and she really appreciates the efforts they have shown to continue their learning even though they could not be together. A big thank you to them all and to their parents!

Year 4

Mr Kingston would like to mention Ezra for his 3D shape work and Julia for super work on Pictograms from 4LC Maths set.

Mr Baker would like to nominate Alisan and Charlie from the Y4 Key worker class for outstanding care and attention to detail when creating their own illuminated 'Lindisfarne' Gospel page.

Mrs Canning was very impressed with Jaeden and Irish, who proved themselves to be talented musicians in our glockenspiel lessons. She was also delighted by how interested China and Alex were in their Kenyan safari topic.

Miss Hulse and Miss Manders are delighted with Jithin, Surina, Cheldane, Noel, Irish, Haaniyah and George for their fantastic work in Maths when reading coordinates.

Mrs Brownhill would like to thank Octavia, Annaiyah, Mika'il, Alisan, Hermela, Sienna, Zachary, Ayona and Julia for the huge effort they have made with home learning over the last few months. She is very proud of you all!

Year 4 would also like to give special mention to Ashin and Darcey for the amazing effort they have put into all of their home learning.

Year 5

Miss Lakin would like to say how pleased she is with her Y5 group who have settled to work so sensibly every day and are enjoying new challenges.

Miss Ryan and M would like to say well done to all of our Year 6 bubble for the way that they participated so reverently in the Good Shepherd Mass.

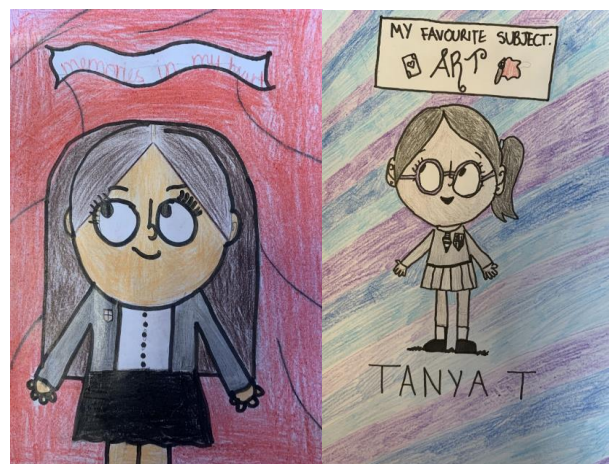
Year 6

Mrs Docker was really impressed with the reverence shown by all the pupils in her 'Year 6 Bubble' as they joined in with the Good Shepherd Mass on Monday where they were thanked for being, 'faithful disciples of Jesus Christ,' due to the support they have given to Father Hudson's. Mani's 'Dragon's Den' competition entry really delighted Mrs Docker, as his bespoke gaming device for a disabled 11 year old child, alongside a confident pitch explaining how the device would support the child to play independently showed great empathy. Mani tackled the questions from the Dragon's with remarkable maturity and ended up securing a much deserved first place in the competition.

Miss Ryan and Miss Speake would like to say well done to all of their Year 6 bubble for the way that they participated so reverently in the Good Shepherd Mass.

Miss Cahill was very impressed with Bexanne, Kerim and Renee for their excellent self portraits in the style of Rob Biddulph. and Renee for their excellent self portraits in the style of Rob Biddulph.

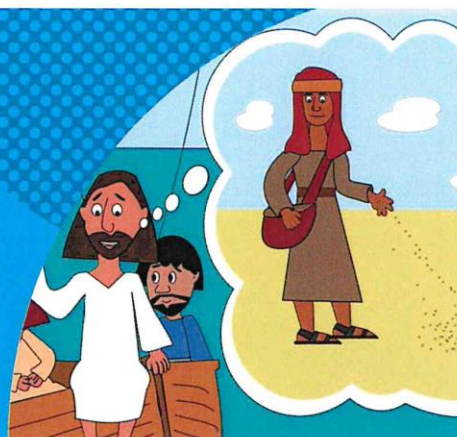
Mr Markham-Jones would like to congratulate his Year 6 group for their wonderful artwork this week. They have developed their drawing skills using #DrawWithRob. He was extremely impressed with Niamh & Tanya's self-portraits.



Parent Newsletter

Living faith
within our families

July 2020



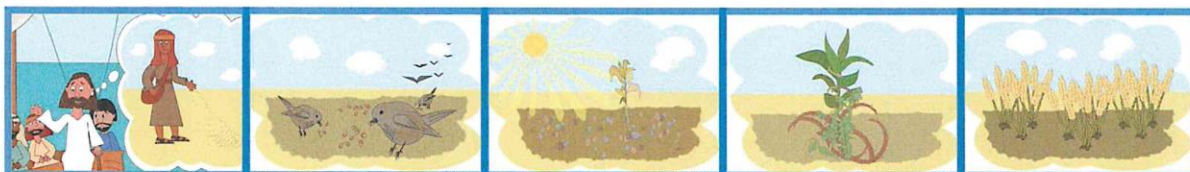
The Parable of the Sower

A version of Matthew 13: 1- 9, the Gospel for w/c 13th July and shared with children in assembly.

Jesus taught the crowd many things through stories. He said, "Imagine a

farmer going out to sow his seeds. While he was sowing, some seeds fell on the edge of the path and the birds came and ate them up. Some seeds fell on rocky ground, where there wasn't very much soil. Those seeds grew very fast, because the ground was not deep. But as soon as the sun came up, the plants

dried up because they did not have deep roots. Some other seeds fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and choked the good plants. Still other seeds fell on good soil where it grew, became strong and produced many more seeds to be used the next year! Let those with ears use them and listen!"



Seeing the Good

Jesus told this story a long time ago, so clearly, it's not about the coronavirus! But we asked children to imagine for a moment that it was, and the seeds are all the good things God has given them...

- The coronavirus might have felt like the birds coming in to steal their good things, keeping them away from school and their friends.
- At first maybe they started off enjoying lockdown and it felt fun to be doing schoolwork from home. Maybe they threw themselves into lots of projects and kept themselves very busy. But it probably got old quickly and their initial enjoyment and positivity faded. That's when they felt like the rocky ground where the good

things didn't have deep roots.

- Finally, the thorny weeds. As the effects of lockdown became more obvious: adults worrying about their work, school STILL being closed, end of year events that they'd been looking forward to being cancelled etc. Maybe it felt like all these bad things, these 'weeds' were affecting their ability to see good things.

We explained to children that Jesus is the farmer in this story, who plants good things from God in our lives and the word of God in our hearts. Jesus wants us to be like the good soil, where the seeds can grow strong and multiply. That means the seed – God's word in our hearts that helps us have faith – can grow!

Prayer

Take some time with your child to reflect on the year – the good things and the bad – and thank God for being with them through everything.

Jesus knows there will be difficult things in our lives. Things that feel like birds coming to steal our joy, rocky ground where things feel more difficult, weeds strangling our hard work and things we were looking forward to.

But no matter what other things are around that we are distracted by, **when we allow Jesus into our lives, our eyes become eyes of faith – and He helps us to see the good things and be thankful for them!**

The Year of the Word: Reflection 14

"Racism is incompatible with the Catholic Faith. Whether expressed by the attitudes or behaviour of an individual, or the behaviour of a group, or through unjust structures in society that exclude and discriminate, there is no place for racism at any time or in any place. We say this again: there is no place for racism."

loving
hopeful
curious
wise
grateful
discerning
compassionate
active
truthful
elegant
generous
faith-filled
attentive
intent



Over the past few weeks, 'Black Lives Matter' has once again been brought into sharp focus with events in America. We cannot be silent about racism. It must be challenged. The Church recognises that it has an important role in working for racial justice, but protesting for justice does not imply endorsement of the positions taken by some Black Lives Matter Organizations. All Catholics have an obligation to work for racial justice in the framework of Catholic Doctrine, principles and teaching about the dignity of the human person, and the sanctity of human life, and to work, above all, for conversion. These beliefs represent what the Church firmly holds to be fundamental moral principles rooted in human nature, natural law, biblical revelation and the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is a complex situation that needs careful thought, handling and research to fully understand and influence appropriately; there are others with their own agendas who can jump on the bandwagon, stir up trouble or hold positions that do not morally match the teachings of the Church. However, that does not give us the excuse to ignore what is happening or justify sweeping it under the carpet again to allow the evil and injustice of racism to continue to be propagated ad infinitum. The Church has a grave responsibility to contribute to the ongoing conversion and spiritual transformation of us all. Working tirelessly day by day, we are co-workers with Christ - His brothers and sisters. For once again we have seen, as with every tragedy, the fleeting 'newsworthiness' of such incidents - after the initial reaction and momentum, it slips from our immediate to background consciousness, as other 'priorities,' 'more important to us,' come along - waiting for the next tragedy to bring it to the fore again, offering a next chance of making another small step forward. But is this good enough? After all this time should this prejudice and suffering still be allowed? Couldn't we make the difference today?

If we are brave enough and 'choose' to tackle the problem head on, our first responsibility is to recognise that racism does exist, whether in individuals, in groups, in organisations, or in society. We need to decide the best way to overcome racism, knowing that violence never solves anything, even when injustice makes us angry. Let the energy that comes from our anger be channelled into changing hearts and minds, beginning with our own, to speak the truth in the service of peace and love. Christ commanded us to 'love one another.' (Jn 15:12) He did not allow for any exceptions and we should not make any exceptions. We should be seeking the unique role God might be asking us to play in transforming this opportunity into a watershed moment in eradicating racism, through encounter, accompaniment, repentance, justice, action, charity, and prayer.

Our Church is a global Church, which puts us in a strong position to influence the future. For our Catholic Faith does more than condemn racism; it also calls us to challenge racism, to eliminate its causes, and to heal the wounds it brings. We each have a part to play in this, the Church teaches and we profess that we believe that every human life is sacred, from its first beginning to its natural end, so we must make sure that we always think of every other person as someone worthy of respect despite appearances or circumstances: We are all made in the image and likeness of God (Wisdom of Solomon 2:23) We must uphold the rights, the equality, and the sanctity of every human life. To God, as it should be to us, every life is a gift and irreplaceable. Every person's life matters, so the life of every black person matters. There should be no place for racism to hide in our World today. Our World is beautifully diverse. There is a rich variety of cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds everywhere we look. This diversity is a gift given to us by God that should be celebrated by us all. We need to work side by side to make racism part of our history, not part of our present or of our future together. It has gone on for too long and is contrary to Christ's teachings. Jesus taught that there is a place for everyone in our Church: He gave us the example with the people he mixed with - no one was excluded - and the parables he told. So, the present moment presents us with an extraordinary opportunity to work to dismantle racism for good.

Now more than ever, we are being called upon to use our passion for justice to make a difference in our schools and parishes, our neighbourhoods and communities, so that we are able to shape the future of Society for the good of all, once and for all. We should be committed to making sure that everywhere is a place ... where everyone is welcomed, where everyone is affirmed, where everyone is encouraged; where everyone is respected for the person God has created them to be and for the person God is calling them to become. We need to make everywhere a place ... where the gifts and skills, the experience and heritage, of all people, of every background, are honoured, valued, cherished and celebrated just as Christ did in His lifetime. We should be united in asking for justice and equality for every person, no matter what colour their skin happens to be.

If we need, we have, in our Church, some inspiring examples of ordinary people who spoke out against slavery and worked to overcome the sufferings of those enslaved. Their voices must be alive in us today. One of these was Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese woman who was sold into slavery, eventually brought to Rome, and cared for by a community of nuns. She became such an outstanding example of what it means to be a Christian that in the year 2000 she was declared a saint. Other examples can be found with the recent canonisations last October 2019 of Sisters Mariam Theresia, Giuseppina Vannini, Dulce Lopes Pontes and Margarita Bays or by studying the lives of many of the Saints and Martyrs.

Isn't it time to acknowledge racism in all its forms, understand and accept our part and travel the road to solutions and a 'cure'?



Readings for Reflection from the Gospels

The sower, the seed, and the soil.
(Matthew 13:1-9)
Weeds among the wheat.
(Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)
The mighty mustard seed.
(Matthew 13:31-32)
The Lost Sheep
(Matthew 18:12-14)
The forgiven who wouldn't forgive.
(Matthew 18:23-35)
When the last was first and the first was last. (Matthew 20: 1-16)
The fig tree and the future.
(Matthew 24:32-35)
Separating the sheep from the goats. (Matthew 25:31-46)

"A single, ordinary person still can make a difference - and single, ordinary people are doing precisely that every day." Chris Bohjalian

We all have the opportunity to help create positive change, we just need to take the first step whether it is addressing massive social problems or our everyday lives. You may see the challenge as overwhelming but if you break a big challenge down into smaller pieces and take those one at a time at least you can change a small part of it, for someone. You might not be able to change the entire world, but to that one person, it can make a world of difference!

The Star Thrower by Loren Eiseley

Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions. Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often and as he grew closer, the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still and the man called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?" The young boy paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can't return to the sea by themselves. When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water." The old man replied, "But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I'm afraid you won't really be able to make much of a difference." The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, "Well it made a difference to that one!"