



# St Thomas More Catholic School Parents' Newsletter

24th April 2020

## INTRODUCTION

We trust that everyone had a good Easter and that the spirit of optimism and hope - the message of resurrection will sustain us all in the times of uncertainty. Of course we want life to return the norm that we once knew, but we must be self-disciplined and not lose sight of the need to keep safe. This means being meticulous about practising social distancing and not leaving home without a reasonable excuse. We trust that everyone is remembering to wash hands frequently to avoid falling prey to, and passing on Coronavirus.

We are all wondering what the future will hold for schools. It is possible that we will follow the example of some of our European neighbours and the government will order some pupils back to school in June. Whilst there are economic pressures in this country to follow this course of action, we do have reservations that lifting the lockdown too early will risk a second peak of illness and puts children and school staff at risk.

We are very pleased with the efforts that departments and year heads are making to keep in touch with children and give them the opportunities to continue to make progress with their studies. We are trialling some online lessons in various subjects next week and believe that this will help to motivate our Year 12 to keep working. We will be setting different work, in their chosen subjects, for year 11 students who are aiming to come back into our Sixth Form so they continue to move forward and prepare for next year.

We want to respond to any issues that parents and children raise, so that learners feel both enabled and empowered to carry on with their school work. This includes having someone from school giving your child a call, if you feel this would help, we are more than happy to do this. We encourage you to make contact with the school if you have any queries by emailing [parents@stthomasmoreschool.org.uk](mailto:parents@stthomasmoreschool.org.uk). School staff are continuing to make preparations for our return to school and the school remains open for children of key workers and those that are more vulnerable. We are very grateful for the many staff that have volunteered to be at school and are being made aware of many who are supporting efforts to care for those that are isolated in their communities.

We are very clear at St Thomas More about the procedures that we are putting in place to ensure that examination pupils are allocated grades that reflect our view of the grade they would have achieved if they had sat GCSE and BTEC examinations this summer. Of course, these are subject to moderation. Please see the letter from Ofqual sent with this newsletter.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the messages of support and your forbearance during the unusual circumstances of the past month.

## INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

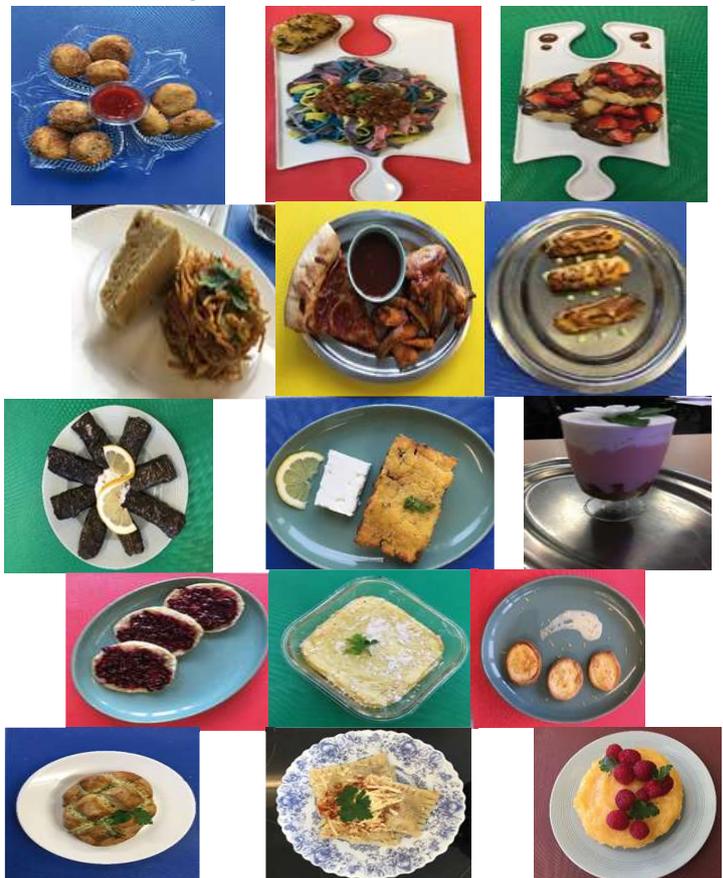
Mr Bent, our Head of Teaching and Learning, has shown us some work of extraordinarily high quality produced by pupils working at home during lockdown. From next week, students whose work is commended by their teachers will have their names recorded to be placed in a weekly prize draw for Amazon vouchers.

With our best wishes for a productive week. Stay safe.  
Martin Tissot Executive Headteacher  
Mark Rowland Head of School



## GCSE FOOD - COURSE WORK

Earlier this year, Year 11 pupils taking GCSE in Food had to plan, prepare and cook three dishes which were either meals high in carbohydrates suitable for an active adult, suitable for a diabetic, or representative of British cuisine. Below are a range of the results:



Congratulations to all the students who produced such mouth-watering dishes.

Ms Monsurate

## RE

**Week Beginning 20th April 2020:**

**Year A: Gospel Reflection:**

A couple of weeks ago I mentioned the word fear. By now all of us are familiar with fear and how it can spread among us.

Let us look back at Easter Sunday Gospel reading taken from St John Chapter 20: Verses 19-31. The most prominent part of the reading was when Jesus said to his disciples "Peace be with you".

After Jesus' death, the disciples were holed up, together in a room, afraid of the authorities. We get a sense that they were in a tight space, feeding of each other's fear.

As we come to terms with this new world we're living in, we can perhaps empathise with the disciples and that fearful time they were facing. We are dealing with an unprecedented global pandemic. Like the disciples at that time, we are confined indoors. The future may seem uncertain then as it does now.

When Jesus appeared to the disciples and showed them his hands and his side, they were filled with joy, not fear. Even Thomas, who doubted at first, came to believe when he felt Jesus' wounds. But Jesus said to him, why doubt, why not believe. Jesus is living proof that death and fear have no power over the life he brings.

In the face of this pandemic, we can draw closer to God. Being on lockdown is not separation from God, it's a chance to grow nearer to him and to one another. Let us be at peace in the knowledge that even at the height of fear, Jesus is here with us through it all.

### **Prayer for the end of the virus:**

Almighty and merciful Father, who show your love to all your creation. We come before you asking for quick control of the Coronavirus currently ravaging our world. Hear graciously the prayers we make for those affected by the virus in various parts of the world.

Grant healing to the sick, eternal life to the dead and consolation to the bereaved families. We pray that an effective medicine to combat the sickness be speedily found.

We pray for the relevant governments and health authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of the people. Look upon us in your mercy and forgive us our failings. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **'The God Who Speaks'. The Year of the Word.**

God tells us in the Bible, "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). It doesn't matter how far you try to run from Him, He loves you and wants to forgive you where you've gone wrong. He created you and cares about you.

## Thought for the Week

Pessimism leads to weakness, optimism to power.  
Inspiration comes from within you. One has to be positive.  
When you're positive, good things happen.

## A REDEEMED WORLD?

A little while ago a teacher at a non-Christian school was asked by one of the pupils "Sir, Christians believe that we live in a redeemed world. What do you think?" The teacher paused for a few seconds and then went to the window of the classroom. He opened the window, put his head through and looked right and then left. He then returned to his desk and said "It doesn't look like it does it?"

Given the state of the world over 2,000 years after Christ, one can have a certain sympathy with his viewpoint. We believe that through His death and resurrection He has definitively triumphed over evil and redeemed the world. Yet suffering and evil continue unabated.

What difference has Christ made? Father Raniero Cantalamessa, the preacher to the papal household, wrote of redemption in these words "In the colour spectrum there is an area close to the red which cannot be seen by the naked eye. These infrared rays make it possible to grasp different aspects of our planet, things which otherwise would be unknown to us. The picture that emerges is quite different from that of ordinary experience. The same thing happens where the invisible world is concerned. There is an aspect of reality, the aspect that cannot be seen with the naked eye but only in the light of divine revelation. Human beings, even if learned and wise cannot even suspect it. It is the Easter picture of the world that emerges from the death and resurrection of Christ; it is the world as God sees it. It does not merely show another aspect of reality but shows everything in a new light."

The Covid-19 pandemic is a testing time for all of us, but it offers an opportunity for a deeper trust and hope in God. Ultimately everything is in God's hands and through the death and resurrection of Christ the victory has already been won. In the words of Samwise Gamgee, one of the hobbits in the profoundly Christian epic the Lord of the Rings, "Above the shadows rides the Sun".

Fr Chris



## Words of the Week

**Monday- Peruse - (Verb)** - Read (something), typically in a thorough or careful way; examine carefully or at length.

**Tuesday- Inexorably - (Adverb)** - In a way that is impossible to stop or prevent.

**Wednesday- Elucidate - (Verb)** - Make (something) clear; explain.

**Thursday- Altruism - (Noun)** - Disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others.

**Friday- Inhibit - (Verb)** - Hinder, restrain, or prevent (an action or process); make (someone) self-conscious and unable to act in a relaxed and natural way.