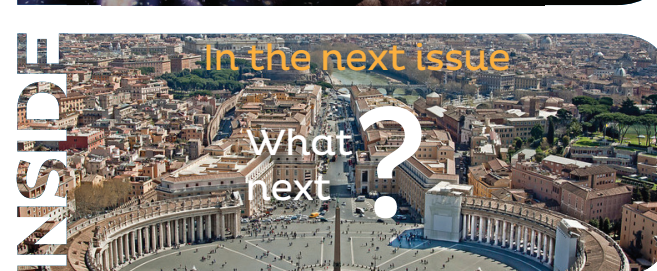


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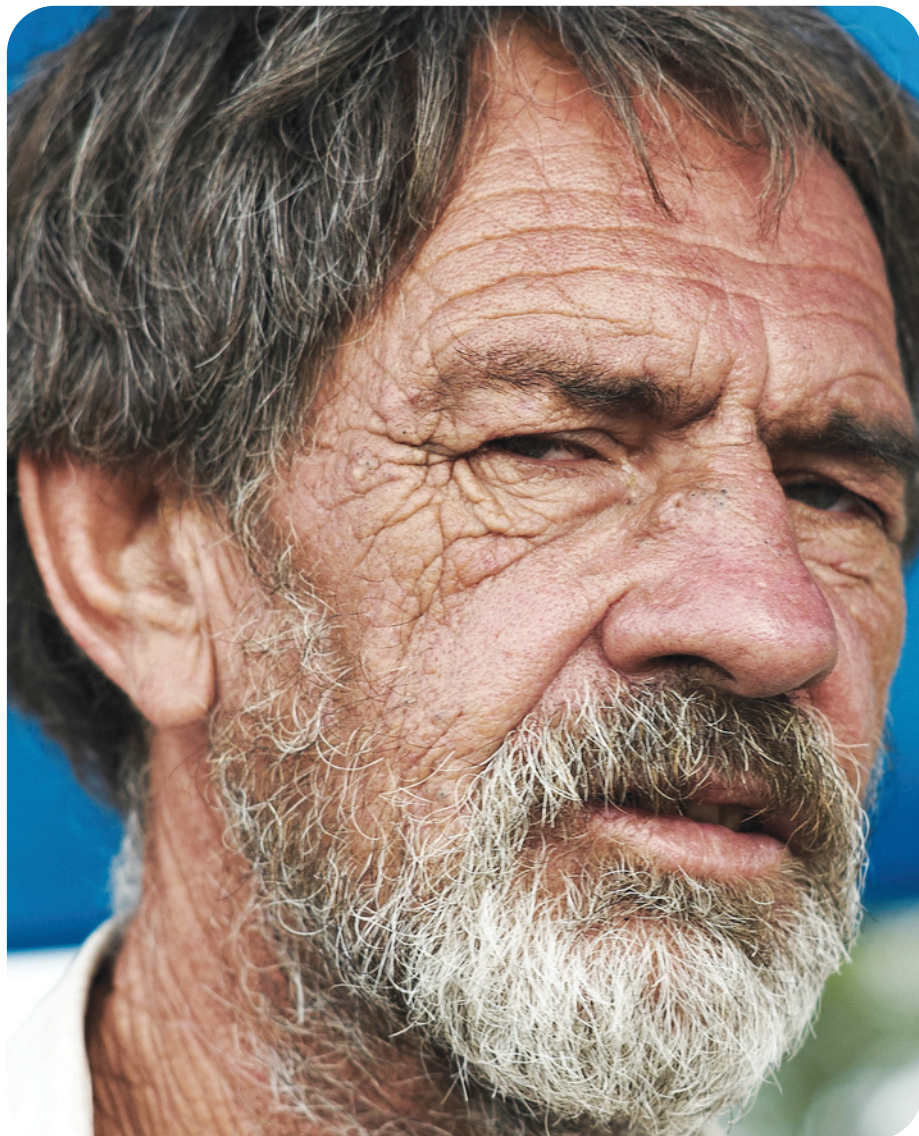
The Inside Story

by Mons. Mark
Langham, Vatican

Next morning, back in the Curial offices, everyone knew how to react. They stood in clusters in corridors, discussing the news, comparing notes, telling the stories of how they found out, wondering at what would happen next. Fr Lombardi, in the Vatican Press Office, was helpful, but it was clear that he had no advance notice ... see page 6 for full story.



Does God Exist?



A man went to a barbershop to have his hair cut and his beard trimmed. As the barber began to work, so they began to have a conversation. They talked about many things and various subjects. Eventually the subject turned to religion and the existence of God. The barber stated: “

I don't believe that God exists.”

The shocked customer asked “Why do you say that?”

“Well” answered the barber, “You just have to go out in the street to realise that God doesn't exist. Tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? If God existed, there would be neither suffering nor pain. I can't imagine a loving God who would allow all of these things!”

The customer thought for a moment, but didn't know how to respond, and didn't want to start a heated debate.

Eventually the barber finished his job and the customer paid and left the barber shop, as he stepped onto the pavement he saw a man across the street with long, stringy, dirty hair and an untrimmed beard. The customer turned back and entered the barber shop again and said to the barber:

“You know what? Barbers do not exist.”

“How can you say that?” replied the surprised barber. “I am a barber and I am here. I have just cut your hair and trimmed your beard!”

“No!” the customer exclaimed. “Barbers don't exist because if they did, there would be no people with dirty long hair and untrimmed beards, like that man outside.”

The barber thought for a moment and replied “Ah, but barbers DO exist! And pointing to the man with the unkempt hair said, that's what happens when people do not come to me.”

“Exactly!” affirmed the customer. “God DOES exist! The reason there is pain and suffering in the world is that people do not go to Him”.

Dear God

So far today, I've done all right.

I haven't gossiped.

I haven't lost my temper.

I haven't been greedy, grumpy,
nasty, selfish or over-indulgent.

I'm very thankful for that.

But in a few minutes, God,
I'm going to get out of bed;
and from then on, I'm probably
going to need a lot more help.

Anon



Baptism: This is our faith

Over the last two articles we have been exploring the Rite of Baptism. As I write this we have begun Lent, and we now come to the final movement of the rite. We have looked at the importance of our children's name and uniqueness. We have discovered that the importance of prayer and spending good time together. We have looked at the importance of reading and listening to the Word of God and how it can help us today. Now we come to the moment when we bring our child to the font, so called because it is the fountain of life, a place of new birth. Just before the actual baptism, the priest or deacon blesses the water of the font. The prayer is beautiful and recalls the story of how God loves us. Then gathered around the font the parent and godparents renew their baptismal promises. In affirming our faith we are in a good place to pass it on. I love the phrase the priest says at the end of this declaration of faith – 'This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord!'

Then we come to the baptism itself. In the newly consecrated waters water is poured over the head of the one being baptised as the minister says – I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. He repeats the exact word of Jesus when he sends his disciples out on their mission to bring the good News to the whole world. The newly baptised is then anointed for the second time, this time with the oil of Chrism. This is the most precious oil and is used only in baptisms, confirmations, the ordination of priests and bishops and the coronation of a king or queen. The oil is a sign of consecration and of service. It underlines our uniqueness and the deeply personal relationship we have with God. Then we receive a white garment, as a sign that we are free from sin, and a candle, a sign of the light of faith that we have received.

When I celebrate a baptism I always say a prayer over the child. I came across it years ago and I find it quite lovely. It is by a Canadian priest called Corbin Eddy. Maybe you could pray this prayer for your child.

*Lord God, our Father,
you have given us your Son,
Jesus Christ,
to us as the good shepherd
who knows us all by name.
We thank you for your grace*

and faithfulness to our human families,

for the new life that you have created,

for this child who has been born among us

and whom you have entrusted to our care.

You have given him eyes to see with and ears to hear with.

Bless too his mouth, so that he may learn to laugh

and to communicate with others.

Bless also his hands and feet and may he learn

from experience that everything that you have made is good.

We ask you to shelter this child and keep him safe in this rough world.

Keep everything that is bad and inhuman away from him;

protect him from all harm.

May he be secure with his family

and may all who are mature and responsible never give scandal to this little one, but lead him to the truth in love.

If, however, sin should ever have power over him,

be merciful to him Lord God –

you make good all human guilt and shortcomings

and are yourself, even before you came into this world,

infinite mercy and compassion in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

In the season of Lent, we hear again the questions that accompany us through life. Who are you? What do you want? Where are you going? It is good for us to spend time with these questions, and maybe as our children grow older to share these questions with them. There is nothing more amazing than watching a child grow, develop a personality and flourish. We learn from them a new appreciation of life and love. To discover from them, what they hunger for, what they seek and what gives them life can be a real blessing and a lesson for us. As we enter spring and see new life flourish around us, may we cherish the life we have and find joy in it.



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Dear Reader

What a coincidence!! Back in November we planned that this issue would be about “New Beginnings” and would go out to parents on 1st March. What are the chances that on the 1st March the Church would be facing a definitive “New Beginning” as the task of finding a successor to Pope Benedict XVI starts today.

We have kept much of the content that we had intended to use, however, we have also focused on what will happen next for the Catholic Church.

We hope that this issue will give you an insight into how the new Pope will be elected and will give you the opportunity to think about new beginnings on a more personal level.

Lent has recently started and it is an opportunity to look at our lives as we approach Easter. It is a time to think about what we need to change, and how we start our own new beginning in our life and in our family.

We would love to know what you think of the paper – if you have any feedback or suggestions please email at editor@cathcomreach.com.

Nick and David

Catholic Social Teaching

– Human Dignity



‘Catholic social teaching believes that human beings, created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–27), have by their very existence an inherent value, worth, and distinction. This means that God is present in every person, regardless of his or her race, nation, sex, origin, orientation, culture, or economic standing. Catholic social teaching asserts that all human beings must see within every person both a reflection of God and a mirror of themselves, and must honor and respect this dignity as a divine gift.’ Daniel Groody – ‘Globalization, Spirituality and Justice’

Archbishop Desmond Tutu reflecting on the human dignity of each person said:

As a created and precious child of God I have been blessed with a great sense of dignity. Recognising that we are all created as sisters and brothers belonging to a common humanity, leads us to treat one another with respect. Our sense of dignity is affirmed when our uniqueness is recognised and valued by those around us, as we all become global citizens.

Africans have something called Ubuntu. It captures the essence of being human. It embraces hospitality, caring about others, being able to go the extra mile for the sake of others. We believe that a person is a person through another person; that my humanity is caught up, bound up, inextricably, with yours.

Respecting a person takes account of their feelings and experiences; their social situation; their ethnic, religious, and sexual identity, though they may be very different from my own.

The practice of Ubuntu demands an open-mindedness that celebrates difference, recognising the validity of others’ circumstances and experiences. It recognises the uniqueness of each person and looks for the image of God in the other.

Source

www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk

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New Beginnings

It's only the beginning now
...a pathway yet unknown
At times the sound of other steps
...sometimes we walk alone

The best beginnings of our lives
May sometimes end in sorrow
But even on our darkest days
The sun will shine tomorrow.

So we must do our very best
Whatever life may bring
And look beyond the winter chill
To smell the breath of spring.

Into each life will always come
A time to start anew
A new beginning for each heart
As fresh as morning dew.

Although the cares of life are great
And hands are bowed so low
The storms of life will leave behind
The wonder of a rainbow.

The years will never take away
Our chance to start anew
It's only the beginning now
So dreams can still come true.

by Gertrude B. McClain



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The Inside Story



A quiet Monday morning in a sleepy library in Rome, sunlight slanting in through ancient windows, picking out scarcely a mote of dust as nothing moves to disturb the calm – certainly not the dozen or so scholars who sit reading in the silence.

When suddenly one priest leaps up, and cries “The Pope is resigning”! At once there is pandemonium; books and papers fly, silence forgotten and with it all library decorum, as everyone clusters around the iPhone of the bearer of this incredible news. In an instant, the quiet of the morning is a memory as priests question, ‘phone, and call to each other. It was one of those occasions you never forget, for it was how I heard the news that the Pope was to stand down.

There are few holidays in the Vatican calendar, but this Monday was one of them. Hence, ironically, or more probably by planning, no one was at work when the news broke. The stunning announcement passed around the Curia (the Vatican civil-service) in a series of texts and mobile calls – people were genuinely caught off guard. No one had ever suspected this might happen. No one quite knew how to react.

Next morning, back in the Curial offices, everyone knew how to react. They stood in clusters in corridors, discussing the news, comparing notes, telling the stories of how they found out, wondering at what would happen next. Fr Lombardi, in the Vatican Press Office, was helpful, but it was clear that he had no advance notice; what he knew was sparse, and what he could tell was sparser. Gradually, a suggested timing of the next few weeks was pieced together, guessed. And gradually, as the shock wore

off, the feeling was that, yes, this was a brave, visionary, good thing for the Pope to have done.

These are strange days at the Vatican, days of limbo, of leave-taking. I walked down to St Peter’s Square late that Monday evening; it was largely deserted, and it had been raining heavily. The world news services had begun to arrive; RAI, the Italian broadcaster, had prime position with an unfeasibly large satellite dish; other reporters lurked in doorways out of the rain. A few pilgrims stood gazing up at the lights still blazing in the Pope’s study, in the Papal apartments. A small group of Polish pilgrims sang half-heartedly. Everyone seemed dazed, unsure of what to do next.

But the picture is becoming clearer. From next week, the Pope is in retreat with senior members of the Curia; that has been scheduled for a long time. On Sunday 24 February, he will lead the mid-day Angelus, as he has each Sunday, and then on the following Wednesday, the last full day of his papacy, he will be present at the weekly public audience. On the next day, at 8 o’clock in the evening, he will travel by helicopter to Castel Gandolfo, the summer residence of the Popes in the countryside just outside the city, a favourite place of Pope Benedict, to wait out of the way while events unfold back at the Vatican.

Meanwhile, the 116 Cardinals will begin to arrive from all over the world (indeed, many have begun arriving already) to begin discussions among themselves, to get to know each other, to consider who the right person would be to stand in the shoes of the Fisherman. The rule book says that the

Conclave must begin within 15 and no later than 20 days after the throne of St Peter becomes free, but that generous interval presumes a Papal funeral, so there is talk of an earlier date for the beginning of the closed sessions of voting in the Sistine Chapel.

Everyone has the sense that this is the first time that something like this has happened. The telephones are ringing continually as journalists, television stations, and ecumenical partners, want to know what is happening, when things will happen – and we have to say that by and large we do not know. One particular headache for my office, which deals with relations with other Christians, is to know how events in Rome will relate to those in Canterbury, where Archbishop Welby is scheduled to be enthroned at about the same time. We have to think about accommodation for guests, about tickets, seating, accompanying. All this for a date that we cannot know until it is almost upon us.

Above it all, above the questions, uncertainty, and panic even, stands the figure of Pope Benedict. His serenity and humility give the lie to any attempt to portray this as a crisis. His example is one of sure hope in God, of trust in the Holy Spirit, and this sets the tone for the rest of us. We are in an unprecedented situation, but we are not without the help of the Lord, or the assurance of his grace. And so with confidence, despite our fears, we look forward to the next few weeks, knowing that the Church we be granted a loving and wise shepherd, one who will continue in the steps so faithfully trod by Pope Benedict.

by Mons. Mark Langham, Vatican

Little Peace



The winning entry to name the paper was – as you can see – **Little Peace**

Congratulations Georgina from Beckenham, Kent who is age 7 from St Mary's RC Primary School.

Well done to everyone for all the wonderful ideas and logos you sent in – these are some of the runners up...

My Brightest Light – Ella, Billericay – age 10

Cath Kids News – Josephine, Pocklington – age 6

Find Christ – Clara, Hove

Let's Care for Others – Herodia, London – age 7

Kidlike – Kiya, Swindon – age 9

He died for me, I live in Him – Anthonia, Dagenham – age 10

Funday Times – Sam, Cheltenham – age 9

The Little Herald – Sonia & Rhea, Staines – ages 11 and 3

The Funky Newspaper – Lily, Aberdeen – age 8

Love News – Abigail, Elgin – age 8

Catholic Kids – Jamielee, Elgin – age 6

YAZ – Youngcatholics Activity Zone – Sophie, Chandlers Ford – age 9

A Prayer in Need – Charlotte, Rayleigh – age 9

All those from Our Lady of the Rosary, Staines

All those from Our Lady of the Rosary School, Staines

Time For Kids – Scarlett, Ella & Olivia – age 8 and 9

We  News – Nancy – age 9

Be our Light Shining Bright – Joseph – age 9

We Stand Together – Ben – age 11

In a World Together – Mia – age 8

Brilliant Catholic Kids – Sophie – age 10

All those from St Thomas More Schools, Saffron Walden

including ... Children's Prayer Corner – Zach, age 9

Chapter Chill – Jacob, age 5

We All Love Jesus – Hannah, age 5

Mother's Day

Did mum forget to give you breakfast today?

Did mum forget your dinner?

Did mum forget to clean your clothes?

Think of all the things that mum does that you don't even notice.

Did mum forget?

Don't forget Mother's Day!

Think of what you can do to make her day wonderful!

Whoever you call Mum, wherever Mum is ... **don't forget to say thanks!**

Remember if Mum is not around – Mary, Jesus' Mum, is always thinking of you and praying for you!

Choosing a New Pope

The Pope is chosen by a group of people called "Cardinals". The process of choosing the new Pope is called a "Conclave". However, the Cardinals start to talk about it before the conclave begins. One of their jobs is to decide how good thing that the last Pope did and work out if there was anything that was not so good. This gives them an idea of what they will be looking for in a new Pope.



What happens in a Conclave?

The Cardinals are locked in a building with no phone or internet and they spend each day discussing the best person for a new Pope. They are not allowed out until they have chosen a new Pope.

Did you know?

In 1268 it took 3 years to choose a Pope. The people refused to give them anything to eat except bread and eventually they took the roof off the building they were staying.

Recently the person who organised the previous conclave was asked how he stopped Cardinals using mobiles – he said the Cardinals were "good boys who played by the rules".

2

People involved

There will be 117 Cardinals voting in the Conclave. One cardinal is in charge of the voting – this person is the Cardinal Camerlengo. Nine cardinals are chosen by drawing lots to help with the voting. The first three watch the counting of votes – they are called the "scrutineers". The second three collect votes from Cardinals who are too unwell to attend – the "infirmarii". The third group are the "revisers" who check the counting afterwards.

What qualities do you think a good Pope should have?



Can you colour this in?

Picture reproduced from the comic 'Habemus Papam' – Manga Hero see page 7 for more information"



Voting

This takes place in a chapel called the Sistine Chapel. Cardinals will go one by one to an altar and choose the person they want to be Pope on a piece of paper called a "ballot paper". They hold it up so it can be seen and then put it into a chalice (cup) on the altar. The "scrutineers" count the pieces of paper – if the correct amount the vote has to start again. Cardinal Camerlengo and the scrutineers all write down the names one by one and make a tally of the results. The last scrutineer threads a needle through the paper to keep them all together.

How Pope

1

phones, television
and voting
they have

people of Rome
and water
where they

Conclave is a
Latin word
meaning "with
a key".



A Winner

To choose a new Pope two-thirds of the cardinals plus one extra have to vote for the same person.

Can you work out how many Cardinals would have to agree to elect a new Pope?

If they cannot get that many Cardinals to agree they vote again. They will have 4 votes each day until a decision is reached. After 10 votes they can choose to decide by only needing half of the cardinals plus one to agree on one person.

4

Oldest
democratic
process for
choosing a
leader of an
institution.

5

The Smoke

The only way the outside world know what is happening is by the smoke that comes out of the chimney in the Vatican. Each day, before lunch and before dinner, the ballot papers are burnt. If they have not decided on a Pope the papers are mixed wet straw to make the smoke black. If a Pope has been chosen they are burnt on their own which produces white smoke. This tells the world a decision has been made. At the same time bells ring out in St Peter's Square.



6

Announcing the Pope

One of the Cardinals will come out onto the balcony of St Peter's and announce "Habemus Papam!" which is Latin for "We have a Pope!". Then the Pope walks out onto the balcony to bless the City of Rome and the World.



3

Chapel. The
write down the
paper called a
een but not read
altar. One of the
there are not the
Then the
read out the
ults. Then the
eces of paper to

Why not try holding a
Conclave in your class?

Teacher Activity sheet available at
www.CathComReach.com/teachers

Did you know
Pope's come in 3 sizes?
No one knows who the Pope
will be – so they put out 3
sizes of robes – small,
medium and large.

New Beginning with God this Lent!

Growing up is hard, we make lots of mistakes. And we often have to start again.

We all like to be loved by our family and friends but sometimes we fall out. Sometimes it is our fault and sometimes it is not. We have to learn to forgive one another, and guess what? When we do that our friendship grows. It's the same with God. The more we love God and talk to God the more he loves us and what is even more wonderful the more we love each other. Fantastic isn't it!

Lent is a special time before Easter when we should try to be better and do better.

- *Be better at talking to God;*
- *Be better at putting other people first;*
- *Be better at trying to be a good person.*

Why not fill in the chart below. It doesn't matter if you don't always manage to do well. The important thing is to try one day at a time. Give it a go and Make friends with God this Lent

Lent – March 2013

New Beginnings

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Be nice to everyone	Help around the house by putting toys, books etc away	Be good at school	Have you fallen out with anyone? Ask God to help you make up.	Read a story from the bible – what does it say to you?	Remember to tidy my room	Go to Mass and ask God to help those who are poorly
Try hard at school	If you are worried about anything pray to God about it	God's love for us is wider than any ocean and bigger than any mountain, how much do we love Him?	Always be ready to forgive someone who has been unkind to you	Say thank you to God for your family	Remember those who are poor and put some coins in a charity box	Mother's day – make it special for your Mum. Go to Mass and thank God for her.
How are you doing? Don't worry if you're not doing so well, try again from today	Do something for someone	Write down all the good things you have done so far – how long is your list?	Read a story about a Saint – think about what made them good	Say a prayer for those who are homeless or poor	Find somewhere quiet and ask God to help you every day	Go to Mass and thank God for all the talents he has given you
Help a teacher	Be a good example to your friends	Remember those children who do not have clean running water in other parts of the world	How are you doing? Still trying hard – well done!	Say thank you to God for your friends	Go to bed on time. Sleep helps us to face the next day better	Palm Sunday Join in the procession at church today
Learn how to make a Cross out the Palm you got at church yesterday	Thank God for all living things, the animals, the birds, the flowers – what else is there?	Share something with someone	Holy Thursday A special day as it celebrates how the Mass started. Do your best to go to Mass today	Good Friday Jesus dies on the Cross for us – try and get to church today and follow in the steps of Jesus.	Nearly there, ask God to help you never to give up – Jesus fell three times and always got up, we must do the same.	Easter Sunday Celebrate! Jesus is Risen – go to Mass and share the good news with your family and friends

What happens next?



The Cardinals will already be assessing the past 8 years and discussing what the Church will need from its next Pope.

The meeting to elect the Pope, called the Conclave, would normally begin between 15th and 20th March – however, this gap of 15 –20 days is to allow for a Papal funeral to take place – which will obviously not happen this time. Therefore, it could begin any time in the next 15 days.

The word Conclave is Latin for “with a key” because the whole process is totally cut off from the rest of the world. Not only are the Cardinals forbidden from speaking to the outside world but they are not allowed to be influenced by any external powers. Therefore, no mobiles, no TV, no newspapers, no twitter and no facebook!

The Cardinals will vote once on the first day of the Conclave and then 4 times each day until they reach a two-thirds majority.

The only contact with the outside world is through the burning of the ballot papers used by the Cardinals. These are burnt with a chemical (in they used wet straw) to give off black smoke if a decision has not been reached or white smoke if they have successfully elected a new Pope.

Once the Pope has been elected they change into a white cassock. Someone will go out onto the balcony of St Peter's and announce “Habemus Papam!” which is Latin for “We have a Pope!”. The name of the Cardinal who has been elected Pope is announced followed by the name they will take as Pope.

Play and Pray

– the simple way that children learn to meditate, build community and pray for sheer enjoyment



Christian Meditation during assembly at St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Harborne

“Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do. Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.”

– Mark Twain

Play is the most important activity in the lives of children. Sometimes it seems more important than eating and sleeping. At times play is easy and fun. At other times play can be trying hard to do something right. Play helps children grow and change in four principal ways: physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. Prayer helps children to grow spiritually.

We pay a lot of attention to children's physical development. We help them develop strength from top to toe but often we neglect their spiritual development. When a child is born, he or she comes with a brain ready and eager to learn. Early experiences greatly influence the way they develop. Everyone who works with children has a considerable responsibility for their future. We would do well to remember that the activities we share with them, from birth to age ten, will determine how their learning patterns develop.

Socially, children develop a sense of self and then a sense of belonging to a family. They begin to watch other children and to want to interact with them. Children's play develops through stages (playing alone, playing near others but not with them, playing with others but not sharing, playing and sharing,

playing with a purpose, organized games). These stages develop over time and with practice. Later, children develop the ability to respect the rights of others and to feel empathy for them.

Christian meditation combines many of the aspects of play in the classroom. We encourage the children to take an active role in setting out the cushions or chairs, the central table, the candle and the chime or gong. In this way they become part of the process. What starts as play soon becomes prayer. Thus action leads to prayer. Through deep silent prayer they develop confidence in themselves and learn to love others and themselves. Thus prayer leads back to action.

Play – an innocent and joyous encounter with the things and beings of the world – is the beginning of all relationship and all learning. It starts as play because it has no fixed end in view; no aim but to be in relationship with others, with the other. The heart of play is the simple sharing of delight. In this it is identical with meditation which transforms the work of prayer into the joyous play of being and being with.

Over 100 Catholic Primary schools and other faith schools are already practising or are in the process of adopting Christian Meditation as part of their school curriculum. This pilot scheme is now being extended to all areas of the UK and is gaining rapid popularity for its ability to deliver a valuable life skill to the children – to be still and silent in an otherwise chaotic and noisy world.

For further information contact Charles Posnett, UK Coordinator Christian Meditation with Children, The World Community for Christian Meditation

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Waking Up The School Garden...

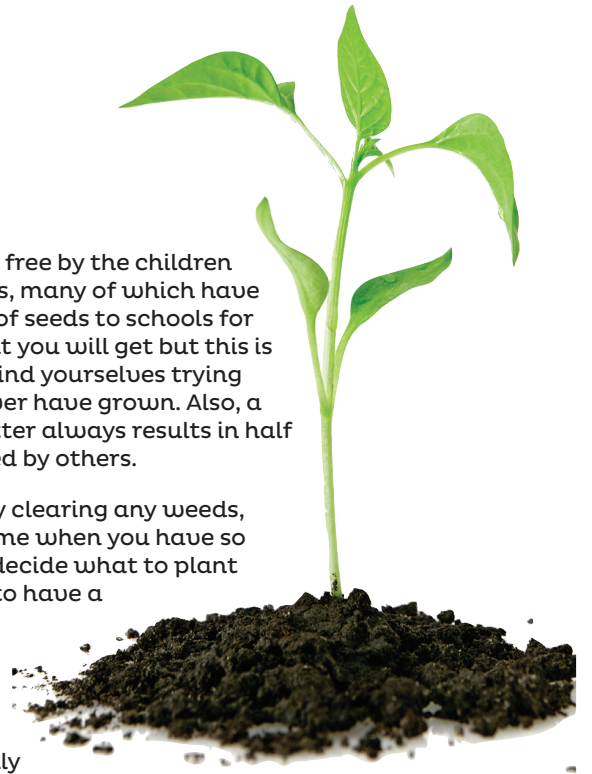
It is one of my favourite times of year in the school garden when there is a smell of Spring in the air, the sun is shining and there are thirty very excited children leaping around me like spring lambs as they suddenly spy something 'beginning to grow,' either out of the ground or on a branch. Whether or not you are lucky enough to have a large plot to tend or just a few pots scattered around in available spaces, it is time to start putting in place all the plans made with the children through the wet winter months.

First of all, have a good look around with them and see what needs doing to reclaim the garden, so they feel that they are taking ownership, and encourage them to make a 'to-do' list: sweeping up any last leaves to go in the leafmould sacks, cleaning pots and containers for planting in, tidying the tools and shed. See what you have already and what you need. A 'need' list can be daunting, particularly when a lot of school gardens are run on a shoestring. However, most things can be either made or acquired for very little outlay. Challenge the children to use their 'eco skills' to reuse and recycle. So, fruit and vegetable trays, both plastic and card, become seed trays, as do kitchen roll tubes (perfect for plants which don't like their roots being disturbed), disposable cups – especially those from coffee shops with domed plastic lids which make perfect propagators. Newspapers become plant pots, along with leaky buckets, supermarket 'bags for life' which have handles for easy moving, empty compost sacks, catering containers and everyone's favourite – outgrown wellies. A row of these against a wall with beans growing up strings or carrot top 'hair' costs nothing and always raises a smile! All of these items can be transformed by the children decorating them. Make plant labels from yoghurt pots now too, so you are ready when you start sowing and planting out.

Seeds can be obtained for free by the children writing to seed companies, many of which have schemes to send packets of seeds to schools for free. You never know what you will get but this is the fun part, as you may find yourselves trying vegetables you would never have grown. Also, a plea in the school newsletter always results in half packets of seed not needed by others.

Prepare your veg patch by clearing any weeds, which takes hardly any time when you have so many willing hands, and decide what to plant where. If you have space to have a three or four year crop rotation then add leafmould to the roots and legumes beds, and compost to the brassica and potato beds. If you only have a tiny space, divide it into sections. So a one metre plot can happily grow nine different crops, which you could theme eg a pizza patch growing tomatoes, onions, garlic, peppers, courgette, herbs etc. Look at seed catalogues and find vegetables suitable for patio growing, which will be smaller. Sow some herbs and salads in pots to grow in classrooms on windowsills. The children will enjoy seeing their produce being used in their school lunches.

Above all, make it fun for the children and yourself by growing things they like and want to try, although a request for a 'banana orchard' is still causing me some difficulty!



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Science and Religion

As human beings we have to find ways of coping with the world we live in. Some of our needs are material, such as food and shelter, while others are non-material, such as relationships, love, affection, and security. Science, in the widest sense of the word, has helped to provide for our material needs. This does not necessarily mean 'Big Science' involving elaborate machines and complicated equations. The earliest fishermen recognised that tides came in on a regular basis and took advantage of this; farmers recognised the timing of the seasons as a valuable guide to planting crops. They did not understand why these events happened the way they did, they only needed to know that they happened to be able to benefit. Science, however complicated, is always like this. No matter whether or not a theory is 'True', what is important is that it fits the facts and most of all, that it works. Scientific theories are really simply stories or images created around the facts as a means of enabling us to deal with the physical world.

Dealing with our non-material needs is more difficult because we often do not even recognise that we have those needs and they are difficult to define even if we do. Religious belief has always had an important role in meeting these needs by shaping our view of

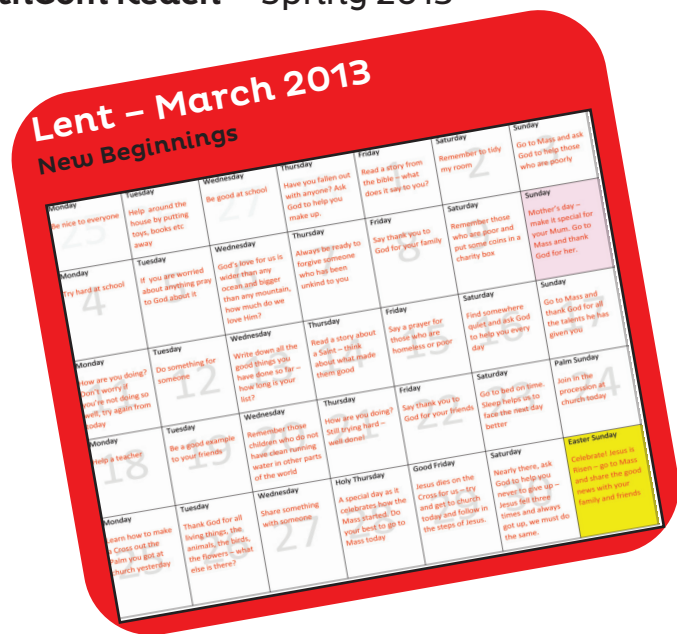
ourselves, our place in the world and our relationships with others. Just as scientific theories provide a story to give us a sense of the nature of the physical world, so religions have provided stories to form our understanding of our own nature and place in the world. These stories are usually stories of Creation and the one that we have in the first chapter of Genesis we regard as the most valuable because we believe that it is Divinely inspired. The purpose and importance of this story is to see our place and value in Creation, and our relationship with God as a model for our relationships with each other. However, we need to be careful of regarding it as a scientific or historical account of the process of Creation.

A complete understanding of Creation, either from a scientific point of view or a religious one, is beyond us and so any account has to be 'dumbed-down' to enable us to learn anything from it. If a modern scientific account of Creation had been Divinely revealed to Moses, neither he nor his followers would have understood a word of it. Any Divine revelation could only be expressed in the words and ideas

that they could understand. Jesus always taught through parables about lost sheep, seed on stony ground, prodigal sons etc., all of which were ideas that His listeners could understand. If we realise that religious and scientific accounts of Creation use different language and ideas to achieve different purposes, then we can accept that apparent conflicts between the two are likely to arise from the limitations of those ideas and their expression, rather than outright contradictions. There are no scientific obstacles to embracing our relationship with God as it is represented in the Bible, provided that we do not insist on literal interpretation of every word or phrase.

The Church's Biblical Commission describes the Creation Story as an historical description of the "fundamental truths underlying the divine scheme of salvation" contained within "simple and figurative language" adapted for the understanding of the time.

More comments on the nature of scientific knowledge at www.scienceasmetaphor.com



New Beginnings with God this Lent

Lent is our opportunity to stop and look at our lives. To look at what is important to us. To look at our relationships with those around us, those closest to us and with God.

Before the Cardinals start their election process they step back and look at the Church and they look at what works and what doesn't. Perhaps we all need to do

that for ourselves this Lent. We need to see what bring God close and what stand between us and Him. We then need to do something about it. One page 4 of the children's newspaper we have included a Calendar with challenges for your children this Lent. Why not put the calendar up in the kitchen and see if you can do all the challenges as a family this Lent?

Three Beers

An Irishman moved into a tiny hamlet in County Kerry, walked into the local pub, and promptly ordered three beers. The bartender raised his eyebrows, but served the man three beers, which he drank quietly at a table, alone.

An hour later, the man had finished the three beers and ordered three more. This happened yet again. The next evening the man again ordered and drank three beers at a time, several times. Soon the entire town was whispering about The Man Who Orders Three Beers.

Finally, a week later, the bartender broached the subject on behalf of the town. "I don't mean to pry, but folks around here are wondering why you always order three beers at a time?"

"Tis odd, isn't it?" the man replied. "You see, I have two brothers, and one went to America and the other to Australia. We promised each other that we would always order an extra two beers whenever we drank, as a way of keeping up the family bond."

The bartender and the whole town were pleased with this answer, and soon the Man Who Orders Three Beers became a local celebrity and a source of pride to the hamlet, even to the extent that out-of-towners would come to watch him drink.

Then one day, the man came in and ordered only two beers. The bartender poured them with a heavy heart. This continued for the rest of the evening. "Each time he ordered only two beers," the word flew around town. Prayers were offered for the soul of one of the brothers.

The next day, the bartender said to the man, "Folks around here, me first of all, want to offer condolences to you for the death of your brother. You know -- the two beers instead of three, and all..."

The man pondered this for a moment, then replied, "You'll be happy to hear that my two brothers are alive and well. It's just that I, meself, have decided to give up drinking for Lent."

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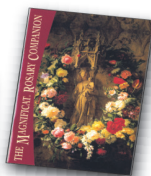
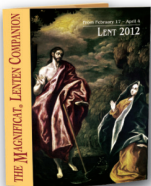
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New Beginnings ...



In the last issue we talked about forgiveness and its' many different facets from hearing an apology to being ready to forgive. we hope that it helped you in some small way to come to terms with any pent up anger and ill feelings towards someone who had hurt you and you have managed to unburden yourself from the heavy load you were subconsciously carrying.... To feel the heady joy of a lifted weight and the feeling of putting your shoulders back looking to the sky and breathing a new refreshing deep breath.....Now the spring is upon us it is time to embrace these new beginnings and use them purposefully....use the relationships that have been resolved to cement a new bond for the future.....make a new acquaintance... meet somebody new, say hello to the person you walk by everyday..... Remember that every journey, no matter how far you are expecting to travel begins with the first step....

The New Year or Lent generally brings with it a list of resolutions:

I'm going to take more exercise;
I'm going to spend more time with the family;
I'm going to lose weight;
I'm going to learn something new;
I'm going to give up smoking, drinking!!!!!! and so the list goes on... and on.

Sometimes the resolutions become a reality. But in the majority of cases the euphoria of starting a new regime with good intentions soon wanes as the pressures of life build and it becomes more comfortable to slip back into our old ways, back into the cell we have built around ourselves to protect us.

It is the same with our spiritual or prayer life. Finding the time and space to build a relationship with God can be difficult even with the

best of intentions. But there is a difference between failing in our attempt to lose weight and failing to build a relationship with God.

If we fall out of the (good) habit of talking to God by finding other things to do on a Sunday rather than attend Mass; or deciding to walk away from our Faith because we don't see the relevance; or by simply putting God on the sidelines for when a crisis arrives we can always redeem the situation. God is always there to welcome us back. And the more we turn to God the more God loves us and helps us!

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The start of every year, every month, every week, every day, every hour, and every minute gives us the opportunity to start again, to create a new beginning. All it takes is a moment! -what better incentive do we need to turn to God and share our problems, worries and stress. And isn't it great that God loves us so much that we can pack up all our troubles and begin again.

So why not think about a new beginning with God, talk to Him, share your joys and sorrows with Him and thank Him for your family, your friends and all the good things you have. There is no better time to start than now, this minute!

Remember that failure is the chance to start again with experience.

Where am I?

A man in a hot air balloon realising he was lost reduced his altitude and spotted a woman below

He descended a bit more and shouted. "Excuse me, can you help me please? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago but I don't know where I am."

The woman below replied, "You are in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40 and 41 degrees North latitude and 59 and 60 degrees longitude."

"You must be an engineer" replied the balloonist.

"I am" she replied, "How did you know?"

"Well, everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information and the fact remains I am still lost. Frankly, you have not been much help."

The woman below responded, "You must be in management."

"I am," replied the balloonist, "how did you know?"

"Well," replied the woman, "you don't know where you are or where you are going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise which you have no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to resolve your problem. The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now you make me feel that somehow it's my fault."

REMEMBER, Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; Leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall!!

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