



28<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

**Re: Celebration of the Word- Half Term Five, Week One**

This week, our **Celebration of the Word is based on the Gospel reading from John 20:19-31**. In this passage, we hear of the risen Christ appearing to His disciples. He comes to them offering peace in the midst of their fear and uncertainty, breathing the Holy Spirit upon them and sending them out to continue His mission. The story of Thomas reminds us that faith often grows through honest questioning and personal encounter with the risen Lord. It is a beautiful reminder that even in our doubts, Christ meets us with patience, mercy, and love.

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the **passing of our Holy Father, Pope Francis**. A truly humble servant of God, Pope Francis dedicated his life to building a Church of compassion, simplicity, and mercy. His deep love for the poor, his call for peace, and his commitment to caring for our common home have left a permanent mark on our Catholic Church. His message will continue to inspire generations of Catholics to live with greater kindness, courage, and faithfulness.

As a school, we will be taking time this week to honour Pope Francis' extraordinary life and service. In our chapel, children will have the opportunity to write **messages of condolence** and prayers of thanksgiving for his life and leadership. During RE lessons, they will learn more about his remarkable life, the process of electing a new pope through the upcoming Conclave, and reflect on the significance of this historic moment in the life of the Church. This is an absolutely wonderful opportunity for our children to deepen their understanding of the richness of our Catholic faith and traditions, and to feel proud of the Church's mission in the world.

This Friday, we will celebrate the feast day of **St James the Lesser**, our school's patron saint, with a **unified Celebration of the Word** during form time. This special occasion will provide a time for us all to reflect on St James' life. It will be a meaningful moment for our entire school to come together in prayer and celebration, strengthening our bond as a Catholic family and honouring the legacy of our patron saint.

This week, our **Year 8 pupils are taking part in a Retreat with the Diocese**. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to step away from the busyness of daily life and spend time in quiet reflection. Throughout the retreat, they will be encouraged to think deeply about their faith, their relationship with God, and the values they carry into the world. We look forward to sharing some moments from their experience with you; photos will be available on our school app later this week.

We are also delighted to **welcome our new Chaplain**, Mrs McGeogh, to the St James' family. Mrs McGeogh will be working closely with our children, supporting them in their faith journey and helping them to grow spiritually during their time with us. We are excited for the opportunities ahead as she helps to strengthen the Catholic life of our school and inspire our pupils to deepen their relationship with God.

We continue to focus this half term on the Catholic Social Teaching principle of **Dignity**. As Catholics, we believe that every person is made in the image and likeness of God and deserves to be treated with respect, compassion, and love. Through prayer, reflection, and action, our children are exploring how recognising the dignity of others calls us to defend the rights of the vulnerable, to speak up for those who are voiceless, and to create a community where every person is valued.

This week, our **Form Saint of the Week is St Veronica from 9S**. St Veronica is remembered for her great act of compassion, when she stepped forward from the crowd to wipe the face of Jesus, leaving His image on her veil. Her



# ST JAMES'

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

courage and kindness remind us that small acts of love and mercy can leave a lasting mark. As we reflect on her example, we remember her simple yet profound message: *"Lord, may I see your face in all those who suffer."* Through St Veronica's example, we are encouraged to respond to the needs of others in line with our Catholic Social teaching this week.

As always, I would like to thank you for your continued support of Catholic Life at St James'. Please keep our Cardinals preparing for the Conclave in your prayers.

I welcome any feedback you may have. Please feel free to get in touch with me at [h.purkiss@stjamescheadle.uk](mailto:h.purkiss@stjamescheadle.uk)

Yours faithfully

**Miss H Purkiss**  
*Associate Assistant Headteacher*