



Community - Unity - Opportunity

From the Headteacher's Desk

As we approach the conclusion of this term, we find ourselves with nearly two weeks remaining until the pinnacle of the Easter Season, such is the position of Easter Sunday in the holiday season.

Over the last few weeks, our worship time has served as a valuable opportunity to emphasise the deep importance of this season within our Christian faith. Lent represents a time dedicated to introspection, prayer, and spiritual rejuvenation—a sacred period during which we ready our hearts for the most significant event in history: the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection is a powerful message of hope, love, and new beginnings. It teaches us that even in the face of suffering and darkness, God's love triumphs, and new life is always possible. Jesus' victory over death is a reminder that no matter our struggles, we are never alone—His grace sustains us.

In our school community, we strive to live out the values of faith, kindness, and perseverance. Let us use this time to strengthen our faith, support one another, and extend compassion to those in need. As we celebrate Easter, may we be inspired by Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection, embracing the joy and peace it brings to our lives.

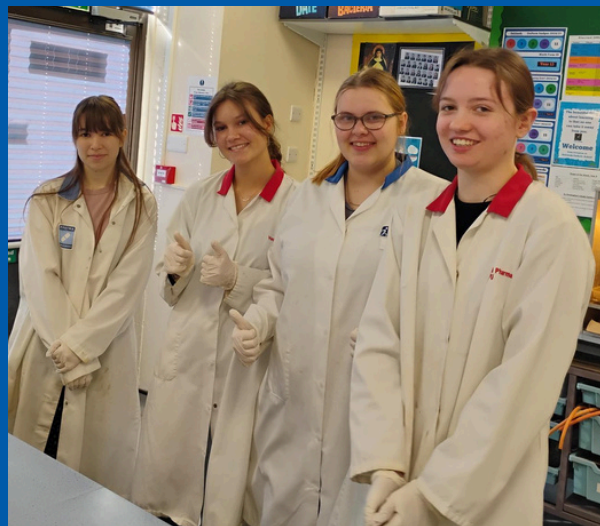
I wish you and your families a blessed Easter, filled with love, hope, and renewal.

Mr Quinn, Headteacher

STEM @ Oaklands

Dissection Lab Event

On March 15th, Oaklands Catholic School had the privilege of hosting The Dissection Live, an immersive and educational experience designed for students interested in healthcare and medical sciences. Around 80 lucky students from Years 10 to 13 from Oaklands and other schools and colleges in the area, were given the opportunity to attend the event and some 20 of our students were able to do so free of charge.



According to The Dissection Live website, the program offers 'a unique and immersive live dissection experience designed to enhance education for students interested in or pursuing careers in healthcare. Whether studying for GCSEs, A Levels, or preparing for further education and medical school, our expert-led sessions provide an in-depth exploration of human anatomy, making complex subjects more engaging and accessible.'

The event was led by Sam and his colleague Dan, both of whom were engaging, enthusiastic, and highly knowledgeable in their field. The day was structured into two sessions, with the morning session lasting two hours. It began with an introductory walkthrough, followed by a safety briefing on proper conduct and handling of specimens. After removing jewellery and rolling up their sleeves, students participated in an icebreaker activity that involved administering anaesthesia to a mock 'patient' in preparation for surgery.



Students had the opportunity to dissect the eye and brain from a pig's head in a structured yet relaxed learning environment. Gloves and sanitation stations were readily available, and the facilitators were on hand to answer any questions. Participants were provided with dissection tools and encouraged to explore the anatomical structures at their own pace.

After a well-earned break in the sunshine, the three-hour long afternoon session delved into more advanced dissections, including a thorax and an intestine dissection. Sam's enthusiasm and expertise remained evident throughout, as he continued to answer students' questions even after the session concluded. At the end of the event, attendees were given access to a downloadable certificate, which can serve as valuable evidence for college and university applications.

Events like this provide an invaluable opportunity for students to gain a realistic and hands-on insight into the medical field. Encouraging participation in such experiences is crucial in inspiring the next generation of healthcare professionals.

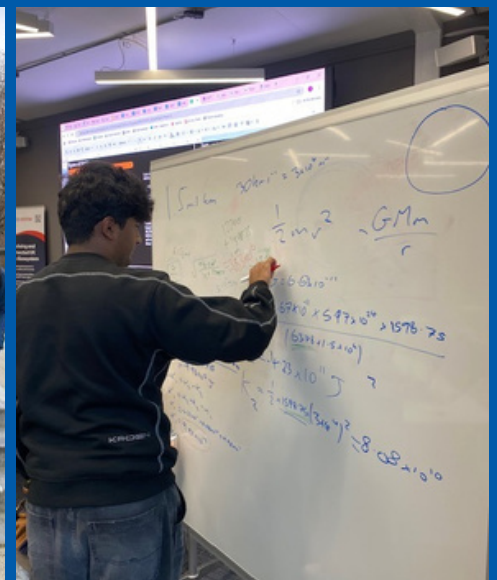
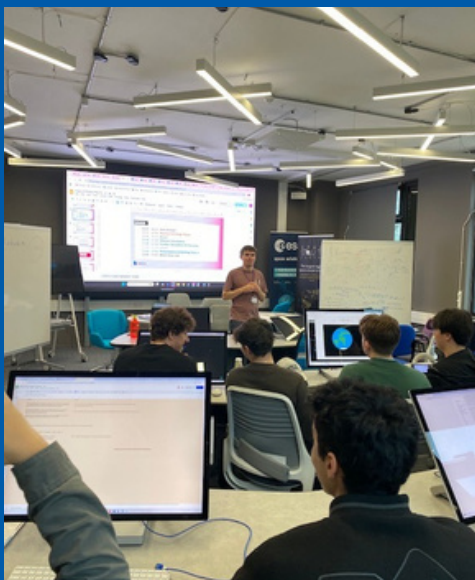
Happily, and thanks to the generosity of the organisers, we had a couple of left-over pig's heads, which we shared with some of our Sixth Form Biologists and 7 St Catherine on Monday 17th March, kickstarting Science week with a bang. Lots of happy faces all round!

Mrs A Gamble

Portsmouth University Trip

The Year 12 Physics students had the opportunity to spend a day in the new mission control centre at the University of Portsmouth. The students were simulating the experience that an engineering and space company would have when trying to get a satellite into Earth's orbit. The students spent their day designing a satellite capable of detecting radio transmissions from deep space, before then embarking on some challenging calculation work that focussed on firing the satellite into orbit, and determining how much power would be needed to ensure it maintained its flight for as long as possible. It was fantastic to see all of the students really throwing themselves into the experience and taking on some very tricky problem collaboratively.

Mr Semple



St John's, Korogocho

Update

The Spring Term is an opportunity for renewal and recalibration; St John's has started their new academic year expanding a junior secondary school section to their school, in the hope that more children will join them in full-time education, working alongside our support and partnership.

To this end, St John's are also working to acquire a school minibus to ferry children to and from their homes – offering safety and security alongside their education and study. All year groups/grades are now back in school, learning, collaborating and achieving as a community through their shared faith.



Most recently, Mr Stephen Mwangi (the Headteacher for St John's) expressed: *'Thank you for your correspondence. We are happy to have crossed over in God's love. I am so overjoyed by the prosperous partnership we have forged together – especially in the past two years that I have been Headteacher. We work together in furthering the lives of the children at St John's and the education they may have missed without your support. We are all doing well and have started our new year. We have just completed the initial stages of sports and WE WON! Our basketball team, and athletes are proceeding to next level and phase of competition (national/Kenyan level). We are grateful and we continue praying for you and your continued support – both through challenging times and in days of success. Mungu awabariki (God bless you).'*

God's love for us and his forgiveness, allows us to come together in faith – we are united by the cross borne by Jesus. This is what provides us with fullness and preparedness for the year ahead – whether it be challenging, joyous or both.

It is evident that even during times of strain and pressure, we are all centred around our shared faith and belief that there will be brighter days ahead. I will leave you with this piece of scripture from Corinthians 4:17-18: *'So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.'*

Mr Osbourne

Duke of Edinburgh Presentation Evening

On 19th March, we celebrated the phenomenal students who achieved The Duke of Edinburgh's Award! These students have shown immense dedication to volunteering, physical challenges, skills development, and adventurous expeditions.



Congratulations to Sophie, Michelin, Gracie, Samuel, Katie, Matthew, Alistair, Jack, and all other students who have completed the award. We couldn't be prouder of their incredible accomplishments and determination.

Year 9 Relationships Day

Our recent Year 9 Relationships Day was an eye-opening and engaging experience for students, equipping them with the knowledge to navigate important topics related to relationships, online safety, and personal well-being.

The day began with a thought-provoking session on pornography, discussing its potential negative effects while ensuring the conversation remained age-appropriate and informative. The second session explored relationships, sexting, and consent through the film Love, Honour and Cherish. Regular discussion breaks allowed students to share thoughts, ask questions, and consider real-life implications. A particularly engaging part of the day was a talk from a speaker from SPU, discussing chastity and reproductive relationships. His relatable approach made the subject more accessible and encouraged meaningful discussions. The day concluded with an essential session on online safety, led by expert Lee Hayward. Covering topics from digital privacy to online grooming risks, this talk reinforced the importance of staying safe in a digital world.

Miss Hogan



The Oaklands Way

Gospel Reflection

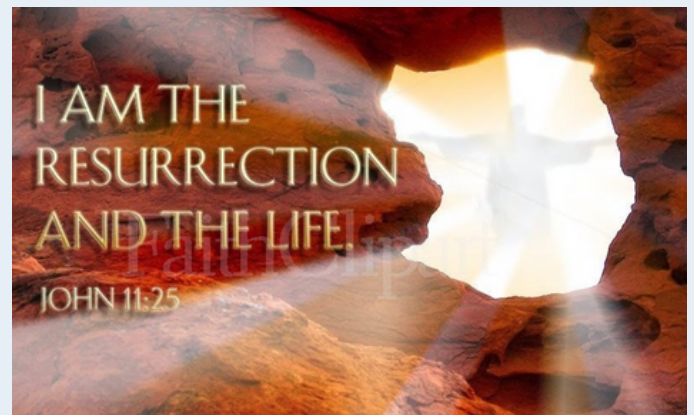
The Parable of the Prodigal Son has a simple message: There is nothing we can do that God cannot (or will not) forgive. We are the son, God is the Father. Whenever we mess up, sin, and run away from God, He will always come running to us with open arms, ready to forgive. Seek forgiveness from God this Lent.



If you are a Catholic, you might go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent. This is an opportunity to prioritise your relationship with God and to spend time repenting and trusting in His love and forgiveness.

Sacrifice and Salvation

In a spiritual sense, sacrifice is an act of offering something to God, such as time, prayer, or fasting, as a sign of faith and devotion. In Christianity, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the ultimate example of love and redemption, as He gave His life for the salvation of humanity.



In Christianity, salvation is a gift from God, made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because of original sin, humanity was separated from God, but through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, believers are offered forgiveness, grace (God's unconditional love), and the promise of eternal life. Salvation is received through faith in Jesus, repentance, and living according to God's will.

Catholic Social Teaching at Oaklands

In our weekly reflections this half term, we have focused on the Catholic Social Teaching principle of solidarity. (Solidarity - the belief that we are brothers and sisters, belong to each other and must stand up for each other.) This has enabled us to look at how different departments teach about this in their subject areas, as well as looking at ways we can 'live out' this principle in our everyday lives.

Some of the questions we reflected on were, 'What does it mean to stand up for others?' and, 'How can we do this?' We reflected on the story of St Oscar Romero and how what he did can inspire us to action too. We also held the CAFOD Fast Day, where community members held some fundraising events. As a school, our obligations to our SEND students represent our commitment to being in solidarity with these students and their families.

Another example of us 'living out' this principle is seen in our Oaklands+ Student Leadership Programme, where our student leaders mentor their peers and students at St Peter's Catholic Primary School.

As we come to our Easter break, we can reflect on this Spring term and say that we have done well in thinking about important things for our school community to flourish. Our CST focus helps us think about practical ways to continue instilling certain values in our community.

CST - Common Good

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After Easter our CST focus will be on the principle of the Common Good. The principle of the Common Good will be at the heart of this journey to realise our expectations of our mission statement.



Father,

We pray as a Christian Community, to be open to the gospel message of Jesus. We value the uniqueness of each other and, in respecting and supporting one another, celebrate the gifts we bring.

In unity and love we will reach out to those in need. Guide us as we work to make prayer, love, healing, peace and justice a reality within our school.

Amen



Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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