

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

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the July edition of our Newsletter, the last Newsletter of this academic year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those students, staff, parents and governors who have contributed so positively to St John's this year in some incredibly challenging circumstances. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a vibrant Catholic school in our local community and one that strives each day to ensure that each of our stakeholders live their lives by our ethos of 'Excellence for All', 'Service to Others' and 'Inspired by Christ'. The fact that we have been able to uphold that ethos during this period of lockdown, says an awful lot about St John's and how strong we are together.

This would normally be a time to look back over this past academic year and reflect on our many achievements as a school: our successful Section 48 Inspection in January 2020, where we were judged to be an 'Outstanding Catholic School'; the excellent examination results from last summer, including our Progress 8 score of +0.40; or the fact that we were heavily oversubscribed again, both for Year 7 places as well as 6th form places.

However, due to the global pandemic, achievements of this nature don't seem particularly relevant at the moment. Instead, I would like us all to spare a few thoughts for our outgoing Year 11 and Year 13 students: the tremendous efforts that these pupils had put into their studies in preparation for the Summer examinations - examinations that sadly never took place; the range of emotions that they must have gone through and continue to go through as a result of the uncertainty that they find themselves in; as well as the fact that they missed out on such memorable occasions such as their Leavers' Masses and Proms. To those pupils, thank you for everything that you have done throughout your time at St John's to represent our school in such an exemplary manner. We are incredibly proud of you all and we wish you all the very best for the future. Please be rest assured that we will be here to support you through your Results Days and beyond and if there is ever the opportunity to give you a proper 'send off' in the future, we will do all we can to make that happen.

Finally, I would like to wish you all the very best for the holidays ahead. Let us all hope and pray that life gets back to some kind of normality soon and the new academic year is full of joy and happiness. May blessings of grace and peace be with you each and every day.

Matt Barron *Headteacher*

Home Learning Support

Please do not hesitate to contact your year teams to support you with any home learning concerns.

Here are some websites to support with home learning:

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/secondary/zkqp47h> - This is an excellent website covering topics in every subject in a really engaging way.
- <https://www.edplace.com/> - You can sign up and receive five free activities a month.

Home Learning

Well done again to Amelia B (7OMP) for adding to her photography portfolio! She has named the image below, "Tunnel to the Future."



Well done to Mariah L. We have received some very positive news and work in regards to her English home-learning tasks. There is an exceptional amount of effort going into these tasks. It is no surprise that Mariah is in her year group Newsletter every week!

Summer Cook Competition

Thank you to everybody who submitted an entry to the STJ Summer Cook Off Competition. We had some brilliant entries and it has been very difficult to judge. All those who entered will receive good comments and prizes will be awarded when we are back to school in September.

1st Prize goes to Owen B £20 Meal Voucher

Owen made Eton Mess, making his own meringues and accompanying them with Dandelion and Lemon Cookies. We loved Owen's presentation and the originality of his recipe. Well done, Owen.



2nd Prize goes to Zuzanna S £15 Meal Voucher

Zuzanna made a wonderful Vanilla Azure Coast Cake and we just loved the creativity that went into the decoration of this cake. Well done, Zuzanna.



3rd Prize goes to Jacob H £10 Meal Voucher

Jacob recreated a family recipe for Strawberry Trifle and we loved the story behind this recipe and the finished dish looked delicious. Well done, Jacob.



VE DAY POSTER COMPETITION

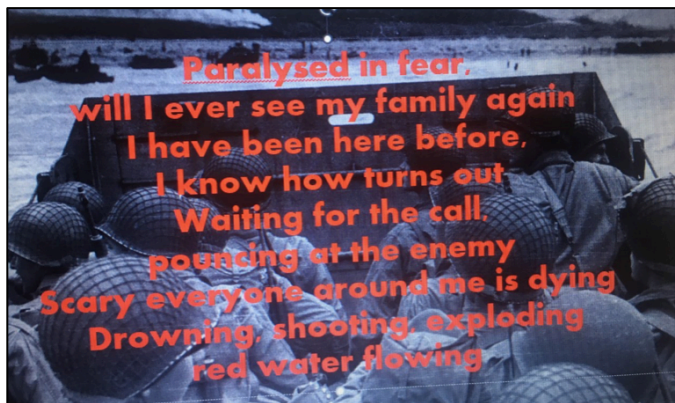
The following students are awarded certificates by the Spirit of Normandy Trust with the work being highly commended by the judges - Connor B, Mark B, Daisy M, Olivia N, Matas P, Skye P, Alicia S, Danni T.

Daisy narrowly missed out on the top award. The certificates will be presented to the pupils in September. The competition was a nationwide competition.

Huge congratulations to all of the students who took part – the response we received was amazing.

Holocaust Stones

KS3 students are reminded to hold on to the work that they created for various history projects - the Holocaust stones and the VE Day bunting and posters - as all will be used in events when we get back to school in September. The Holocaust stones will be used to create a new Memorial at the school with the VE Day work being used in the VE/VJ party set for September.



History work at home has included a focus on D-Day, June 6th, 1944. Students were tasked with writing a poem and other work. The work provided by students will be used to create a book on poems and imagery [all created by St John's students] and sold in aid of the D-Day Memorial which is currently under construction in Normandy.





Literary Legends

What fantastic creative writing skills we have seen this term from Year 10.

The following students have impressed with their creativity, thoughtfulness, and their GCSE English Language writing skills. A massive congratulations from the English Department, we look forward to seeing what you achieve in your exam next year!

Saved by mum. The memory of me rushing towards the glistening lake, feeling as if I could fly, floods my mind. The wind smothering my arms as I ran faster and faster. Mum and dad smiling, hand in hand. We were happy. I placed my hand in the fresh water whilst enjoying the smell of crisp grass and raw lavender. The icy water engulfed my hand.

“Be careful Sebby!” My mum’s soft voice yells out to me. I look over to her glowing and fair face as she beams at me. She was the definition of beauty. I turned back to the lake and admired the ripples of the water flowing with the current. Admiring the sun, the water sparkled as dusk approached. I leaned in further losing my balance. A warm hand clutches my shoulder and pulls me away from the water. I spin around to see the sweet and delightful face of my mother turn to fear and worry.

“Sebastian you scared me. You nearly fell in when mummy told you to be careful,” my mother says firmly. Pulling me close, she holds me tight not wanting to let me go.

Rubi-Halz D L Year 10

I lay there, gasping for breath at the bottom of a large hill, the air thick and foggy as the pollution filled and weighted my lungs. We were all climbing, all those that could anyway, to the closest tree around us. The only tree around us. My athleticism was the only thing allowing me to get this far, as I continued to climb I staggered and lost my footing briefly, feeling like it was impossible but knowing it was, suddenly something popped out of the mist, a hand. She was offering me help but I shrugged it off, brashly, confident I could make it to the top not needing the help of others. I lost my footing again, this time hitting my head, making me remember the many chances we had to change this. To stop the suffering. To stop the pain. Tears swelled up in my eyes as I remembered all those I had lost to our mistakes, friends, family. Our Earth. I continued climbing and through burning lungs and aching muscles, I broke through the mist, to look around, to see the crying of people. The devastation upon their faces as the last leaves dropped from the tree and the bark peeled off of its dying trunk. If only we had heeded the warnings, if only we had not neglected the current situation, we could have changed many things to fix this.

James L, Year 10

At the beginning; darkness poured from windows, like spoiled milk. Pouring. Pouring, unnaturally through every street, as if it suffocated every brick that lay beneath its endless pools of ebony. The moon shone its milky rays across the town, highlighting shadows. Tip tap. The patter of soft slippers of a passing-by couple echoed off the buildings and the plethora of noise was lost amongst the black sky. A pavement trailed to a linear structure of a

building. Outlined with mould; vines crawling up the walls, as if they caged something in. At the opposed side of the structure, sat a window embedded in a withered slab of the wall. Chipped and worn, the corners engulfed with cobwebs, soft traps, ready to trap innocence. Within the window, trailed to a non- commodious room, with a spruce door, scratches lay on the surface of its fresh coat of wax, splinters of wood stuck out like daggers, coating the whole of the door leading to a brass knob, is it locked?

Charlotte B, Year 10

Ex – St John’s Student Daniel ‘Hammers’ it home

Former St John’s Catholic Comprehensive student Daniel J has signed his first professional contract, with English Premier League outfit West Ham United, a few days before his 18th birthday.

Daniel has made five appearances with the U18s in the 2019-20 season and has been rewarded for his consistency and diligence with his first professional deal.

It is no surprise to hear that Daniel is becoming a huge success. He has clearly continued to demonstrate the hard work and dedication that he showed throughout schooling.

From all the staff and students at St John’s Catholic Comprehensive School, we wish Daniel a huge congratulations and look forward to seeing him on Match of the Day soon.

We hope that Daniel will visit us soon, as I am sure St John’s has a lot of talented young boys and girls that would love to follow in his footsteps.



Keep up the good work, Daniel.

Mr A Rowlinson. *Assistant Headteacher*



Dear Parents/Carers,

I do hope that you and your families are safe and well in these unprecedented times.

Please find below some articles/links that you may find useful. I subscribe to magazines and they send out some really useful information to help support parents/carers when dealing with the issues that young people are facing today.

Please also look at our website for some more resources. It is under the parents tab and then click on parental support.

Take care and stay safe

Mrs Kelham. *Designated Safeguarding Lead*

Wellbeing Workout

Practising Self-discipline with our Amazing People

FREE access to all 50+ stories during school closures via:

www.amazingpeopleschools.com

Explore our interactive stories (audio, video and timelines included), take the quizzes, unlock the fact cards and decorate your avatars.

Discover how they demonstrated self-discipline.



Ada Lovelace

laid the foundations for the first computer programme, and studied hard across many subjects.

Life continues to be uncertain with some returning to school and some needing to stay focussed at home. Practising self-discipline can help us feel more in control.



Jesse Owens

won 4 gold medals in Berlin Olympics: *'We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort.'*

Avoid the triggers that divert you – perhaps your phone, music or TV? Set a time limit when using those distractions, it gets easier the more you practise.



Charles Darwin

spent decades collating evidence for his life-changing book on evolution. *'A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life.'*



Frida Kahlo

spent a year in bed recovering after a traffic accident and used the time to paint.

Get enough sleep!
7-12 year olds need 10-11 hours a night and teenagers need 8-9 hours.

'If your job is to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first.' Mark Twain.
What does this mean? If there's something particularly difficult you need to do today, then do it first!

Mahatma Gandhi

dedicated his life to independence for India – practising self-discipline in what he ate, wore and his lifestyle. *'Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world but to change ourselves'.*

Break down your big jobs into smaller, easier parts.



Ask for help if you need it – use a study plan or build in enough time to exercise, have some fun, help out at home etc?

Doing a little bit of something every day builds up discipline and brings more results than doing a larger amount once a week. This is true of exercising, playing an instrument, painting, or learning a language. Set your goal to be 3 minutes a day and

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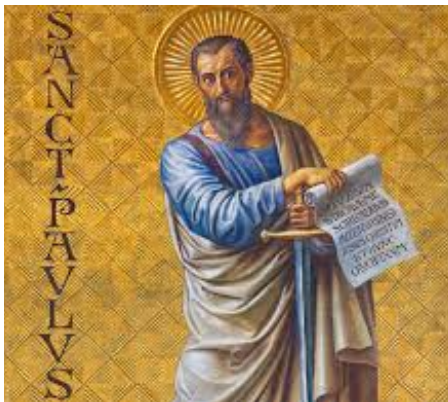
Chaplain's Corner

Chaplain's Corner

“God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1Corinthians 1:27).

Do you sometimes feel that life is out of your control; that you wish you were stronger, that you had more choices, more knowledge or ability? This is a time when many of our young people feel that their whole future is not within their control. At an age when perhaps they are naturally seeking to be more independent and assert their own identity, they are faced not only with so much uncertainty but are surrounded by deceptions and temptations.

Why did I lead with that quote from Corinthians, “God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong”? Because the way of Christian life is counter-intuitive, for we tend to be conditioned to believe we should be self-reliant, strong and in control if we are to be happy and especially if we are to be great. But we, and our young people, have to learn to surrender our egotistic ways, for it is the ego of the strong that so corrupts and messes up our world. If we surrender our ego and begin to recognise that everything that is good owes its existence to God, then God will fill us with love, compassion, and gifts we can use to serve each other without selfishness; he will make us strong in love.



We recently celebrated the feast day of St. Paul, the mighty evangelist who took the Gospel to the non-Jewish nations, tirelessly pouring out his life for love of God and his brothers and sisters, and who was finally beheaded in Rome. But he was not strong, he was weak; it was God who was strong in him because he surrendered his ego to God. God gave St. Paul a mysterious ‘thorn in his flesh’ to keep him grounded.

“He [God] said to me ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Life was not ‘plain sailing’ for St. Paul or any other of the great figures of the Bible, but he learned to trust God. Our trials lead us to accept our weakness, and turn to God, recognising instead that his are the power and the glory because he is love itself. Just as it is important for our children to listen to the wisdom of parents, even though it is an imperfect wisdom, as they become adults they must learn to listen to the wisdom of God, which is perfect. Control is not always what we need, sometimes we need to trust.



There are so many false idols that our young people may be deceived by, but it is interesting to see so many so called strong, famous people of history being recognised in our current times as not so glorious people that held reprehensible views or who behaved badly toward their fellow human beings. The same is true of many recently strong or famous people, and the same is true of people immediately around us that may be popular but who are not good; not filled with the love of God.



This is why Christian parents' most important job is to cultivate the relationship our young people have with God; it is an anchor that will keep them from drifting too far as they experiment with independence; it is the foundation on which their true values are built; it is the key to their calling and purpose in this life that will bring them eternal happiness in heaven, though not without trials and crosses to bear along the way.

Our young peoples' lives are not entirely within their control, but then neither are ours really. But each of us has a path that is offered by God, if we choose to accept it; if we know God well enough to trust him.

I'll leave you an excerpt from a book called 'Deeper into the Mess: Praying through tough times', written by Brendan McManus SJ and Jim Dick:

CONVERSATION WITH GOD

Fear

Me: Hello ... God?
God: Hello, my friend. What's going on?
Me: I find myself worrying a lot about the future. Like, what's going to happen in the future?
God: Maybe that's why you haven't talked to me in a while?
Me: Probably. Sorry.
God: I forgive you. Tell me more.
Me: Sometimes I wonder where I am going and where my life is leading. I start to make really elaborate plans for the future, usually based on avoiding something going wrong.
God: And how is that working out for you?
Me: Not so well. I get mentally tongue tied in all these plans. And mostly, they don't work out like I planned anyhow.
God: I know the hope I have for you. This is me speaking to you now. I know you better than you know yourself. And let that be enough for you. If I'm watching out for you, you don't have to worry.
Me: That's a relief in a way. But in another, it's a worry. Making plans makes me feel in control.
God: And are you?
Me: In control? Well ... no.
God: I am. Let me be a comfort to you.
Me: I will.
God: What will you do with all that time you'll have, now you're not planning too much?
Me: I'll live for today, every day. And I'll talk to you more.
God: Good! I'll look forward to that.

It's good to talk.

God Bless
Deacon Michael