



ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL TRINITY TERM 1



"Inspired by St. Joseph, together with Christ, we learn, we grow, we love"

Dear Parents/Carers,

Most Catholics have no recollection of their Baptism whatsoever. This is because our Baptism occurred a few months after our birth and we were incapable of knowing what was going on or of expressing an opinion on what was about to happen to us. It was our parents and godparents who answered on our behalf when the priest asked, "Will you be responsible for nurturing this child in the faith and life of the Catholic Church?"

When the time came to receive Confirmation, the time also arrived for us to begin speaking on our own behalf. Before the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles for the first time, they were gathered together in the upper room of a house. They were slowly recovering from the events of Good Friday; they were frightened and nervous about Jesus' promise to them, "You will receive power when the Spirit has come upon you".

They did not realise that Jesus had prepared them well for what was about to happen to them.

The Spirit arrived with a great wind and with tongues of fire and their hearts were filled with the power of the Spirit and as the saying goes, "A burning heart will soon find for itself a flaming tongue":

They were able to speak about their faith with boldness and confidence and share with others what they had seen, experienced and learnt from seeing Jesus in action. They were able to bring healing to people who were hurting. They were able to work out disagreements by remembering what Jesus had taught them: Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek and humble, the merciful, those who hunger and thirst for what is right, those who mourn and are able to enter into the sufferings of others, those who are persecuted in the cause of what is right.

The Apostles also remembered the day a Pharisee came to Jesus and asked him, "Jesus, of all the 613 rules and regulations of the Old Testament, which one is the most important?" They remembered

clearly the answer that Jesus gave, "The passage from the Book of Deuteronomy Chapter Six, Verse Four: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your soul."

Even though the Pharisee asked for only one rule or regulation, Jesus gave him two. "And from the Book of Leviticus Chapter Nineteen, Verse Seventeen: You shall love your neighbour as yourself; these are the greatest of all the rules and regulations."

So, on Pentecost Sunday, when a new group of young people is about to formally receive the power of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation and begin speaking for themselves, we might cast a timely glance over our own lives to see how well we have spoken for ourselves. What are our reactions as the power of the Spirit continues to be revealed in our lives; are the two greatest commandments alive and active? How "blessed" are we in living the inspiring words of Jesus about being humble and merciful, in contributing to the welfare of the disadvantaged, in standing up for Christian values?

If, as the most significant people in the lives of our children, we are making a real effort to exercise the power of the Spirit within us, then, our children will really begin to "answer for themselves" and follow our example to reveal Jesus to others by engaging in Christian thinking and action.

"May the Spirit of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you always and may we go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Amen."

This is all the more poignant given the recent Manchester tragedy. It is our role to reassure and reaffirm with pupils the importance of our faith and the teachings of Christ at times like this. We also need to be mindful and respectful of those of other religions and none. Supporting discussion and dialogue amongst our community and with others is vitally important at this time. Pope Francis has expressed his sadness at the Manchester attack, calling it a "senseless act of violence". We ask for God's blessings of peace, healing and strength at this time.

Thank you for the fantastic response to the questionnaires which indicated that 98% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements. 3% which equates to six parents indicated that more could be done regarding homework and bullying and as a school, we will look into this further.

The school needs the support of its parents to ensure it gives only its best for the children. I would ask you to consider becoming part of the school's PTA (known as Friends of St Joseph's) as the current leaders, Mrs Gosh and Mrs Horan, are unable to continue. Without a new group coming forward, it means the PTA would be disbanded and should a new one be formed thereafter, it would have to start the administrative process all over again.

During half term, please give this your consideration and let the school know if you would want to be part of this hardworking and productive group. Please inform the school office and dependent upon feedback, a meeting can be arranged to move this forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and co-operation whilst I have been here at St Joseph's. You have been a very welcoming community and I have no hesitation that the school will continue to rise to the challenges presented currently in education.

Jesus, come into our hearts this Pentecost give us the gift of your Spirit. Help us to be Your people in our world. May Your Spirit "transform" us this day and help us to become more like You. Amen.

Peace and Best Wishes.