

SENIOR SCHOOL

St Mary's Fortnightly Newsletter for teenagers



"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ"

Galatians 6:2

WHAT'S GOING ON @ ST MARYS

Good Friday, 15th April, we gather in sorrow for the Lord's Death. 1pm at St Mary's and 6pm at the Good Shepherd. We kiss the Cross to share our gratitude for Jesus for dying on it.

A SAINT TO KNOW

On 25th March we celebrate the Annunciation, Mary being told she will give birth to the Saviour of the world. Jesus spends 9 months in her womb so it is 9 months until Christmas! Mary sacrifices her own hopes and plans to do God's will: may we do the same.

DID YOU KNOW?

Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting are the Three Pillars of Lent. These practices help further our closeness to God during Lent. How are you practicing these three pillars and what does your everyday lent life look like?

SHARE IN SOMEONE'S SUFFERING

One of the key practices during Lent is 'almsgiving' this is just an old fashioned way of saying giving to people that are in need. You may already give to charity, or maybe you did a sponsored walk or did something as a part of a school voluntary program. All good things I'm sure. But when was the last time you were with someone in pain, really suffering and really sad. How do you feel when you see someone upset? it's a horrible feeling isn't it? Even if it's someone you don't know that well or at all. There is something built in us that reacts strongly. We want to ask them what's wrong we want to offer help or try find a way to fix it.

God knew what He was doing when he made us this way, 1 Thessalonians 5:11 tells us **"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."**

It is in our nature to help one another. But sometimes we can be tempted to look the other way, to ignore that homeless man looking cold and hungry, or pretend to not see that boy at school crying or stop reading the news because everything seems so sad.

But that's now how we're made, **"Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another."** Proverbs 27:17 In someone's suffering Jesus creates an opportunity for us to connect, through comfort and engagement. By feeling true compassion and empathy from other people we are able to move on and be healed.

So yes during Lent we are called to give more to charity to be generous to other less fortunate but we're also challenged to not look away from the uncomfortable and instead be generous with our time, love and understanding. This sharing of problems not only strengthens our brotherly love but also makes the problems of others our problems too.

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had."



COMPASSION

by *Father Morris*

Tayo on the front page of this newsletter has written about compassion, literally suffering alongside. This is what Jesus does for us in His innocence through His fasting in Lent and all that happens at the Cross. We accept the bad things that happen in our life so we can know what it was like for Jesus to suffer.

We need empathy as part of this, an ability to appreciate what it's like for another. We do this, first, by not focusing on our own problems. Coming to Church helps us to do this. We can wonder what other people are praying for: be glad if they look happy and see if they're alright, if they're not looking happy. That's why we worship in communities so we can have a sense of the needs of others and our prayer lives aren't just me, me, me. This is the second step, to notice others. This may mean less rushing around and less fear of the other.

Compassion flourishes from little things. Pick the bus ticket up for someone if it's been dropped. Open the door for someone. Give your neighbours a present. Every time we do this, we're stretching our compassion muscles and making them stronger. The word for 'compassion' in the Bible normally has a sense of our stomach being turned: it's a physical reaction and all we can do in response is to act.

It's easier to be compassionate to others if we don't label them: they vote for them, they support that football team, they live in that postcode, they go to that school. All these things divide whereas compassion reveals a unity we have because we are all made in the image of God.

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PAIN FOR A REASON

Have you ever heard about someone going through something and immediately understood what they must be feeling because you'd experience something similar.

Our experiences good and bad allow us to connect with others. Whether it's to comfort them and provide advice or celebrate and share in their joy.

Use this Lent period to connect deeper with those around you.

Here's some scripture to keep in your heart.

"I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith."

Romans 1:11-12

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day." 2 Corinthians 4:16.

"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13