

Dear Parents, guardians, students & friends of St John's

Welcome to the Spring edition of our Newsletter. First and foremost, I sincerely hope that you and your families have managed to stay safe and well in these most challenging of times. Sadly, I am acutely aware that there are members of our school community who have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic; to those of you who have suffered bereavements or illness in this crisis, you have my deepest sympathies. The prayer to the right can be said for all of those who are suffering at the moment.

I am very conscious of trying to keep the spirit of our wonderful Catholic community of St John's alive and well, even whilst we are on lockdown. Currently, our Year Leaders are sending out individual Newsletters to their cohorts each week full of positive stories and I have been truly impressed to read about all the wonderful endeavours that pupils are undertaking whilst not in school. This Spring edition of our whole school Newsletter shares just some of the fantastic things that our pupils have been getting up to over these past few weeks; well done to all those who have got a mention!

Congratulations must also go to all the pupils and their parents who have managed to keep academic study going with the support of our Home Learning programme. I am well aware that for the majority of you, this has been a real challenge, particularly as it is incredibly difficult to replicate the type of support that pupils receive from staff on a daily basis when they are physically in school. However, I am sure that whatever work our pupils have been able to complete will be of great benefit when schools are finally allowed to fully reopen.

To those of you that are anxious about public examinations, please be rest assured that the school will do everything in its powers to ensure that students are awarded the grades that they deserve this summer. Additionally, to those of you who have concerns that you are falling behind with your studies, you have my word that the staff of St John's will do all we can to manage and minimise the impact of the school closure on this crucial time in your school career when you return.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish you all the very best. I have greatly missed the pupils of St John's over these last six weeks, along with the energy and joy that they bring to our school community; I am really looking forward to seeing you all again as soon as it is safe to go back to school. God bless you all!

Matt Barron *Headteacher*

FOR THOSE IN ISOLATION

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill,
afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone
on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Home Learning

We have been delighted to receive so much positive feedback about all the wonderful achievements that the students have made during their home learning time. Home learning can be very challenging and we are proud of the way our students are rising to the challenge. Thank you to all of the parents who are dedicating so much time to supporting the students with the work set. We really appreciate your continued support and have shared a number of successes below.

Year 7

Isabel (7MJC) has been choreographing her own contemporary dance pieces to enhance her creative and technical skills during her time at home. She has showed excellent control and a very clear use of contrasting dynamics in her piece. We are very pleased to see her passion for dance is still shining brightly despite not being able to go to classes at the moment!

Well done Isabel!



Year 8

Anna Marie (8CRC) has been cooking up a storm in the kitchen over Easter. She made these cakes with her sister and delivered them to her neighbours who may not have been as fortunate to receive any Easter eggs this year. A really thoughtful gesture Anna Marie – well done! I hope they tasted as good as they look!

**STAY AT
HOME**

**PROTECT
THE NHS**

Year 9

Owen B (9LBE) has completed an outstanding research project as part of his Food and Nutrition course, highlighting the contrasting cuisine in different countries. The picture shows the Tiramisu he created as part of his research and demonstrates that his passion for the subject has only grown throughout this testing time at home. Owen, thank you for your continued effort with home learning and we look forward to seeing more of your fantastic work in the coming weeks.



Jack needs your support!



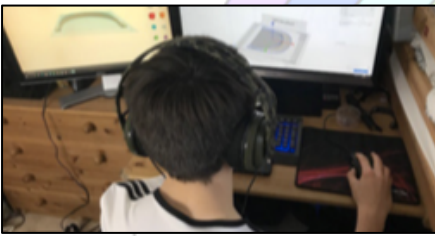
Jack was diagnosed with Leukaemia in early 2018; in the beginning he was very sick and was hospitalised for 5 months. Jack needed intense chemotherapy every day for a long time. In order to make life as comfortable as possible for Jack, The Ellenor Hospice were able to come out to his home and deliver this treatment to Jack every day, so that hospital visits were kept at a minimum. The

Ellenor offer this invaluable service free; they get no government funding and rely on the generosity of the community. However, unfortunately, in this current COVID-19 crisis, all fund-raising events have been cancelled. Ellenor urgently needs our help to keep hospice nurses and front-line clinical staff safe and able to treat and support their sick and vulnerable patients.



They have launched an Emergency Fighting-fund, please help them today and donate <https://ellenor.org/emergencyfund> so that they can continue to help children like Jack.

Visors for the NHS



Luke H (9EM) has been designing a visor for the NHS to mass produce on the 3D printers at his father's laboratory at UCL. What an amazing achievement and contribution he is making to the NHS! The school have started to use its donated 3D printers from UCL to produce visors with Luke's design. You can see a finished result to the bottom right. The school have already been

making face shields for the Ellenor hospice and are looking to expand its operations. If you work or know anyone who works in any local care homes that are in need of this PPE, then please do contact the school and we will do our utmost to try and provide, subject to materials.

Careers

The working world is likely to be quite different after the current situation subsides, with lots of new opportunities as a result. So, it's perhaps more important than ever that you take some time to think about your future. Springpod has launched Learn Lounge: free talks and lessons from inspirational speakers who are experts in career fields including sports, law, financial services and many more. While school is closed, LearnLounge will be covering a whole range of topics – from career stories to advice on employability skills— in 30 minute virtual lessons and talks scheduled twice a day - at 10:30 am and 2:30 pm.

You can view all the talks and register here: <https://learn.springpod.co.uk/schedule/>

Ms H. Rooke

Get involved with random acts of kindness

Easy

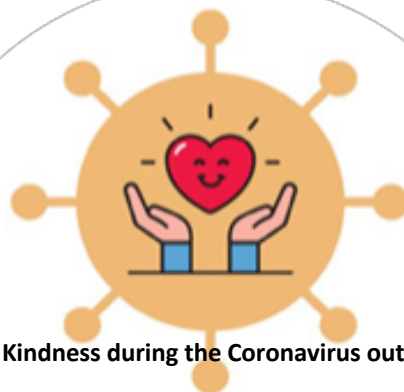
- Make a cup of tea for someone you live with.
- Help with a household chore at home.
- Arrange to watch a film at the same time as a friend and video call.
- Tell someone you know that you are proud of them.
- Tell someone you know why you are thankful for them.
- Send a motivational text to a friend who is struggling.

Medium

- Call a friend that you haven't spoken to for a while.
- Tell a family member how much you love and appreciate them.
- Send someone you know a joke to cheer them up.
- Send someone you know a picture of a cute animal.
- Send an inspirational quote to a friend.
- Send an interesting article to a friend.
- Contact someone you haven't seen in a while and arrange a phone catch up.
- Spend time playing with your pet.

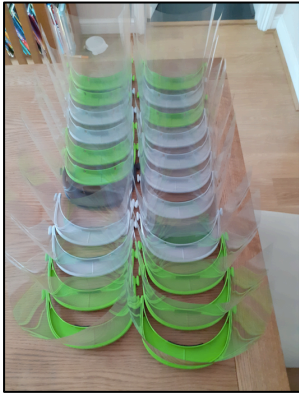
Challenge

- Reach out to call a friend, family member or neighbour who is experiencing loneliness or self-isolation.
- Donate to a charity.
- Lend your ear – call a friend and ask how they're finding the change in routine.
- Send an inspirational story of kindness to someone you know.
- Donate to food-banks.
- Offer to skill-share with a friend via video call - you could teach guitar, dance etc.



Kindness during the Coronavirus outbreak

St John's makes PPE



During these unprecedented times we have a dedicated team of staff who are currently putting the school 3D printers to good use. Over the past few weeks we have been printing face shields for the Ellenor Hospice, and some of the other hospitals, and care homes in the local area.

If anyone works for the NHS, or a care home, and are in need of PPE. Please urge the company to contact the school via the office and we will do our very best to support.

Thank you NHS



As part of their home learning work, our key stage 3 students were asked to produce 'thank you' rainbows for the NHS. We are thrilled with the response and the care taken over the work that has been produced. We have displayed the rainbows within the school as an uplifting welcome to all of the children of key workers attending school each day. Thank you to every student that contributed to this display.

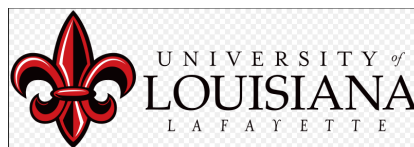
Every rainbow received will also be included on the virtual gallery at the Nightingale Hospital in London.

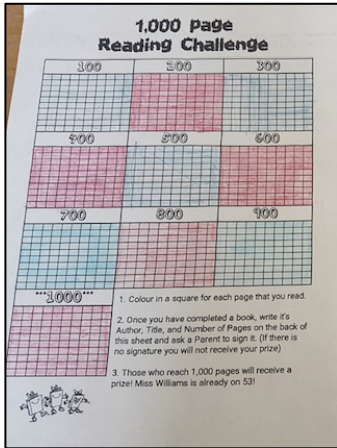
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Sports Scholarship Success

We are delighted that Maisie S in year 12 has just gained a full Sports Scholarship to the University of Louisiana to continue her already successful footballing career. Studying in Louisiana, Maisie will undertake a degree in Sports Psychology. This exciting opportunity is due to start in September and we wish her all the very best with this exciting venture.





Literary Legends

The English Department would like to Congratulate the students below who have amazed us with their completion of the Reading Challenge!

All four students have impressed, not just with the amount they have read, but with what they are reading. Prizes are being ordered as we speak!

Congratulations: Mya T - Year 7, Jake C - Year 7, Jacob H - Year 7 and a special congratulations to Otilia M - Year 9 who is reading A Level quality texts!

Safeguarding

Dear Parents and Students,

I do hope that you and your families are safe and well in the current situation. As you may well know, St John's is a HEADSTART school and this organization has provided us with a great deal of support in recent years with building resilience in the young people at our school. HEADSTART have recently been in touch to say that they would very much like to get your views on how the current COVID-19 situation is affecting you. If you could spare some time and complete the survey for HEADSTART they would really appreciate it. Below is what HEADSTART have said and the links to the respective pupil and parent surveys.

Thanking you
Mrs Kelham



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We are conducting research into how Covid-19 is impacting young people and parent's health and wellbeing, to see how we can improve young people's resilience and mental health during this time.

Below are links to two short surveys.

The first survey is for parents of young people aged 10-16 which asks for views about their own wellbeing as well as their child's wellbeing <https://bit.ly/2XRDb7a>

The second survey is for young people aged 10-16 to help us gather information about how Covid-19 is affecting them <https://bit.ly/34R1wLP>

Chaplain's Corner



What are you struggling with right now? The sickness of a loved one? How you are going to pay the mortgage or put food on the table? How not to shout at the bored kids? How to help with home schooling? Where to find the next funny video to share on your WhatsApp groups? The list could go on and on.

For our young people the challenges are also very real. Perhaps a feeling of isolation from friends on whom they rely for that affirmation that makes them feel ok about themselves, or a loneliness that social media does not bridge. I think that social media creates a false world that projects the person they think will be attractive to others, more than their real self, and this creates a loneliness; a sense that sitting in the isolation of their own room they are not so loveable somehow. Then there are many who perhaps worry what will become of their education. And then there is boredom!



We have got used to a world of noise; the noise of ambitions, the noise of demands on us, the noise of TV, iPlayers and social media, the noise of stress, the noise of disagreements and negative emotions that wind us up and make us angry with others. It is little wonder that we are uncomfortable with quiet, or with our own company and with what we see in the mirror when the noise stops.

- The coronavirus crisis for all its awful suffering and death, also offers an opportunity to see what is truly precious in life and to cut through the noise and start looking at life and each other through a different lens.

Alongside the usual aggressive forces such as the media and the opinionated, we see the beauty of humanity. The NHS, care workers, and other key workers, lovingly stepping up and serving us with dedication, despite the risk to themselves. We see inspiring figures such as Captain Tom (now Colonel Tom). We find ourselves moved with compassion for those dying without loved ones by their side. We see a community that has discovered a sense of family; that now exchange a friendly hello (while keeping two meters apart). We see people looking out for their elderly neighbours and others making meals or giving their time to deliver supplies. These things are beautiful.

This is a time, I suggest, to focus on that sense of family, rather than judgements, ambitions, and other 'noise'; a time to be beautiful not the ugly in our society. Perhaps it is a time to sit at the meal table and talk to each other? Maybe we could make a survey of our young people how they feel about family life, home, school



community and team, consciously feed the potentially re-invent special effort to ask friends, worries; how

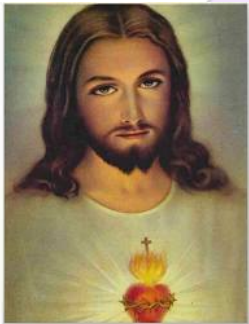


they feel about themselves? Perhaps it is a time to contact relatives and friends we have become distant from, and to reach out warmly and generously to our neighbours?

What a gift to our young people: we could give them a future world that has rediscovered love! What a gift to our young people if global greed diminishes and caring global responsibility increases!

If we are to truly and lastingly bring good out of bad, we need God's help. What is impossible for humankind is possible for God, but we have to desire it and ask for it! We are each created for love; to be loving. If we wish that to happen in society, it has to happen within ourselves first. It doesn't happen by shouting at the TV when we think we see people doing things wrong (or at each other!), rather by humble recognition that we all have weaknesses and imperfections and would most often fail, much the same as those we judge if we had walked in their shoes. From our humility, stems our recognition that we need the love of God to transform us within, so we can then infect the world around us with that contagious love that the world needs.

May I humbly suggest that we all make time to pray; that we make space to build that most important of all relationships with God who suffered unimaginably for each of us and who now offers us himself, and the fire of love that will transform our hearts to be like his.



What a sign to our young people it would be, if every family home had some sort of focal point for prayer; a little table or a wall with a picture of Jesus and a crucifix? In my house we are fortunate to have enough space to use our little box room as a prayer room, but also have pictures of Jesus, crucifixes and pictures of Mary (as our exemplar disciple and mother) dotted around. If your children can tangibly sense your faith, know that you pray, and see its fruits in the patient love you give them, they will be truly blessed.

Fr Mike Schmitz said in an Instagram post recently "all Catholics grow in the same soil together but the fruit we bear is unique. But what is this common soil? What are the essentials for every Catholic Christian?" That soil is the Church, its community, its teaching, its prayer and the sacraments. We are created to be a family.

Our own Archbishop John celebrates Mass online at 10am each Sunday, and I truly commend attending Mass 'virtually' and receiving Holy Communion spiritually; he is a fine preacher and you can sense him reaching out pastorally to us over the airwaves in his own humble, down to earth style. See

<https://www.stgeorgescathedral.org.uk>

I'll leave you with that wonderful passage from 1 Corinthians 13 on love:

Love

¹I may be able to speak the languages of human beings and even of angels, but if I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell. ²I may have the gift of inspired preaching; I may have all knowledge and understand all secrets; I may have all the faith needed to move mountains — but if I have no love, I am nothing. ³I may give away everything I have, and even give up my body to be burnt — but if I have no love, this does me no good.

⁴Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; ⁵love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; ⁶love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. ⁷Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

⁸Love is eternal. There are inspired messages, but they are temporary; there are gifts of speaking in strange tongues, but they will cease; there is knowledge, but it will pass. ⁹For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial; ¹⁰but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear.

¹¹When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child; now that I have grown up, I have no more use for childish ways. ¹²What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete — as complete as God's knowledge of me.

¹³Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.

God bless you all,

Deacon Michael

